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V. G. BELINSKY

SELECTED PHILOSOPHICAL WORKS



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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The *Selected Philosophical Works* of V. G. Belinsky comprise the author's more important articles, reviews, letters and excerpts from essays dealing with philosophical and sociological problems.

All these works give a clear idea of Belinsky's philosophical and political evolution to materialism and revolutionary democratism, and reveal his role as the predecessor of Russian Social-Democracy.

The present publication is a translation from the Russian edition of Belinsky's *Selected Philosophical Works* (State Publishers of Political Literature, Moscow, 1941).

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A GREAT RUSSIAN THINKER

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY*

BY

M. YOVCHUK

June 7, 1948 marked the centenary of the death of Vissarion Grigoryevich Belinsky (1811-1848).

The peoples of the Soviet Union are legitimately proud of Belinsky, one of the finest sons of the Russian people, a great revolutionary democrat, eminent thinker and literary critic.

Comrade Stalin, in stating that the great Russian nation is the nation of Plekhanov and Lenin, Belinsky and Chernyshevsky, Pushkin and Tolstoy, Glinka and Chaikovsky, Gorky and Chekhov, Sechenov and Pavlov, Repin and Surikov, Suvorov and Kutuzov, paid tribute to the role Belinsky played in the history of the Russian people and of all the peoples inhabiting our country. Belinsky, along with the other famous sons of the Russian nation, is the personification of the spiritual greatness and might of our people, of its powerful talent and vital strength.

Vissarion Grigoryevich Belinsky has gone down in the history of Russian revolutionary thought, in the history of Russian democratic culture of the nineteenth century, as an original and versatile thinker. Belinsky represented an astonishing combination of many talents. He was not only a great literary critic and publicist; he was an outstanding Russian philosopher, a classical representative of Russian materialist philosophy of the nineteenth century, a talented sociologist, historian of Russian literature and founder of modern, revolutionary democratic aesthetics. In addition to all this, Belinsky was, first and foremost, an indomitable fighter

* This introductory essay is based on the supplemented and revised preface to the 1941 Russian edition of the *Selected Philosophical Works* of V. G. Belinsky.—*M.Y.*

against tsarism and serfdom, one of the initiators of the revolutionary-democratic movement in Russia in the nineteenth century.

Lenin paid a high tribute to the role Belinsky played in the Russian emancipation movement against tsarism and serfdom. Emphasizing in his work, *What Is To Be Done?*, the historical importance of the struggle Belinsky, Herzen, and Chernyshevsky waged for a correct revolutionary theory, Lenin called them the precursors of Russian Social-Democracy.

In the early period of the revolutionary movement in Russia revolutionaries from the nobility predominated in it; but, after the Reform of 1861 (the emancipation of the serfs), the democratic intelligentsia among the commoners began to play the leading role in the revolutionary movement. Belinsky stands on the borderline between these two periods in the social development of Russia. Lenin said: "A precursor of the complete elimination of the nobility by the commoners in our emancipation movement, while serfdom still existed, was V. G. Belinsky. His famous 'Letter to Gogol,' which summed up Belinsky's literary activities, was one of the best of the writings that appeared in the uncensored democratic press, and it has retained its tremendous, living significance to this day."*

This appraisal of Belinsky by Lenin provides the key to the scientific solution of the problem concerning the character of Belinsky's activities and world outlook, the problem which has exercised the minds of numerous students of the work of Belinsky for a century since the death of the great thinker.

* * *

The period that Belinsky lived in, the second quarter of the last century, was a period of disintegration of the system of serfdom. Capitalism began to grow in autocratic-feudal Russia. Year after year, the number of factories and mills in the country, and the number of wageworkers, increased. Russia's home and foreign trade, particularly the grain trade, steadily expanded. Gradually, a home market was formed for both manufactured goods and agricultural produce. But the economy of serfdom still pre-

* Lenin, "From the History of the Labour Press in Russia," *Selected Works*, Eng. ed., Moscow 1938, Vol. XI, p. 59.

dominated in Russia's national economy. Like heavy shackles, it fettered the economic development of the country and hindered the creation of large-scale industry and the formation of a proletariat.

That period in Russia witnessed a steady aggravation of the antagonism between the two main classes in feudal society—the landlords and the peasants; the spontaneous anger of the peasantry steadily grew and ever more often found expression in peasant revolts against the landlords.

But there was still no force in Russia capable of leading the masses of the people to a victorious fight against tsarism and serfdom. There was still no proletariat as a class. The Russian bourgeoisie was never a revolutionary force; it cringed before the ruling landlord class, and the bulk of the bourgeoisie supported the landlord state. Disunited and unorganized, still lacking political consciousness, the peasants from time to time rose in revolt against the landlords and satraps of the tsar, but did not yet set themselves the revolutionary aim of overthrowing the serf system of society and the autocratic state. Revolutionary ideas fermented in the minds of the more advanced peasants, but as yet did not reach the consciousness of the broad masses of the peasants.

At that time, the political emancipation movement against tsarism and serfdom was represented mainly by progressive individuals among the nobility who began to realize how disastrous the backward social relationships of the autocratic-feudal regime prevailing in Russia were for the country, protested against serfdom and demanded its abolition. "Serf Russia was downtrodden and immobile," wrote Lenin concerning life in Russia in the period after the defeat of the Decembrists. "Protests were raised by an insignificant minority of nobles who, lacking the support of the people, were impotent. But the finest men among the nobility helped to rouse the people."*

In the forties of the nineteenth century a new social stratum entered the arena of the emancipation movement in Russia, in addition to the noblemen revolutionaries, namely, the commoners. The commoners came from different social groups: from among

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* Lenin, "The Role of the Estates and Classes in the Emancipation Movement," *Collected Works*, 3rd Russ. ed., Vol. XVI, p. 575.

the burghers, the clergy, the merchants, the civil service, and in individual cases they were peasants who had pushed their way into "educated society."

The revolutionary commoners stood much closer to the people than the revolutionaries from the nobility. They were the initiators of the democratic movement in Russia, the vehicles of democratic ideology.

Concerning the commoners Maxim Gorky wrote that at that time "... men already appeared possessing proud and self-reliant strength; they marched forward along their own road without stumbling over the ruins of the past—and at that time there could be only one road for them—the road to the people, to the masses of the peasants, hence, primarily—against serfdom....

"In transitional periods two types of men always stand out with exceptional brilliance—one completely personifying all that is moribund, all that is obsolete—... the other type is inspired solely by a striving towards the future, is totally alien and hostile to the past—for us these are Bel(insky), Dobr(olyubov), Cher(nyshevsky)."*

V. G. Belinsky was the initiator of the democratic movement of the forties of the last century, the ideological inspirer of the struggle against the landlord-autocratic system in the reactionary reign of Nicholas I. His activity played a major role in the struggle of the Russian people for emancipation, the struggle against serfdom and the autocracy. Belinsky's views reflected the sentiments of the peasants who were rising to the struggle against serfdom, their protest against it. But Belinsky, like the other ideologists of Russian revolutionary democracy of the middle of the nineteenth century, did not, and could not, become the leader of the revolutionary movement of the masses of the people. The revolutionary theory which he worked out was now shared not just by single individuals as was the case among the revolutionaries from the nobility, the Decembrists; but its hold extended to only a narrow circle of democratic intellectual commoners. It did not reach the broad masses of the people, the lowly peasants.

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* Maxim Gorky, *History of Russian Literature*, Russ. ed., Moscow 1939, p. 153.

One of the most real and effective weapons in the fight against the system of autocracy and serfdom, and against the ideology which sanctified it, was literature, primarily publicist literature and literary criticism.

It was no accident that Belinsky devoted all his efforts to literary criticism and publicist writing, and that he used these in his struggle against the landlord-feudal policy and the officio-reactionary ideology of "autocracy, orthodoxy and nationality." Like Herzen, Belinsky continued and extended the ideological struggle against the landlord-serf system, the struggle that was initiated by Radishchev and the Decembrists; in the 1840's he accepted and developed the progressive traditions of Russian materialist philosophy that were begun by Lomonosov and Radishchev.

Belinsky's whole conscious life was devoted to the search for a correct revolutionary theory, for the right way to bring about the social transformation of Russian life in the interests of the masses of the people who were groaning under the yoke of serfdom.

S. M. Kirov, in the splendid article "A Great Seeker," which he wrote in 1911, on the centenary of Belinsky's birth, said of him:

"He was the incarnation of the whole protest against the surrounding 'infamous reality' and exercised all the greatness of his genius in the search for truth.

" 'Tell me what truth is!' he cried in appeal to penetrating reason. Into the search for truth he hurled himself, ardently, tirelessly and passionately, and his mighty voice resounded in that gloomy epoch like a clarion call, summoning all that was virile and best.... All his writings—from the tragedy *Dmitri Kalinin* which he wrote in his youth to his letters written just before his death—were marked with this ardent search."

* * *

Vissarion Grigoryevich Belinsky was born in 1811. He spent his childhood in the town of Chembar (now Belinsky), Penza Gubernia, where his father was a country doctor. In 1829 Belinsky entered the Moscow University, but was expelled in 1832 "because of unsound health, and also because of limited capabilities." The real reason for his expulsion, however, was the desire of the University authorities to get rid of the young radical who in that

period had written the drama *Dmitri Kalinin*, in which serfdom and landlord tyranny were sharply criticized.

In 1833 Belinsky started on his career as a literary critic. From 1833 to 1836 he contributed to the magazine *Teleskop* and to its literary supplement *Molva* (*Common Talk*), in 1838-1839 to the magazine *Moskovski Nablyudatel* (*Moscow Observer*), from 1839 to 1846 to the magazine *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* (*Fatherland Notes*) and from 1846 to the end of his life to the magazine *Sovremennik* (*The Contemporary*).

Already in the 'thirties, Belinsky wrote important literary works of profound theoretical significance: "Literary Reveries," "On the Russian Novel and the Novels of Mr. Gogol," a critical essay on the works of Fon-Vizin and Zagoskin, and a number of others.

Belinsky's talent as a literary critic and publicist reached full bloom in the forties of the nineteenth century. In that period he wrote scores and scores of essays and reviews, particularly outstanding among which are his essays on the works of Pushkin, Derzhavin, Lermontov and other Russian writers, his "Thoughts and Notes on Russian Literature," reviews of works on history by N. Markevich, F. Lorentz and S. Smaragdov, reviews of books on Peter I, and also his yearly reviews of Russian literature in 1846 and 1847. His famous letter to Gogol was written in 1847.

By his splendid essays Belinsky won enormous prestige among the progressive strata of Russian society and incurred the vicious hatred of the ruling classes of tsarist Russia.

Herzen, in his *My Past and Thoughts*, splendidly described the enthusiasm with which all progressive people in Russian society welcomed every issue of the magazine that contained an essay by Belinsky; Belinsky's essays simply shattered the obsolete views and the former authorities.

"...this retiring man, this feeble body," wrote Herzen, "was inhabited by a powerful, gladiatorial spirit! Yes, he was a powerful fighter...."*

Belinsky's essays cultivated among the non-aristocratic, democratic intelligentsia a hatred for serfdom and for all it engendered;

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* A. I. Herzen, *Selected Philosophical Essays*, Russ. ed., 1946, Vol. II, p. 183.

they exposed the serf-owners' ideas contained in the slogan "autocracy, orthodoxy and nationality" and the mystical theories of the Slavophiles and other forms of reactionary ideology; and they imbued progressive people in Russian society with sympathy for the people and a desire to rouse the masses to fight their oppressors.

The enemies of revolutionary democracy were aware of the tremendous influence V. G. Belinsky was exercising upon progressive people in Russia. Bulgarin, an agent of the Third Department (the Secret Police), and other writers who were "loyal subjects" of tsarism, more than once sent in reports against Belinsky and informed the government that he was a rebel writer who, "finding no room in the market place to sow sedition," did so in the columns of the magazines. Fyodorov, a member of the Imperial Academy of Sciences, collected all the articles in *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*, including Belinsky's, cut out passages from them, piled these clippings in seven baskets each bearing a label with an inscription: "Against God," "Against the Government," "Against Morality," etc., and sent these baskets to the Third Department.

One day one of the tsar's satraps whom Belinsky happened to meet told him that "a cosy little casemate" had already been prepared for him in the Fortress of St. Peter and Paul.

Constant want, privation and persecution soon undermined Belinsky's health. He contracted consumption and in 1847 he went to take a cure in France and Germany; but the disease had gone too far to enable him to benefit from this. While abroad, in Salzbrunn, on July 3 (15), 1847, Belinsky wrote his famous letter to Gogol, which, as Herzen quite justly stated, became Belinsky's testament for several generations of revolutionaries in Russia.

On May 26 (June 7), 1848 Belinsky died and was buried in St. Petersburg.

Tsar Nicholas' satraps very much regretted that Belinsky had passed away when the members of the Petrashevsky circle, who had read and copied Belinsky's letter to Gogol, were arrested. Dubelt, the Chief of the Third Department, said: "We would have put him in the fortress and let him rot there."

For several years the press was prohibited from mentioning Belinsky's name, and his letter to Gogol was banned right up to

the time of the 1905 revolution. But in spite of this "conspiracy of silence" which the reactionaries instituted, Belinsky's name and his works won nation-wide fame and became unforgettable.

* * *

The development of Belinsky's political and philosophical ideas proceeded along a devious path. To him fully applies what Lenin said in his book *"Left-Wing" Communism, An Infantile Disorder*: "For nearly half a century—approximately from the 'forties to the 'nineties—advanced thinkers in Russia, under the oppression of an unparalleled, savage and reactionary tsardom, eagerly sought for the correct revolutionary theory and followed each and every 'last word' in Europe and America in this sphere with astonishing diligence and thoroughness."*

Belinsky, like Radishchev, the Decembrists, Herzen and other Russian revolutionary thinkers, was influenced by the progressive trends in West-European philosophical and socio-political thought which reflected the historical experience of the bourgeois revolutionary movement in Western Europe. There can be no doubt that one of the sources of Belinsky's philosophical and sociological views is to be traced to the achievements of West-European philosophical and social thought at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century as expressed in the French Enlightenment and, particularly, in the revolutionary bourgeois democracy of the period of the French bourgeois revolution, utopian socialism, the dialectical method contained in the systems of the German idealist philosophers of the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, and Feuerbach's materialist philosophy.

But Belinsky never became an obedient disciple, and still less a blind imitator, of any West-European philosophical system or socio-political doctrine.

Belinsky strove to generalize the historical experience of Russia and Western Europe in order to find an answer to the theoretical and political problems posed by the entire course of social development. He proceeded from the historical conditions of Rus-

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* Lenin, *Selected Works*, Two-Vol. Eng. ed., Vol. II, Moscow 1947, p. 575.

sia's development, from the matured need for social change in Russia, from the interests of her toiling classes, primarily the peasants. This was the foundation on which Belinsky, while accepting—with many a grain of critical salt—the progressive ideas of the philosophical and socio-political doctrines of the West, which he worked over and assessed from the standpoint of revolutionary democracy, built his own world outlook, his own, independent system of philosophical and socio-political views.

In the thirties and forties of the last century there was not yet in Russia such a firm materialist tradition as there developed in the latter half of the century thanks to the theoretical activities of Herzen, Belinsky, Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov. Nevertheless, already at that time, the moulding of Belinsky's world outlook was largely influenced by the progressive trends in Russian social and scientific thought represented by Lomonosov, Radishchev, the Decembrists and Herzen.

From Radishchev and the Decembrists Belinsky inherited the ideas of liberty and of opposition to serfdom, their hatred for the autocracy and serfdom, their faith that the abolition of serfdom would lead to the well-being of the people.

From Lomonosov, the founder of Russian science and of Russian materialist philosophy, Belinsky inherited the passionate striving to promote Russian science and Russian literature and to implant education in Russian soil.

Following in the footsteps of Radishchev, Belinsky held that serfdom, being contrary to human reason and incompatible with human nature, could not be tolerated any longer.

Belinsky was strongly influenced by the works of the great national poet A. S. Pushkin. He insisted that literary productions—in line with the beginning made by Pushkin—must provide a comprehensive, profound and truthful reflection of Russian realities; along with Pushkin, he was a determined champion of realism in Russian literature, but went much farther than Pushkin and his idea of an "enlightened nobility." He viewed Russian literature, as he viewed Russian life as a whole, with the eyes of a revolutionary democrat.

In the middle of the 'thirties, Belinsky joined Stankevich's circle and practically played the leading role in it. The "credo"

of Stankevich's circle, its program, was the conviction that it was necessary to spread education throughout Russia with the object of preparing for the abolition of serfdom. This program of enlightenment appealed to young Belinsky who joined Stankevich's circle not as a timid disciple, but as a convinced and passionate follower of Radishchev's enlightened ideas, a follower who shared his opposition to serfdom.

The philosophical views of Stankevich, of young Belinsky, and of the other members of the circle were basically idealistic. Unable to perceive the reactionary nature of German idealism, the members of Stankevich's circle, including Belinsky, at first appraised it as a progressive modern doctrine.

But, unlike Stankevich, Belinsky did not rest content with philosophical idealism. He passionately sought for a correct revolutionary theory. Contrary to Stankevich, who was a nobleman and merely an enlightener, aloof from political strife, Belinsky came forward, already in the 'thirties, as a determined foe of serfdom, as a revolutionary enlightener.

An important factor in Belinsky's philosophical development in the beginning of the 'forties was his intellectual communion and collaboration with A. I. Herzen, who at that time had already formed a materialist world outlook. When they met, Belinsky and Herzen discussed problems of philosophy; they also discussed philosophical problems in their correspondence (their letters, which they jocularly called "dissertations," have unfortunately not been found). The beneficial influence of Herzen's materialism helped Belinsky, in the beginning of the 'forties, to "take his leave" as he put it, "of Yegor Fyodorovich's [Hegel's] philosophical cap," that is to say, to take a negative attitude towards Hegel's idealism and soon, in 1843-1845, to arrive at materialism.

For a long time this process of Belinsky's theoretical development was misrepresented in the historical and philosophical literature. The bourgeois liberal historians of Russian public thought (Pypin, Bogucharsky and others) depicted Belinsky as an idealist of the German persuasion, as a lifelong follower of West-European idealistic systems. The Narodnik Socialist-Revolutionary historians of Russian public thought (Mikhailovsky, Ivanov-Razumnik, and others) depicted Belinsky's philosophical development as

a transition from objective idealism to subjective idealism, and in particular, to positivism and subjective sociology.

G. V. Plekhanov, who highly appraised V. G. Belinsky's literary works and activities, nevertheless, shared the mistaken view about his philosophical and political evolution. Plekhanov, and many other students of Belinsky's works who followed him, wrongly divided Belinsky's philosophical and political development into the "Schellingian," "Fichtean," "Hegelian," "Left-Hegelian" and "Feuerbachian" periods.* This approach to Belinsky's philosophical and political development caused these writers to lose sight of the independence and originality of Belinsky's philosophical and political views at every stage of his literary and theoretical development, caused them to forget that Belinsky took as his point of departure not this or that doctrine, but primarily the interests and needs of the masses of the people of Russia, the needs of the social development of the country. Belinsky, who at every stage of his development had critically assessed all the achievements of West-European philosophy and socio-political thought, was depicted by Plekhanov as a disciple and follower of first one and then another German philosophical system. In his analysis of Belinsky's philosophical and political evolution, Plekhanov also failed to take into account the continuity of the revolutionary tradition in Russia herself. He attached no importance to the fact that an enormous factor in the moulding of Belinsky's world outlook was Russian progressive social and philosophical thought, the materialist and emancipatory ideas of which had been handed down from generation to generation.

The profound utterances of Lenin and Stalin on questions concerning the history of the Russian revolutionary movement and of theoretical thought in Russia enable us to understand and properly to appraise the independence of the philosophical and political path pursued by Belinsky, correctly to appraise his theoretical searchings.

* * *

* I regret to say that this erroneous point of view was to some extent reflected in my introductory essay to the first, 1941, edition of Belinsky's *Selected Philosophical Works.—M.Y.*

The evolution of the great critic's philosophical and political ideas represented an intricate course of development from idealism to materialism, from the mentality of an enlightener to revolutionary democracy. The philosophical and political path traversed by Belinsky comprised the genesis and shaping of his materialist world outlook, which took place in the process of critically surmounting philosophical idealism and contending against it.

In the first years of his literary activities—1830-1837—Belinsky, on joining the ideological struggle against serfdom, became, in his socio-political convictions, a revolutionary enlightener of the democratic trend; at the same time he was a dialectical idealist in his philosophical views.

He remained an enlightener in the subsequent period from the end of 1837 to the end of 1839. But, since he saw no tangible conditions for the abolition of serfdom in Russia, he temporarily abandoned the struggle against the Russian feudal realities. In his philosophical convictions, he was still a dialectical idealist.

In 1840-1841, influenced by the class battles that were maturing in Western Europe and in Russia, he became a utopian socialist and revolutionary democrat. In the field of philosophy he gradually passed, in 1841-1844, from idealism to materialism and at the same time made a notable effort critically to revise the idealistic dialectical method.

In the last years of his life—1845-1848—he became more and more strongly entrenched in his position as a revolutionary democrat, became a confirmed materialist and strove to revise Hegel's dialectics on a new, materialist basis, to convert it into an "algebra of revolution."

In the thirties of the last century Belinsky was an idealist in his philosophical convictions. He believed that the universe surrounding us is nothing but the manifestation of an eternal absolute idea. But, unlike the German idealists Schelling and Hegel, with whose theories he was familiar, Belinsky, in that initial period of his development, did not incline towards mysticism and was least of all disposed to worship mysterious supernatural forces. According to Belinsky, the relation of "God," regarded as the sole world substance, to particular manifestations of nature bears a character different from what the advocates of the idealistic religious conception of the world imagined. Nature is in constant motion,

development. It is a process of eternal and never-ending creation. In his "Literary Reveries" (1834) Belinsky wrote: "The whole infinite, beautiful, divine world is nothing but the breath of a single, eternal *idea* (the idea of a single, eternal God) manifesting itself in innumerable shapes as a great spectacle of absolute unity in infinite diversity."*

Belinsky was attracted to idealism not by its mystical system, but by the idea of dialectical development.

"...for this idea," he wrote, "there is no repose: it lives perpetually, that is, it perpetually creates in order to destroy, and destroys in order to create. It is incarnate in the radiant sun, in the magnificent planet, in the errant comet; it lives and breathes in the turbulent ebb and flow of the ocean tides and violent desert storms, in the murmuring of leaves and the babbling brook, in the roar of the lion and the tears of the babe, in the smile of beauty, in the will of man, in the harmonious creations of genius...."**

In the period in which he wrote "Literary Reveries" Belinsky's philosophical views coincided in a number of points with the idealism of Schelling, which contained elements of dialectics. But Belinsky the enlightener could not limit himself to Schelling's views on surrounding reality, *i.e.*, to "serene contemplation" and the lauding of all that exists. Still more remote was Belinsky from that worship of landlord-aristocratic reaction that was characteristic of Schelling. Reflecting on the realities around him, Belinsky tried to work out an ideal of a just and rationally organized society, which, in his opinion, would have nothing in common with the feudal social order that existed in Russia and Germany at that time. But while denouncing the tyranny of the feudal and police state and the feudal backwardness of tsarist Russia, Belinsky was not yet then, in the thirties of the last century, convinced of the inevitability of a revolutionary overthrow of the old autocratic feudal order. He pinned his hopes primarily on the progress of morality and education, on the transformation of the social consciousness of men. In the early years of his activity he believed that education and the perfection of morals were the road to change in social relationships. But all the time he bore in mind the neces-

* *See* p. 13 of this volume.
** *See* p. 14 of this volume.

sity of enlightening the broad masses of the people who were oppressed under the system of serfdom. He never sought to "enlighten" the serf-owning landlords or to "persuade" them of the necessity of social change. In the 'thirties Belinsky was not yet a revolutionary democrat: his social and political views were the views of a revolutionary enlightener opposed to serfdom, but still having no program for a revolutionary-democratic reformation of society.

Belinsky sharply criticized serfdom in the works he wrote in the period from 1830 to 1836. But he did not at that time openly come forward with the demand for the overthrow of the tsarist autocracy by revolutionary means. In his censored articles we find assertions to the effect that education in Russia might develop thanks to "the vigilant tutelage of a wise government." At the end of his "Literary Reveries" we even find a favourable opinion of the three principles of tsarism in the field of ideology, namely, "orthodoxy, autocracy and nationality." In all probability, such statements, which contradict Belinsky's entire way of thinking and are at variance with the spirit of his essays, which were directed against the official, autocratic and feudal-landlord trend in Russian literature (Kukolnik, Bulgarin, Grech, etc.), were urged by censorship considerations, or may even have been inserted in the text of Belinsky's essays by Nadezhdin, the editor of *Molva*.

In 1836-1837 Belinsky studied the philosophy of Fichte. At first it seemed to him to be a "philosophy of action," capable of providing the theoretical grounds for, and translating into life, the ideal he had formed of a rationally ordered and just society. In this short period, surrounding reality, real life, seemed to Belinsky to be a phantom, a vacuum, a nothingness. For him real life was solely the ideal life, the life of the "thinking Ego," which, in his opinion, was capable of critically rejecting surrounding reality and of mentally creating an ideal reality.

But at this time too he subordinated the idealistic philosophical theory to his enlightener's ideal, and from the idealistic doctrine of the primacy of reason he drew the conclusion of the necessity for the unlimited development of the human mind, morality and education. "Every man," he wrote, "must love mankind as the idea of the full development of the mind, which constitutes his own goal too; consequently, every man must love in mankind his

own mind in the future, and loving his mind, he must promote its development."*

But Belinsky, who at one time had seen in Fichte's philosophy a revolutionary theory of "action," who had thought that this philosophy was impregnated with "Robespierreism" and "the smell of blood," soon realized that it was not what he had sought, that it did not show how society could be remoulded on just lines. Fichte's philosophy, while it enabled one critically to reject, mentally to repudiate surrounding reality, gave nothing real in its place.

Disillusioned with the barren "speculations" of Fichteism, Belinsky began to criticize this subjective-idealist philosophy of an "abstract ideal." It is not the subjective consciousness of the "thinking Ego" that precedes reality, said Belinsky, but reality that precedes all human thought. But what is reality? At that time Belinsky assumed that "all that is, is either self-manifesting reason (reason in phenomena) or knowing reason (reason in consciousness). It is the task of knowing reason to be conscious of reality, not to create it. . . ." **

At the end of the 'thirties Belinsky regarded man and human society as one of the manifestations of the eternal, "absolute idea." But he did not intend to relegate man, as Hegel did, to the role of a miserable puppet of the universal spirit, to the role of a passive being incapable of changing the world.

Then too Belinsky believed that the meaning of human existence, its mission, was infinite development of society, the enjoyment by men of the benefits of civilization, the perfection of their knowledge and morality with the aim of changing the world in the interests of the people.

Although, in the early period of his philosophical and political development, Belinsky regarded reality as the manifestation of the absolute idea, the logical consequence of its development, he was far from blindly worshipping reality. He believed that mankind must not halt before reality, nature, society and spiritual life as before something mysterious and unknowable. Already at that time Belinsky was an enemy of agnosticism and mysticism.

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* V. G. Belinsky, *Complete Works*, Russ. ed., 1901, Vol. III, p. 76.

** V. G. Belinsky, *Complete Works*, Russ. ed., 1901, Vol. IV, p. 403.

Reality, truth, he believed, only stands to gain by the development of man's scientific knowledge, which tears down the veil from the "mysteries of existence"; reality can lose nothing by this either in beauty or grandeur.

The end of 1837 marked the beginning of the period of Belinsky's so-called "reconciliation" with reality.

Belinsky committed a grievous ideological and political error when he uncritically accepted one of the theoretical propositions of Hegel's philosophy, namely: "all that is real is rational, all that is rational is real."

Belinsky, being an idealist, was unable to draw from the dialectical method the correct revolutionary conclusions that Marx and Engels drew. Engels, in his book *Ludwig Feuerbach*, showed that Hegel's dialectical proposition—"all that is real is rational, all that is rational is real"—could be given a revolutionary meaning. Engels wrote: "... the Hegelian proposition turns into its opposite through Hegelian dialectics itself: All that is real in the sphere of human history becomes irrational in the process of time, is therefore irrational already by its destination, is tainted beforehand with irrationality; and everything which is rational in the minds of men is destined to become real, however much it may contradict the apparent reality of existing conditions."*

Belinsky's error at that time consisted in the fact that he still failed to distinguish the existing from the real, from the necessary. As for Hegel, that philosopher of German reaction deliberately betrayed the revolutionary-critical spirit of the dialectical method to please the landed German aristocracy and the bourgeoisie which cringed before it. In the preface to his *Philosophy of Right* and in later works, Hegel not only identified all that existed, including the infamous Prussian monarchy, with reality, but extolled that "existing" as the highest embodiment of reason, as the "crown of creation" of the absolute idea.

Belinsky, in his essay "Menzel, Critic of Goethe" and in his articles on the Battle of Borodino, justified the existence of the social order of his time, although, unlike Hegel, he did not assert that it was eternal and immutable.

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* Frederick Engels, *Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy*, Eng. ed., Moscow 1946, p. 13.

Belinsky's so-called "reconciliation" with surrounding reality is partly to be explained by the fact that he did not see in the Russia of the thirties of the last century any social force that would be capable of destroying the reality of autocracy and serfdom and of establishing a new social system in its place. After the Decembrist uprising was suppressed, the emancipation movement of the progressive section of the nobility subsided, the bulk of the commoners had not yet entered the arena of the emancipation movement, the mass of serf Russia was still downtrodden and impassive.

At the end of the 'thirties, too, Belinsky remained an enlightener and sincere enemy of serfdom; he cherished the dream that mankind would be emancipated and that a new, fairer and more rational social system would be established in the future. But since he saw no force in Russia at the time capable of achieving this emancipation, he fell into an error and for a short time renounced his former demands for a fight to destroy serfdom and to create a new, just society.

But even in that period of his philosophical and political development, in the period of his so-called temporary "reconciliation" with Russian reality, Belinsky retained his dialectical outlook on social life. He by no means wanted to perpetuate the system of autocracy and serfdom, although he believed that this system was a historically necessary stage in social development. Even at that time Belinsky believed that "the old course of things" was unsatisfactory and inadequate. The new, he believed, must arise from the negation of the old, but this new had the same root as the old, and the old is negated gradually, in the course of time.

At that time he wrote:

"All that is new, every step forward, is real only when it springs from the negation of the old, as the result of experience, as a new idea that logically follows directly from an old idea." In the period of his temporary "reconciliation" with reality Belinsky also regarded the "reality" that surrounded him, that is, the social order in Russia of his time, as a natural transient stage in the development of society; but he did not regard it as the "crown of creation," as Hegel did in his *Philosophy of Right* in relation to the Prussian bourgeois-landlord monarchy. At that time Belin-

sky, on more than one occasion, said that the fall of kingdoms is as intrinsically necessary as had been their rise.

Even in the period of 1837-1839 Belinsky was by no means an unreserved follower of Hegel's philosophy, an apologist of that philosophy. In his letter to M. Bakunin, who was an orthodox Hegelian at that time, Belinsky, in October 1838, spoke critically of the aesthetical views of Hegel and his followers. "In matters of art," he wrote, "and particularly of its direct appreciation, or as regards what is called aesthetical feeling, or the perception of the beautiful—I am bold and daring, and my boldness and daring in this respect go so far that even the authority of Hegel himself places no limit to them.... I appreciate the mystical awe of the disciple before his teacher, but not being a disciple in the full sense of the term, I do not feel obliged to play the role of Said.... Even absolute men, citizens of the speculative realm, can make mistakes and fail to understand; consequently, it is not good to believe everything unreservedly."*

In his review of the collection of speeches that were delivered at a celebration meeting of the Moscow University in June 1838, Belinsky hinted that although the reality of serfdom was an indefeasible fact, it must in the future make way for a new and more perfect reality which would not be grafted upon Russia from without, but would develop organically and gradually.

"We cannot say," he wrote, "to what extent grafting, by means of which a young tree is compelled to produce fruit prematurely, is useful; but we may boldly assert that in the matter of reforms, such grafting would be fatal. Here organic development is needed, and the condition for this is strict consecutiveness. The need for changes and improvements must be indicated by circumstances themselves, and these changes and improvements must be brought about with the aid of these very circumstances.... In matters of this kind, the whole essence lies in development, and development must be organic, which, we repeat, is conditioned by consecutiveness: leaves do not appear before the buds, or fruit before the blossoms."

Belinsky's "reconciliation" with the realities of serfdom in tsarist Russia, however, was not of long duration. Already in 1840

* V. G. Belinsky, *Letters*, Russ. ed., 1914. Vol. I, p. 266.

he realized what a blunder he had committed. "I woke up—I dread to recall my dream ..." he wrote. "And this unnatural reconciliation with abominable Russian reality, that Chinese kingdom of materialist, animal life, love of rank, love of decorations, love of money, bribery, irreligion, depravity, absence of all spiritual interests, triumph of unblushing and arrogant stupidity, mediocrity, incompetence—where everything human, everything at all wise, noble and talented is doomed to oppression and suffering, where the censorship has been converted into army regulations for dealing with deserting recruits ... where Pushkin lived in poverty and fell a victim to villainy, while the Grechs and Bulgarins, who rule the whole field of literature with the aid of *denunciations* live in clover.... No, may the tongue wither of the one who even attempts to justify all this—and if my tongue withers, I shall not complain. What exists, is rational; but the hangman exists, and his existence is rational and real, but he is nonetheless abominable and disgusting. No, henceforth, for me *liberal** and *man* are one and the same; absolutist and executioner are one and the same."**

Belinsky expressed profound regret at having, in the period of his "reconciliation with reality," sharply criticized "the French" (the French Enlighteners and materialists of the eighteenth century). Gradually he repented of having, in the 'thirties, praised the philosophy of the German idealists, the reactionary nature of which he had not at that time apprehended.

Belinsky's repudiation of the Hegelian philosophy of history and the "reconciliatory" conclusions that followed from it had been prepared by the entire preceding course of the great Russian thinker's theoretical development.

Belinsky had before that, too, been attracted to German idealist philosophy by the dialectical idea of evolution that it contained and not by Hegel's conservative mystical system, according to which the Prussian estates-representative monarchy marked the limit of social development, romanticism the limit of the development of art and his own philosophical system of absolute idealism the limit of the history of human thought.

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* By liberal Belinsky meant a man who fought for liberty.

** V. G. Belinsky, *Letters*, Russ. ed., 1914, Vol. II, pp. 136-87.

"I have long had the suspicion," wrote Belinsky to Botkin, "that Hegel's philosophy is only a moment, though a great one, and that its absolute results are not worth a—, that it were better to die than be reconciled to them."*

Having rejected Hegel's view of reality, and having independently realized how limited, contradictory and conservative Hegel's philosophy was, Belinsky became a more consistent dialectician. Gradually he arrived at the conclusion that the dialectical concepts were a reflection of the dialectical processes of life itself—of nature and of society.

In 1840 Belinsky began to criticize the reactionary conclusions Hegel had drawn from his philosophical system, his betrayal of the dialectical method; he refused any longer to regard surrounding reality as real and therefore rational, and demanded a change.

He called upon progressive people in society to fight the reality of serfdom: "We must not stand with folded arms admiring it, but do all we can to make it possible for others to live better in the future, since we could not possibly live."**

S. M. Kirov, summing up, in his article "A Great Seeker," Belinsky's philosophical and political evolution in the thirties of the last century, quite rightly said: "And if Fichte prompted Belinsky to renounce the reality that surrounded him as a phantom that contradicted the ideal, and Hegel presented his utter abstraction—'all that is real is rational, all that is rational is real'—and compelled Belinsky to reconcile himself to the joyless reality of Russia—in both cases the reconciliation was only temporary and served as a transitional stage from one world outlook to another. . . .

" 'Reality—such is the slogan and the last word of the modern world!'—exclaims Belinsky in his 'A Discourse on Criticism.' And of course this is not the 'vulgar reality' of Fichteism or the Hegelian 'rational reality'—Belinsky's reality rests on the idea of socialness: 'Reality springs from the soil, and the soil of all reality is society'—he wrote to Botkin."

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* *See* p. 149 of this volume.

** V. G. Belinsky, *Letters*, Russ. ed., Vol. II, pp. 191-92.

Belinsky's criticism of his former philosophical beliefs and adoption of a new system of views were by no means due to "outside influences," nor were they to be explained by the "instability of views" or the "fierceness" of character attributed to Belinsky by the enemies of revolutionary democracy who falsified the history of Russian philosophy and culture. The changes in Belinsky's philosophical views are explained by the fact that he was seeking all the time for a better theory, for one that would not only explain the world but show how to change it. In discarding one philosophical theory or another and elaborating new views, Belinsky was advancing in his search for a correct revolutionary theory—advancing to revolutionary democracy and materialism.

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Belinsky's revolutionary-democratic world outlook took final shape in the last eight years of his life (1840-1848).

Those years were marked by a surging wave of peasant risings against the landed serf-owners; ever larger numbers of intellectual commoners were joining the emancipation movement against tsarism and serfdom, and their sentiments and aspirations reflected the spontaneous protest of the oppressed serfs.

The 1840's also witnessed a heightening of the ideological and political struggle which the advanced representatives of the democratic intelligentsia, who expressed the hopes and aspirations of the oppressed peasants, waged against the government's policies and the ideology of "autocracy, orthodoxy and nationality," and also against the reactionary Slavophiles who glorified and sought to perpetuate the regime of autocracy and serfdom. In those years a cleavage was making itself distinctly felt in Russian public opinion; there was a sharp division between the revolutionary democrats and the liberals who, in their fear of revolutionary action by the masses of the people, made their peace with tsarism and the serf-owners.

Belinsky took the lead in the ideological and political struggle of the revolutionary democrats against the camp of the autocracy and serf-owners and against the liberals who fawned upon tsarism. He arrived at the conclusion that genuine progress in Russia, as well as the progress of all mankind, was impossible without a

radical change in social relationships and, first of all, without the revolutionary abolition of serfdom and all that it engendered.

In his letter to V. P. Botkin of January 1841 Belinsky declares: "...all the social foundations of our times call for the strictest revision and radical reconstruction, which is bound to take place sooner or later. It is high time the individual, unhappy enough as he is, freed himself from the abominable shackles of irrational reality...."*

Revolutionary democratism combined with utopian socialism became the essence of Belinsky's socio-political views in the 'forties.

In the beginning of the 'forties Belinsky began to study the theories of utopian socialism in the endeavour to find an answer to the problem that was tormenting him, namely, the way to transform society. He studied the views of the utopian Communists of the period of the first French bourgeois revolution, the works of Cabet, Louis Blanc and George Sand and the ideas of the utopian socialists Fourier and Saint Simon. In his letter to V. P. Botkin of September 8, 1841, he wrote: "...I am now at a new extreme, which is the idea of *socialism*, that has become for me the idea of ideas, the being of beings, the question of questions, the alpha and omega of belief and knowledge. Everything is from it and for it. It is the question and its solution. It has (for me) engulfed history and religion and philosophy."**

Shortly before his death Belinsky was disillusioned with the reformist utopias of Louis Blanc and the abstract and utopian theories of George Sand and arrived at the correct conclusion that these utopian theories were but fruitless dreams, which diverted the masses of the people from the real struggle for their emancipation. But in the advent of socialism Belinsky believed to the end of his days.

"And there will come a time," he wrote, "—I fervently believe it—when no one will be burnt, no one will be decapitated, when the criminal will plead for death as a mercy and salvation and death will be denied him, but life will serve as his punishment as death does now; when there will be no senseless forms and rites,

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* V. G. Belinsky, *Letters*, Russ. ed., 1914, Vol. II, p. 203.

** *Ibid.*, p. 262.

no contracts and stipulations on feeling, no debt and obligation, and we will not yield to will, but to love alone ... there will be neither rich nor poor, neither kings nor subjects, there will be brethren, there will be men...."*

How can mankind achieve this just system of society, *i.e.*, socialist society?

On this question Belinsky went much farther than the West-European utopian socialists, for he believed that socialism could not be achieved by peaceful means.

"... it is absurd to imagine," he wrote, "that this could happen by itself, with time, without violent upheavals, without bloodshed."

While the West-European utopian socialists engaged in concocting impossible schemes for the reconstruction of society and hoped to convince the wealthy and noble of the reasonableness and necessity of socialist change, Belinsky by no means shared such illusions and believed that socialism could be achieved only by means of a revolution.

He did not regard the political struggle, the struggle for power, with the disdain that was characteristic of the utopians. On the contrary, Belinsky linked the establishment of the new society with the establishment of government by the people as the result of a revolution.

Belinsky's utopian socialism, unlike West-European utopian socialism, was linked with revolutionary democratism; it was a peculiar form of the revolutionary-democratic ideology which reflected the outlook of the downtrodden Russian serf peasants and their dreams of a better, a just order.

Belinsky was the first of the utopian socialists, both Russian and West-European, to advance the idea of the revolutionary transformation of society, of the establishment by revolutionary means of democratic government for the purpose of achieving socialism. Subsequently, revolutionary democratism was organically merged with utopian socialism in the world outlook of Herzen, Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov.

However, the combination of petty-bourgeois revolutionary democratism with the utopian socialist ideas of Belinsky and his

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* V. G. Belinsky, *Letters*, Russ. ed., 1914, Vol. II, pp. 267-68

successors—Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov—did not, and could not, convert these ideas into scientific socialism. Socialism could become a science only on the basis of a revolutionary working-class movement.

The task of creating scientific socialism was accomplished by Marx and Engels. Belinsky and his colleagues and disciples did not, and could not under the backward conditions of serfdom that prevailed in Russia, go beyond the limits of petty-bourgeois revolutionary democratism. In Russia at that time there was still neither a proletariat, the force capable of heading the socialist reformation of society, nor the material conditions for the realization of socialism.

The combination of utopian socialism with revolutionary democratism, however, raised Belinsky far above the bourgeois narrow-mindedness of the French democrats of the end of the eighteenth century, who never entertained the thought of any but capitalist social relationships, and far above the petty-bourgeois illusions of the West-European utopian socialists who appealed to the "conscience" of monarchs and the big bourgeoisie.

Belinsky most resolutely opposed both monarchist rule and the dictatorship of the big bourgeoisie. Criticizing Hegel for glorifying the Prussian estates-representative monarchy, he wrote: "Hegel dreamed of a constitutional monarchy as the ideal state —what a paltry conception! No, there should not be any monarchs, for a monarch is never a brother; he will always keep aloof from them though it be by empty etiquette, and men will always bow to him if merely for the sake of form. Men should be brothers and should not offend one another by even a shade of external and formal superiority."*

To the end of his days Belinsky was a militant revolutionary democrat who called upon the masses of the people to fight serfdom and tsarism.

A splendid monument to Belinsky's revolutionary democratism is his famous letter to Gogol of July 3, 1847. In this letter he depicted in vivid colours the horrible picture of oppression, poverty and disfranchisement of the masses of the people in feudal Russia. In opposition to the serf-owning reactionaries and their

* See p. 158 of this volume.

defenders he advanced a program of immediate action for the Russian revolutionary peasant democracy.

"...Russia sees her salvation not in mysticism, nor asceticism, nor pietism, but in the successes of civilization, enlightenment and humanity," he wrote. "What she needs is not sermons (she has heard enough of them!) or prayers (she has repeated them too often!), but the awakening in the people of a sense of their human dignity lost for so many centuries amid the dirt and refuse; she needs rights and laws conforming not with the preaching of the church but with common sense and justice, and their strictest possible observance." *

From this logically followed Belinsky's immediate political demands, which he formulated in his letter to Gogol: abolition of serfdom, abolition of corporal punishment, abolition of the tyranny of the police and the government officials.

In these demands Belinsky expressed the cherished thoughts, sentiments, and hopes of the masses of the people of Russia, of the millions of serf peasants who dreamed of obtaining the elementary human rights which were being trampled upon by the regime of serfdom.

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In the forties of the nineteenth century Belinsky became a more and more consistent revolutionary democrat and his philosophical views underwent essential changes, changes in principle.

The revolutionary-democratic convictions that were taking shape in the minds of Belinsky and other like-minded commoners could not possibly be reconciled with the idealistic philosophy that dominated the minds of the ruling classes in Russia and in Western Europe in the thirties and forties of the last century.

At that time the ideologists of the Russian landed aristocracy (Sheviryev, Katkov, Davidov, the reactionary Slavophiles, etc.) who entertained a mortal hatred for the revolutionary movement, for progressive science and materialism, were doing their utmost to disseminate among the Russian public the reactionary ideas of Schellingism and Hegelianism, waged a life and death struggle

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* *See* p. 504 of this volume.

against the ideas of revolutionary democracy and socialism, and hounded and persecuted every manifestation of materialism in science and philosophy.

The Russian revolutionary democrats, who were hostile to the landed aristocracy and whose ideas were increasingly inspired by Belinsky, turned more and more to the materialist philosophy to find substantiation for the necessity of social changes in Russia.

In 1841-1844 Belinsky passed from idealism to materialism. In the beginning of this period he criticized primarily the reactionary political views of the German idealists, and of Hegel in particular; in 1843-1844, however, he no longer confined himself to this, but came out in opposition to the idealism and mysticism of German philosophy. He took a critical attitude to the Hegelian idealistic dialectics, which he strove to surmount in the effort to create his own dialectical method free from Hegelian mysticism and reactionary narrow-mindedness.

Belinsky sharply criticized Hegel's philosophy of history, which the ruling reactionary classes could use to justify every kind of social injustice, oppression and bondage. Throwing down a challenge to German idealism, he said, addressing Hegel: "...let me inform you, with all respect for your philosophical philistinism, that if I did succeed in reaching the top of the evolution ladder, I would demand even there an account from you of all the victims of the conditions of life and history, of all the victims of accident, superstition, the Inquisition, Philip II, etc., etc.: otherwise I will throw myself headlong from the top rung. I will not have happiness if you gave it to me gratis unless I feel assured about every one of my blood brothers...."*

Belinsky was most vehement in his criticism of Hegel's social theories, and, in particular, his theory that all social historical phenomena are but the imperfect manifestations of the eternal and transcendental absolute idea. He opposed Hegel's philosophy of history, according to which every social phenomenon is nothing more than a natural product of the evolution of the absolute idea and is in no way dependent upon the actual course of human history, upon the historically moulded conditions of social life. In his letter to Botkin of March 1, 1841, Belinsky wrote that Hegel

* See p. 150 of this volume.

"has turned the realities of life into ghosts clasping bony hands and dancing in the air above the cemetery. The subject for him is not an end in itself, but a means for the momentary expression of the universal, and this universal ... having flaunted himself therein (in the subject) he casts it off like a pair of old trousers...." Contrary to Hegel, Belinsky maintains that "the fate of a subject, an individual, a personality is more important than the fate of the world and the weal of the Chinese emperor (*viz.*, the Hegelian *Allgemeinheit*)."*

Unlike Hegel, who believed that at a definite stage the absolute idea completes the cycle of its development, Belinsky was of the opinion that evolution in nature and in society never halts anywhere, that mankind will never cease its activities in promoting material and spiritual culture. No level of development that society achieves can satisfy mankind.

"Yet it would be still more absurd," wrote Belinsky, "to think that progress must cease because it has now reached its extreme point and can proceed no further. There is no limit to human progress, and never will humanity say to itself: *stop, enough, there is nowhere further to go*!"**

Belinsky rightly held that the reactionary conclusions at which Hegel arrived were a betrayal of the dialectical method and demanded that philosophy should return to life, to reality.

Unlike Hegel, Belinsky understood that dialectics are not merely the dialectics of concepts. In his opinion dialectics should be understood as the law of development of life, a law inherent in reality itself, in nature. Unlike Hegel, who believed that nature merely unfolds the diversity of its manifestations in space but does not develop in time, Belinsky held that development in time, the rise of new phenomena, change, was nature's fundamental law of life. "...the whole point about life," he wrote, "is that it is constantly new, that it constantly changes: this is my fundamental principle of life too...."***

Elsewhere he wrote that life is nothing more than continuous development, a ceaseless process of formation.

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* *See* pp. 149-50 of this volume.

** *See* p. 308 of this volume.

*** V. G. Belinsky, *Letters*, Russ. ed., 1914, Vol. II, p. 339.

The pivot of Belinsky's philosophical views in the 'forties was the "idea of negation," which found expression in the sharp criticism he leveled against the old and obsolescent reality and in his recognition that to fight this reality was in conformity with the law of development. Emphasizing that without negation human history would have become a "stagnant and malodorous swamp," Belinsky asserted that his heroes in history were those who destroyed the old: Luther, Voltaire, the Encyclopaedists, the Jacobins, and so forth.

On the basis of dialectics, Belinsky tried logically to prove the necessity of abolishing all the old, obsolete systems of society. Applying the idea of dialectical evolution to the future, he dreamed of the advent of a just social order based on economic and political equality.

While regarding dialectics as the "algebra of revolution" and criticizing Hegel's reactionary philosophy and sociology, Belinsky, in 1841-1843, had not yet, however, freed himself entirely from the influence of philosophical idealism, although materialist notes were beginning to sound more and more loudly in the views he expressed at that time.

Belinsky's transition to the position of materialism, indications of which were already in evidence in 1841-1843, became final in 1844-1845.

Already in his essay "The General Meaning of the Word 'Literature'" (evidently written in 1843), Belinsky speaks of the equal importance of the material process of life ("to be born, to eat, to drink and to die") and the spiritual process ("to think, to know"). In the same essay he notes that "the first and chief cause of the substance of every nation, as well as of every individual, is a physiological cause, which forms the impenetrable secret of directly creating nature."

Here Belinsky had not yet found a correct solution for the problem of what is the nature of a nation, of society, and reduced the essence of social life to physiological life. But he had already broken with the conception that the life of every nation is based on some mysterious supernatural substance.

In his early essays on Pushkin (1843-1844), Belinsky took as his point of departure the proposition that every nation has two philosophies: one—a scientific, book philosophy; and the other—

an everyday philosophy for common use. Belinsky strove towards materialism as the philosophy of practical life: his sympathies were on the side of materialism.

In the same essays he gave expression to the materialistic thesis that the behaviour of men, their activities, depend upon social requirements, which spring from reality itself and not from theory. He arrived at the conclusion that the views and actions of men, their morals and strivings, depend upon the conditions of their lives, upon the organization of society. In his essay on Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* (1844), he wrote: "... man is born for good and not for evil, for the rational and lawful enjoyment of the blessings of life and not for evil-doing; ... his strivings are righteous, his instincts noble. Evil is latent in society and not in man...."*

Probably in 1843, or in 1844, Belinsky became acquainted with Feuerbach's materialist philosophy, and this definitely helped to mould his own materialist world outlook, which was taking shape in his mind while he was criticizing and independently overcoming Hegelian idealism.

In Belinsky's works of the period of 1845-1848 we find a materialist solution of the fundamental problem of philosophy. Belinsky was of the opinion that man's mind, his ideas, sentiments and thoughts, are determined by the influence of his material environment, that thinking is a product of the brain. In his review of Postels' book he wrote: "... the most abstract mental conceptions are after all nothing more than the results of the activity of the cerebral organs which possess certain capabilites and qualities."**

He pours ridicule on the mystics and the supporters of "nebulous idealism" who live eternally in abstractions and consider it beneath their dignity to study nature and the human organism. "Psychology which is not based on physiology," he wrote, "is as unsubstantial as physiology that knows not the existence of anatomy."***

Once he came over to the positions of materialism in philosophy Belinsky began even more forcefully to wage the struggle

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* *See* p. 235 of this volume.

** V. G. Belinsky, *Complete Works*, Russ. ed., 1914, Vol. X, p. 509.

*** *See* p. 369 of this volume.

against agnosticism. In his essay "A Discourse on Criticism," written in 1842, he said: "... the blissful time of that fantastic epoch of mankind when feelings and fantasy provided it with answers to all its problems and when abstract idealness constituted the bliss of its life, have passed away never to return. The world has grown to manhood: it needs, not the multicoloured kaleidoscope of imagination, but the microscope and telescope of reason, to bring it nearer to the remote and to make the invisible visible to it. *Reality*—such is the slogan and last word of the modern world! Reality in fact, in knowledge, in the convictions of feeling, in the conclusions of the mind—in all things and everywhere, reality is the first and last word of our age...." And further on he wrote: "Scepticism despairs of truth and does not seek it; our age is one of quest, of striving, of searching and longing for truth.... It is not afraid that truth will deceive it, it is afraid of the falsehood that human narrow-mindedness often takes for truth."*

Confirmed in his materialist stand, Belinsky called upon the advanced people in society to become cognizant of truth, believing that truth takes shape in the long process of evolution of human life, in the experimental cognition of nature and society.

"In science," he wrote, "abstract theories, *a priori* postulates, and faith in systems are day by day falling into discredit and yielding place to practical tendencies based on a knowledge of facts."**

Belinsky's materialism, influenced as it was by Feuerbach's anthropological materialism, was not free from elements of anthropologism. Belinsky often spoke of men in general, and attributed all man's mental activities and moral qualities to his physiological nature: in his view, mind is "man in the flesh, or rather, man through the flesh...." But under the conditions that prevailed in the forties of the last century, when science and literature were predominantly under the influence of idealism, which separated thinking from the human brain and idea from matter, Belinsky's opposition to those who, "living eternally in logical fantasies," were accustomed to treat the human organism and its requirements with disdain, was militant and progressive.

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* V. G. Belinsky, *Complete Works*, Russ. ed., 1904, Vol. VII, pp. 295-96.

** See p. 436 of this volume.

Belinsky came close to dialectical materialism, but he did not get to the point of applying materialism to social life, and to the end of his days he adhered to the idealist conception of history. Even in the 'forties he regarded as the source of social progress not the contradictions inherent in the development of the material conditions of life of society, not the class struggle, but human nature. In Belinsky's opinion, in every man, and in every nation, a struggle takes place between the new and the old, between reason and prejudice. Thus, the anthropological elements in Belinsky's materialism went hand in hand with idealism in the explanation of social phenomena.

It would be wrong, however, to put Belinsky's materialist philosophy on a par with Feuerbach's anthropological materialism. Belinsky's philosophy represented a big step forward as compared with the various forms of the old, contemplative, metaphysical materialism, including Feuerbach's. Unlike Feuerbach, Belinsky sought to apply the idea of evolution, the principle of historism, to social life. He endeavoured to take a historical approach to social systems, to the requirements and needs of the different classes of society, and did not regard them as something fixed once and for all, as something immutable.

Unlike Feuerbach, Belinsky attached great importance to the class division of society. "There is a prevailing spirit of disunity in our society," he wrote: "each of our social estates possesses specific traits of its own—its dress and its manners, and way of life and customs, and even its language.... So great is the disunity reigning among these representatives of various classes of the same society!"*

Unlike Feuerbach, who rejected dialectics, obscured the contradictions inherent in the evolution of society and the class struggle, Belinsky endeavoured to apply dialectics to the understanding of social phenomena, and more than once he stated that there can be no progress without the contest of contradictions in social life.

In the 'forties Belinsky agreed with Herzen in regarding Hegel's dialectics as the "algebra of revolution," and he viewed dialectics as the theoretical substantiation of the necessity for a transformation of the social system.

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* *See* p. 333 of this volume.

Belinsky understood that Hegel's logic could not satisfy modern thinkers and scholars, and so he sought a philosophical theory that did not reduce man's thinking to his physiological nature, as the vulgar materialists and positivists did, and which at the same time did not separate thinking from matter, as Hegel did.

In his letter to V. P. Botkin of February 17, 1847, he wrote, criticizing Auguste Comte's positivism: "Man's spiritual nature must not be *separated* from his physical nature as something peculiar and independent of it, but should be *distinguished* from it as the sphere of anatomy is distinguished from the sphere of physiology. The laws of the mind should be observed in the activity of the mind. That is the task of logic, of science, which comes immediately after physiology, as physiology comes after anatomy."*

Belinsky believed that there would arise a new philosophy which would study the material world, and that this philosophy would be free from all that is fantastic and mystical.

As we know, this new revolutionary theory was founded by Marx and Engels.

Belinsky was influenced by the early works of Marx and Engels. In January 1845 he read the *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* (*German-French Yearbook*) which contained Marx's articles "On the Jewish Question," and "A Contribution to the Criticism of Hegel's Philosophy of Right," and Engels' article "Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy." After reading these works of Marx and Engels, Belinsky wrote to Herzen: "I have accepted the truth—and in the words *God* and *religion* I see darkness, gloom, shackles and the knout; and now I love these two words as much as I love the four that followed them. All this is true, but I am still unable to say what I think, and how I think, in print."**

An analysis of the letters Belinsky wrote to his friends in 1847-1848, and also of the essays and reviews he wrote at that time, reveals that some of them were influenced by the earlier works of Marx and Engels. It may be confidently asserted that on questions concerning the criticism of the bourgeois state and religion, the very first works of Marx and Engels which became known

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* See p. 493 of this volume.

** V. G. Belinsky, *Letters*, Russ. ed., 1914, Vol. III, p. 87.

to Belinsky exercised an influence on him. In the last years of his life, for example, Belinsky wrote that a distinction must be drawn between the bourgeoisie that was marching towards power and the bourgeoisie already in power. He wrote that "the dominance of the capitalists has covered contemporary France with everlasting shame"; and he asserted that when the bourgeoisie came into power and triumphed, woe to the state that was in the hands of the capitalists, for these are "men without patriotism, without loftiness of sentiment."

Belinsky subjected bourgeois liberalism to withering criticism and gave utterance to remarkable materialistic conjectures concerning the nature of bourgeois "equality" and bourgeois "liberties." He saw the inherently contradictory nature of capitalist society, which, while developing the productive forces and culture on the one hand, brings exploitation and horrible suffering for the masses of the people on the other. But Belinsky was unable scientifically to reveal the material basis of this inner contradiction; he was unable to understand the essence of the capitalist mode of production.

In his review of V. Grigoryev's book, *Jewish Sects in Russia*, Belinsky came near to a correct understanding of the origin of religion and of the role it plays in society. In this review he expressed the view that in the course of time every religion loses its original form and undergoes a change in the process of social-historical development. He came close to Marx's critique of religion when he said that criticism of religion is criticism of the social system which religion reflects.

All these views of Belinsky's are in harmony with the criticism to which Karl Marx subjected religion, bourgeois right and morality, in his works "A Contribution to the Criticism of Hegel's Philosophy of Right" and "On the Jewish Question." However, Belinsky did not, and could not, see the proletariat—the sole class capable of taking the lead in the revolutionary effort to reconstruct society on the basis of socialism; and he could not, for that reason, come over to the positions of the truly scientific philosophy of dialectical materialism, which began to be developed in the second half of the 1840's.

Belinsky was an original and profound thinker in the field of sociology as well.

One of the most important points in Belinsky's sociological views was the idea that there is *order in history*. According to Belinsky, the succession of historical epochs, the transition from one system of social relationships to another, is by no means accidental, or due to the caprice of rulers and legislators. He held that the transition from one form of society to another is due to historical necessity, to the operation of social laws.

"Great historical events," asserted Belinsky, "do not occur accidentally or suddenly, of themselves, or (what is the same thing) out of nothing, but are always the necessary results of preceding events."*

But Belinsky failed to find a scientific solution for the problem of order in history. He did not reach the materialist conception of history, according to which, all social relationships are based on the development of the productive forces of society, and the fact that one historical epoch is superseded by another signifies primarily that one historically determined mode of material production is superseded by another.

The idealist conception of the history of society, from which Belinsky did not free himself, prevented him from substantiating by scientific arguments the idea of order in history which he advanced, prevented him from bringing this idea into harmony with the real course of history which proceeds on the basis of the development of the productive forces of society.

While recognizing the existence of class divisions and of a class struggle in society, Belinsky was unable correctly to indicate the causes of the class struggle. He was of the opinion that it was called forth by the political structure of society, by the division of society into estates inherited from preceding epochs, by wars and conquests, by the concentration of all the means of education and enlightenment in the hands of the ruling estates, and so forth.

Like the other revolutionary enlighteners who stuck to the positions of idealism in the sphere of sociology, Belinsky often expressed the belief that economic progress, due to the development of industry and means of communication, can directly lead

* V. G. Belinsky, *Complete Works*, Russ. ed., 1926, Vol. XII, p. 352.

to universal prosperity extending to the people as a whole, to the satisfaction of the requirements of all strata of society and to the softening of class antagonisms. He wrote: "Railroads will run their tunnels and bridges through and beneath the walls, and the development of industry and commerce will interweave the interests of people of all estates and classes and force them into the close and vital intercourse that needs must smooth down all the sharp and unnecessary distinctions."*

Failure completely to overcome the influence of anthropologism often prevented Belinsky from correctly understanding the nature of historical events, their root causes. The elements of anthropologism in Belinsky's sociological views can be seen in the fact that he often understood the social interests of men not historically, but abstractly, regarding them primarily as their natural, primordial right to freedom, education and happiness.

Living in backward, feudal Russia, Belinsky was unable to see that the paramount social interest of the new social class that was entering the historical arena, the proletariat, was to abolish the old mode of material production and to create a new social system, a new system of social relations of production. He believed that the struggle that goes on in society is, primarily, a struggle between the new, progressive ideas and the old ideas, concepts and beliefs that are deep-rooted in society and hinder social progress. He did not see that the proletarian class struggle was becoming the most important motive force in the evolution of society, and he did not single out the proletariat from among the general mass of the oppressed "third estate." Belinsky regarded the proletariat merely as the most oppressed section of society, the section that lacked elementary human rights.

In the Russia of his time, Belinsky did not, and could not, become a dialectical materialist; he was unable to rework Hegel's dialectics materialistically and apply materialism to the sphere of social phenomena.

Belinsky did not live to see the June insurrection of the Paris proletariat in 1848—that first open armed class battle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. The backwardness of life in Russia in his time, the absence of a revolutionary proletariat, the

* See p. 335 of this volume.

weakness of the revolutionary movement among the masses, and the absence of firm connections with the West-European revolutionary working-class movement, prevented Belinsky from becoming a dialectical materialist, from rising to the level of historical materialism.

Notwithstanding the idealistic character of his sociological views, however, Belinsky gave utterance to materialistic conjectures that are a tribute to his genius. He found a profound and, in general, correct solution for the problem of the role of the individual and of the masses of the people in history when he maintained that the masses of the people could and would become the decisive force in historical development. The masses could be raised to the level of such historical activity by the progressive, educated people in society, who must be guided by the requirements of society, by the spirit of the times, by the interests of the people. Inasmuch as the outstanding individual is a son of the people and possesses a profound knowledge of its needs and requirements, he can play a great part in determining the course of history. The people are not a frail boat which can be steered by a slight movement of an oar, said Belinsky. The genuinely great man cannot be at odds with his people, he must know and love the people and be conscious of his organic unity with the people. If, said Belinsky, the masses of the people were not yet deciding the destiny of society, they would do so in the future.

"The people," he wrote, "is a child; but the child is growing and promises to become a man full of strength and reason.... It is still weak, but it alone bears within itself the flame of national life and the fresh enthusiasm of conviction which has gone out in the sections of 'educated' society."*

Although living in backward, feudal Russia, Belinsky, the revolutionary democrat, nevertheless understood the inherently antagonistic nature of the new capitalistic relationships that were growing out of the system of serfdom. He gave examples, unsurpassed in pre-Marxian philosophy, of a dialectical, historical approach to the appraisal of the role of the bourgeoisie. "I realize," he wrote, "that the bourgeoisie is not an accidental phenomenon,

* *See* pp. 326-27 of this volume.

but the product of history, that it is not a mushroom growth of yesterday's appearance and, finally, that it has had its great past, its brilliant history and has rendered humanity immense services." "...now it has deliberately placed the people in the thrall of hunger and capital, but then it is now not a fighting bourgeosie but a triumphant bourgeoisie."*

Belinsky was of the opinion that capitalism was a progressive phenomenon compared with feudalism, and appreciated the importance of capitalist industry for the development of society; but he denounced the monstrous exploitation and oppression of the working people which the development of capitalism brought with it. "I know," he wrote, "that industry is the source of great evils, but I also know that it is the source of great blessings for society. Strictly speaking, it is only the least of the evils in the rule of capital, in its tyranny over labour."**

Herzen sometimes made concessions to Slavophilism, particularly in the matter of the village community, which he lauded in every way; Belinsky, however, was an uncompromising enemy of Slavophilism and was very far from idealizing the village community in any way.

He was of the opinion that the ideal of the progressive people in society was not in the past, but in the future, which would develop on the basis of the present. It is possible to go forward but not back, he said; whatever may attract us in the past, it has gone, never to return.

Although he regarded capitalism as progressive in comparison with the feudal system of serfdom, Belinsky also realized that capitalism would not solve the "new problems," *i.e.*, would not bring genuine freedom, happiness and well-being for the masses of the people.

Belinsky held that capitalism, which was superseding serfdom, was not a natural and just system. Progress of industry, the abolition of the survivals of serfdom, and the establishment of democratic government under capitalism were only the conditions necessary for the transition to a new, advanced social system based on equality among men. And genuine equality could only be

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* *See* pp. 499-501 of this volume.
** *See* p. 502 of this volume.

achieved after the elimination of the rule of the bourgeoisie, which he regarded as a "syphilitic sore" on the body of society.

Belinsky's opinion of capitalism and the bourgeoisie represents a sharp contrast to the worship of the bourgeois West by the Russian liberals of the 1840's, who extolled the capitalist ways and dreaded the revolutionary movement of the masses.

Belinsky did not overcome the idealistic conception of history, did not arrive at the positions of historical materialism. He did not, and could not, in his day, create a real science of society, reveal the laws of social development and map out scientifically the road toward the revolutionary reformation of society. Only Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin coped with this problem.

But, because he approached the questions of social development from the standpoint of revolutionary democracy, applied dialectics to the study of social phenomena, wrathfully denounced not only serfdom, but capitalism as well, and demanded the revolutionary reformation of society in the interests of the masses of the people, Belinsky advanced Russian sociological and historical thought, and in his solution of social and historical problems was far ahead of all Russian and West-European thinkers of the pre-Marxist epoch.

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Exceptionally great are the services Belinsky rendered in the sphere of aesthetics. He wrote a number of distinguished works on the theory of art, worked out new, revolutionary-democratic principles of literary criticism, and infused progressive materialist and democratic ideas into Russian literature of the forties and the latter half of the nineteenth century. He was the founder of classical Russian nineteenth century aesthetics based on philosophical materialism.

Belinsky maintained, first of all, that literature and art are the reflection of actual reality in artistic images. Art is the reproduction of reality, the world created anew, as it were. Literature and art, he argued, are powerful instruments for the cognition of reality—as much so as science.

While it is a reflection of reality, art must not confine itself to simply copying it. The artist must not rest content with merely giving a truthful reproduction of the phenomena of reality; his

mission is to interpret and assess these phenomena. Art, said Belinsky, must not be limited to the passive role of providing an indifferent, mirror-like reflection of life and nature; there must be living personal thought in its depictions, thought lending them an object and meaning.

In reproducing the relationships of contemporary society in an artistic form the artist and poet must, like the economist or sociologist, cultivate either respect for or hatred of this society. Belinsky demanded that, in truthfully reproducing reality, writers and scholars should express their judgment of this reality from the standpoint of the progressive forces of society.

Regarding social interests as the interests of the broad masses of the people expressed by revolutionary democrats, Belinsky placed his theory of aesthetics at the service of these interests. He wrote: "To deny art the right of serving public interests means debasing it, not raising it, for that would mean depriving it of its most vital force, *i.e.*, idea, making it an object of sybaritic pleasure, the plaything of lazy idlers."*

Belinsky always emphasized that it is the mission of art to reproduce life, reality, in its most essential, typical manifestations. In his essay "On the Russian Novel and the Novels of Mr. Gogol" he wrote: "... *real* poetry, the poetry of life, the poetry of reality, and lastly, the true and genuine poetry of our times. Its distinguishing feature is that it is true to reality; it does not create life anew, but reproduces, recreates it, and like a concave mirror, reflects, from one point of view, diverse phenomena of it, choosing from among them those that are needed for the purpose of composing a complete, living and integral picture."**

In working out the principles of his aesthetics, Belinsky criticized the idealistic aesthetical views of Hegel. Hegel based his theory of aesthetics on the principle that art is the realization of the idea of the beautiful. According to this idealistic conception, art must remain entirely independent of all human strivings except the striving towards the beautiful.

In demanding that art should be inseverably connected with real life, with the interests of the masses of the people, Belinsky

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* *See* p. 431 of this volume.

** V. G. Belinsky, *Complete Works*, Russ. ed., 1900, Vol. II, p. 194.

dealt a crushing blow at idealistic aesthetics, at the theory of "art for art's sake."

In the review of Lorentz's book that he wrote in 1842, Belinsky said: "Is it so long ago that aesthetics pursued its own road independently of history, without contact with it? Even today there are still many good people who, repeating the outdated thoughts of others, very naively assert that art and life go their separate roads, that there is nothing in common between them, and that art would degrade itself if it descended to contemporary interests. If by 'contemporary interests' is meant the fashions. Stock Exchange quotations, the gossip and trifles of high society, then, indeed, art would play an extremely wretched role if it descended to sympathy with such 'contemporary interest.' That is what happened to art in France when it compelled the heroes of ancient Greece and Rome to indulge in contemporary court gossip. No, this is not what we mean by the historical trend in art: it is either the modern view of the past or the thought of the age, the sad reflections or radiant joy of the times; not the interests of an estate, but the interests of society; not the interests of the state, but the interests of mankind; in a word, it is *universal*, in the ideal and lofty sense of the term. . . ."*

Realism, as interpreted by Belinsky, presupposes that art must be impregnated with lofty ideas. Belinsky denounced all writers and artists who, calmly and dispassionately gazing at all that went on in the world, kept on repeating that "happiness lies within us," who dreamed of a "transcendental world" and gave no thought to the "vanities of this world," where hunger and want prevailed. He insisted that the writer, like the scientist, cannot pose as the dispassionate observer of events; he must have his own point of view concerning the phenomena that he depicts.

In his essay "A Discourse on Criticism" Belinsky wrote: "What is the art of our times?—A judgment, an analysis of society: consequently, criticism. The thinking element has now merged even with the artistic—and for our times a work of art is lifeless if it depicts life only in order to depict it, without a mighty, subjective urge that springs from the prevailing thought of the epoch, if it is

* V. G. Belinsky, *Complete Works*, Russ. ed., 1926, Vol. XII, p. 333.

not a cry of suffering, or a dithyramb of rapture, if it is not a question, or an answer to a question."*

Belinsky was the herald of popular literature and art. He regarded literature and art as the pulsation of the life of the people, the expression of its mind in a definite epoch. In Belinsky's opinion, an author expresses the thoughts, aspirations and sentiments of the people.

Demanding that literature and art should be popular, Belinsky always drew a distinction between the *popular* and the *vulgar*. He was of the opinion that genuinely popular Russian art was represented not only by the finest examples of the folk art, but also by the works of the best representatives of the Russian literature and art of his time (Pushkin, Gogol, Lermontov, Goncharov, and others) which reflected the numerous aspects of the life of the people, including that of "educated society," in Russia.

Belinsky waged a tireless and relentless struggle against the anti-popular theories in art, and particularly against the reactionary "art for art's sake" theory. He wrote: "The times of rhymed rattles have gone, never to return; no value is now attached to cheap sensations and sentimentality; what is now demanded instead of either is profound feelings and ideas expressed in artistic form, whether in rhyme or not—that makes no difference. To achieve success in poetry today, talent alone is not enough—one must also be educated in the spirit of the times. The poet can no longer live in a world of dreams; he is already a citizen of the kingdom of reality of his times; all the past must live in him. Society no longer wants him to be an entertainer, but a representative of its spiritual, ideal life; an oracle who can answer the most difficult questions; a physician who discovers in himself, before discovering them in others, the common pains and sufferings, and heals them by reproducing them in poetic form."**

Belinsky showed that the followers of the "pure art" theory are the spokesmen of the reactionary forces of society, opponents of all that is new and progressive. He taught progressive workers in Russian literature and art that only when art serves the people,

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* V. G. Belinsky, *Complete Works*, Russ. ed., 1901, Vol. VII, p. 298.
** *Ibid.*, pp. 82-83.

only when it is inseverably connected with the life of the masses, can it be assured of true development.

Belinsky's conception of the lofty social mission of art started the great progressive traditions of Russian literary criticism and realistic aesthetics. Richly impregnated with ideas, Belinsky's works on aesthetics and literary criticism constitute an entire epoch in the development of Russian literature and public thought.

In his speech on the magazines *Zvezda* and *Leningrad* Comrade Zhdanov said: "Beginning with Belinsky, none of the best representatives of the revolutionary-democratic Russian intelligentsia recognized 'pure art,' 'art for art's sake' so-called; they were the champions of art for the people and emphasized its high intellectual and social significance."

Leninism inherited this finest tradition of Russian revolutionary democracy of which Belinsky was the founder. Soviet art and Soviet literature have continued and, under new conditions, on the basis of Leninism, have developed this glorious tradition; they are devoted entirely to the cause of serving the people; the finest productions of Soviet art are permeated with the lofty ideas of the truly scientific and advanced doctrine of our times—Leninism.

In the speech referred to above, Comrade Zhdanov also said: "... the best traditions of Soviet literature constitute a continuation of the finest traditions of Russian literature of the nineteenth century, of the traditions created by our great revolutionary democrats—Belinsky, Dobrolyubov, Chernyshevsky, Saltykov-Shchedrin—continued by Plekhanov, and scientifically elaborated and substantiated by Lenin and Stalin."

* * *

Belinsky was a true Russian patriot. His patriotism was inseverably bound up with his revolutionary democratism, or rather, it followed logically from his revolutionary-democratic convictions. He hated the realities of serfdom in Russia with every fibre of his being and fiercely denounced all the pseudo-patriotic defenders and apologists of patriarchal-feudal backwardness. He was of the opinion that the greatest blessing that could be bestowed upon Russia was the abolition of the old feudal order and the creation

of a new national economy, state and culture that conformed to the interests of the working classes of Russia. He combated both the Slavophile idealization of feudal Russia and the so-called "humanistic cosmopolitans," *i.e.*, those writers and publicists who worshipped everything foreign and slandered the Russian people by stating that it was incapable of living its own independent life, that it did not, and could not, have an independent culture, and so forth.

All his life Belinsky strongly denounced this slavish worshiping of things foreign, to which the ruling classes of tsarist Russia were addicted. He denounced the "aping" by a large section of "educated society" in Russia of all the West-European habits and customs, of West-European feudal and bourgeois culture. He wrote with great indignation that the Russian nobility were so infatuated with everything foreign that they forgot the Russian language, ceased to speak and write Russian.

Belinsky was rightly of the opinion that the shortcomings in the life and mentality of the Russian people in landlord-serf Russia were "engrafted vices," engendered by the hard conditions of life under the system of serfdom, implanted by alien invaders and "native" serf-owners.

The finest qualities of the Russian people, said Belinsky, are cheerfulness, boldness, resourcefulness, intelligence, strength of spirit, absence of mysticism and religious contemplation, ability to live and act on a wide scale, diligence, wisdom, and heroism in the struggle against enemies, both internal and foreign.

Belinsky showed that these qualities of the great Russian people enabled it to defend its country, freedom and independence against alien invaders and to create its own national state and culture.

"The national spirit," he wrote referring to the Russian people, "was always great and mighty: that is borne out by the rapid centralization of Muscovy, the Mamai Rout, the overthrow of the Tatar yoke, the conquest of the dark Kazan kingdom, and the regeneration of Russia, like the phoenix arising from its own ashes, during the painful interregnum...."*

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* *See* p. 126 of this volume.

For the Russian people, as well as for the other peoples inhabiting Russia, Belinsky predicted a great and glorious future. "... we will be poets and philosophers," he said, "an artistic people, a learned people and a militant people, an industrial, commercial and social people...."*

Belinsky regarded as the source of the future greatness and glory of Russia the Russian people, the masses of the working people, their enormous vital strength and ability to bear the most trying ordeals of history, their mighty talents and ability to develop their native culture, their indomitable striving to put an end to the feudal backwardness of Russia and ability to create in their own country a social order that would become the ideal of mankind.

"We Russians," he wrote, "need have no doubts as to our political and state significance: only we, of all the Slavonic tribes, have formed into a strong and powerful state, and have, both before and ever since the time of Peter the Great, come through many a severe ordeal with flying colours, have often stood on the brink of ruin and invariably rode out the storm to reappear upon its crest in new and greater vigour and strength. A nation that is not capable of internal development cannot possess such strength and vigour."**

Belinsky was aware that it would be impossible to do away with the backwardness of Russia and create a new culture as long as serfdom existed, and that this could not be achieved under the sway of the alien colonizer-adventurers who were entrenched in the state and cultural institutions of tsarist Russia.

He believed that Russia would put an end to her economic and cultural backwardness and create a progressive civilization by her own efforts, by the efforts of the masses of the people.

"Yes, we have the national life in us," he wrote, "we are ordained to give our message, our thought to the world; but what message, what thought, it is too early yet to conjecture. Our grandchildren or great-grandchildren will learn that without any effort at hard guessing, because that message and that thought will be uttered by them...."***

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* V. G. Belinsky, *Complete Works*, Russ. ed., 1901, Vol. IV, p. 321.

** *See* p. 362 of this volume.

*** *See* p. 362-63 of this volume.

Dreaming of a new, happy life for the Russian people, and for all mankind, Belinsky gave utterance to a prophetic thought:

"We envy our grandchildren and great-grandchildren who are destined to see Russia in 1940—standing at the head of the educated world, laying down the law in science and art and receiving the reverent tribute of respect from the whole of enlightened mankind."*

This ability to look into the distant future of the Russian people and to forecast the trend of social development cannot be regarded as scientific foresight, for Belinsky was still unable to reveal and scientifically define the laws of social development. But his prophecy followed logically from his profound and realistic analysis of the reality that surrounded him, from his sincere and indomitable faith in the great Russian people, in their creative powers.

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Vissarion Grigoryevich Belinsky played an enormously important role in the development of nineteenth century Russian revolutionary thought. Of exceptional importance was his letter to Gogol, which became a model for the democratic press of Russia for many decades. In his article "A Great Seeker" S. M. Kirov rightly observed that Belinsky was "the Moses of Russian public thought who led it out of the gloomy labyrinth of bare abstractions on to the beaten track of realism."

Belinsky's world outlook reflected the interests and sentiments of the serf peasants who were fighting for their emancipation. This was shown by V. I. Lenin in a number of his works. Denouncing the counter-revolutionary scribbling of the contributors to the symposium *Vekhi* (*Landmarks*) in 1909 who tried to belittle the literary heritage of Belinsky and Chernyshevsky, Lenin wrote:

"Or, perhaps, our wise and learned authors are of the opinion that the sentiments Belinsky expressed in his letter to Gogol were independent of the sentiments of the serf peasant? That the history of our publicist writings is independent of the anger the

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* V. G. Belinsky, *Complete Works*, Russ. ed., 1926, Vol. XII, p. 224.

masses of the people felt against the survivals of feudal oppression?"*

This appraisal by Lenin of Belinsky's world outlook was a rebuff to bourgeois liberalism and Narodism, which tried to make capital out of Belinsky's name and at the same time to misrepresent his world outlook. Both the bourgeois liberal historians of Russian public thought (Milyukov, Ashevsky and Bogucharsky) and the Narodnik "historiographers" (Mikhailovsky and Ivanov-Razumnik) tried to make it appear that Belinsky had been their ideological father and forebear. The pro-Constitutional-Democratic professors depicted Belinsky in the image of the bourgeois liberals, and the pro-Socialist-Revolutionary "historians" depicted him as an ideologist of the Narodnik persuasion.

The bourgeois *Vekhi* counter-revolutionaries (Bulgakov, Gershensohn, and others) who came out after the defeat of the 1905 revolution, tried to make it appear that the theories of Belinsky as well as of Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov, had been borrowed in their entirety from the West, that they expressed "intelligentsia moods" and had no roots in the Russian people.

Lenin irrefutably proved that beginning with Belinsky, the history of Russian democratic literature and publicist writings reflected the aspirations of the masses of the people of Russia, their striving to destroy serfdom and establish a democratic system in its place.

Lenin showed that Belinsky and his followers, first and foremost Chernyshevsky, represented the revolutionary-democratic trend in Russia's historical development, which was sharply opposed to the other trend—that of bourgeois and landlord liberalism. Lenin thus stressed the great role played by Belinsky's democratic ideas in the struggle against the Russian liberals who grovelled before tsarism and the serf-owners.

Lenin attached enormous importance to the fact that in 1905-1907, when democratic ideas became widespread among the masses of the people, "democratic books became a *market place* product." He saw that the liberal bourgeoisie was greatly alarmed by this fact. On this subject Lenin wrote: "... How 'disturbing!' ex-

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* V. I. Lenin, "Concerning *Vekhi*," *Collected Works*, 4th Russ. ed., Vol. XVI, p. 108.

claimed the liberal—who thinks he is educated, but is actually a filthy, disgusting, fat and smug liberal pig—when he *actually* saw this 'people' carrying from the market place ... Belinsky's letter to Gogol."

Belinsky was the initiator of the revolutionary-democratic movement in Russia. His revolutionary-democratic activities were continued in the fifties and sixties of the last century by his followers and disciples—Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov—who used it as a basis for their theory of a peasant revolution.

Belinsky, the pioneer of utopian socialism and revolutionary democracy in Russia who boldly expressed the sentiments and aspirations of the oppressed masses of the people, the great promoter of Russian democratic culture who blazed new trails in literature and art, is infinitely precious to the Soviet people. Belinsky's name and splendid works will remain for ever the national pride of the peoples of the Soviet Union.

V. I. Lenin, 'Another Campaign Against Democracy," *Collected Works*, 3rd Russ. ed., Vol. XVI, p. 132.

SELECTED ARTICLES
1834–1836

LITERARY REVERIES

(AN ELEGY IN PROSE)[1]

I'll let you have home truths without all ceremonial,
Truth's worse than any lie. Friend, here's his testimonial:
To speak with due respect and gentleness I'm staggered,
with men like these....

"Wit Works Woe." Griboyedov

Have you good books?—No, but we have great writers.—Then, at least you have literature? —On the contrary, we have only a book trade.

Baron Brambeus

DO YOU REMEMBER that blissful time, when a breath of life seemed to have stirred in our literature, when talent appeared after talent, poem after poem, novel after novel, periodical after periodical, almanac after almanac; that splendid time when we were so proud of the present, so hopeful of the future and, proud of our reality and still more of our sweet hopes, we were firmly convinced that we had our own Byrons, Shakespeares, Schillers and Walter Scotts? Alas! Where art thou, *O bon vieux temps,* where art thou fond dreams, seductive hopes! How everything has changed in so short a time! What a terrible, what a heartbreaking disappointment after such a strong, such sweet enchantment! The stilts of our literary athletes have snapped, the straw stage has collapsed on which golden mediocrity was wont to climb, and silenced, mute and vanished are those few and slight talents we had so fondly believed in. We have slept and dreamt of ourselves as Croesuses, to awaken as Iras. Alas! How aptly do the touching words of the poet fit every one of our geniuses and semi-geniuses:

Not to blossom but fade away
In the morn of cloudy days!

Yes—*before and today, then and now*! Good heavens! Pushkin, pre-eminently a Russian poet, Pushkin, whose powerful and stir-

ring songs first wafted to us the breath of Russian life, whose whimsical and versatile talent Russia so greatly loved and cherished, to whose melodious notes she listened so eagerly and responded so lovingly, Pushkin, the author of *Poltava* and *Godunov*—and Pushkin, too, the author of *Angelo* and other dead and lifeless tales.[2] Kozlov, the wistful bard of the suffering monk, who drew so many tears from the eyes of fair readers, that blind man[3] who gave us such harmonious glimpses of his beautiful visions, and Kozlov the author of ballads and other poems, long and short, published in the *Readers' Library*, of which all that can be said is that *all's well* with them, as has already been noted on the pages of the *Molva*! What a difference! We could cite many, too many, such sad comparisons, such deplorable contrasts, but... in short, as Lamartine says:

Les dieux étaient tombés, les trônes étaient vides.

What new gods have filled the thrones vacated by the old ones? Alas, they have substituted them without replacing them! Previously our Aristarchuses,[4] carried away by youthful hopes, under whose spell everybody lived at one time, used to exclaim in an intoxication of puerile ingenuous rapture: "Pushkin is the Byron of the North, the representative of present-day humanity!" Today our indefatigable town criers are clamouring loudly on the literary marts[5]: "Kukolnik, the great Kukolnik, Kukolnik is a Byron, Kukolnik is the valorous rival of Shakespeare! Obeisance to Kukolnik!" Now all the Baratinskys, the Podolinskys, the Yazikovs, the Tumanskys and Oznobishins have been replaced by Messieurs Timofeyevs and Yershovs; on the field of their eclipsed glory now ring the names of Messieurs the Brambeuses, Bulgarins, Greches and Kalashnikovs according to the proverb: in a waste every one can be king. The former either regale us once in a while with old tunes to old measures, or maintain a modest silence; the latter exchange compliments, call each other geniuses and cry from the housetops so that people should hurry to buy their books. We have always been too immoderate in awarding the laurels of genius, in eulogizing the corypheuses of our poetry: that is an inveterate vice; at least the cause of it before was an innocent illusion springing from a noble source—love of kin; whereas now decidedly everything is based on self-interest; moreover, we really had something to boast

of before, whereas now.... Far from wishing to cast aspersion on the excellent talent of Mr. Kukolnik we can yet assert without hesitation that between Pushkin and Mr. Kukolnik there lies an immeasurable gulf, that Pushkin is to Mr. Kukolnik:

As far as the heavenly star!

Yes—Krylov and Mr. Zilov, Zagoskin's *Yuri Miloslavsky* and Mr. Grech's *The Black Woman*, Lazhechnikov's *The Last Page* and Mr. Masalsky's *Streltzi* and Mr. Bulgarin's *Mazepa*, the stories of Odoyevsky, Marlinsky and Gogol—and the stories, if stories they can be called, of Mr. Brambeus!!! What does this all mean? What are the reasons for this void in our literature? Or can it really be that *we have no literature*?...

(Continuation promised.)

LITERARY REVERIES

(Continuation)

Pas de grâce!
Hugo, "Marion de Lorme"

Yes—we have no literature!

"What astonishing news!"—I hear thousands of voices in response to my impertinent sally. "And what about our magazines, unremittingly pursuing for us the quest of European enlightenment, and our almanacs, filled with brilliant fragments of unfinished poems, dramas and fantasies, and our libraries chock-full with thousands of volumes of Russian authorship, and our Homers, Shakespeares, Goethes, Walter Scotts, Byrons, Schillers, Balzacs, Corneilles, Molières and Aristophaneses? Have we not Lomonosov, Kheraskov, Derzhavin, Petrov, Dmitriev, Karamzin, Krylov, Batyushkov, Zhukovsky, Pushkin, Baratinsky, etc., etc.? What have you to say to that?"

This, dear sirs: though I have not the honour of being a baron, I am free to have my whims and consequently I stubbornly hold the fateful belief that despite the fact that our Sumarokov has greatly outstripped M. Corneille and M. Racine in tragedy, and M. La Fontaine in fable; that our Kheraskov, in glorifying the

fame of the Rosses on the lyre, has become the peer of Homer and Virgil, and under the shield of Vladimir and Ivan[6] has wormed his way unscathed into the temple of immortality,* that our *Pushkin* has managed in a very brief space of time to take his place with Byron and become the representative of humanity; that although our prolific Faddei Venediktovich Bulgarin, the veritable scourge and persecutor of evil vices, has been arguing for ten years in his works that a man *comme il faut* should not cheat and swindle, that drunkenness and thievery are unpardonable sins, and whose moral-satirical (would it not be more correct to say *police*) novels and humouristic popular pieces have advanced our *hospitable* country a whole century in the matter of moral reformation;[7] that although the young lion of our poetry, our mighty Kukolnik, has at his first bound overtaken the universal genius of the giant Goethe,[8] and only at his second has fallen somewhat short of Kryukovsky; that though our venerable Nikolai Ivanovich Grech (in concert with Bulgarin) has anatomized and dissected piecemeal our native language and presented its laws in his triple-seried grammar—that authentic tabernacle of the Lord which, except for him, Nikolai Ivanovich Grech, and his friend, Faddei Venediktovich Bulgarin, no profane foot has yet defiled;[9] the Nikolai Ivanovich Grech who has never committed grammatical errors in all his life, and only in his marvellous creation—*The Black Woman*—on the evidence of sensitive Prince Shalikov, did he first fall out with his grammar, apparently having been carried away on the wings of fancy; that although our Mr. Kalashnikov has thrown Cooper into the shade with his magnificent descriptions of the trackless deserts of Russian America—Siberia, and the portrayal of her rugged beauties; that although our genius, Baron Brambeus, with his fat *fantastic* book[10] has dealt a deathblow to Champollion and Cuvier, two of the greatest charlatans and cheats whom ignorant Europe has hitherto been credulous enough to have regarded as great scientists, and in caustic wit has trampled underfoot Voltaire, the world's supreme wit and wag; despite, I say, this convincing and eloquent refutation of the absurd idea that we have no literature, a refutation so cleverly and forcefully proclaimed in the *Readers' Library* by the profound Asiatic critic Tutunji-Oglu;[11] despite all this, I repeat: *we have*

* *I.e.*, into Mr. Kaidanov's *Universal History*

no literature! ... Whew! I'm tired! Let me recover my breath! Though such a long period would make even Baron Brambeus gasp for breath, and he is a master for great periods.

What is literature?

Some say that the literature of a nation comprises the entire scope of all its intellectual activities expressed in letters. Consequently, our literature, for example, would comprise Karamzin's *History* and the Histories of Messieurs Emin and S. N. Glinka, the historical researches of Schlözer, Everts, and Kachenovsky, and Mr. Senkovsky's article on "Iceland Sagas," the physics of Vellansky and Pavlov, and *The Destruction of Copernicus' System* with a pamphlet on *bugs and beetles;* Pushkin's *Boris Godunov* and some scenes from historical dramas complete with *cabbage soup and vodka,* Derzhavin's odes and Mr. Svechin's *Alexandroida,* etc. If so, then we do have a literature, and a literature rich in great names and no less great works.

Others under the word literature understand a collection of a number of elegant productions, or, as the French say, *chef d'œuvres de littérature.* In this sense, too, we have a literature, for we can boast a certain number of works by Lomonosov, Derzhavin, Khemnitzer, Krylov, Griboyedov, Batyushkov, Zhukovsky, Pushkin, Ozerov, Zagoskin, Lazhechnikov, Marlinsky, Prince Odoyevsky and some others. But is there a language in the world which does not possess a modicum of exemplary works of art, though they be only folk songs? Is it surprising that Russia, which exceeds in territory the whole of Europe and in population any single European state, is it surprising that this new Roman empire should yield a greater number of talents than, say, a country like Serbia, or Sweden, or Denmark or other diminutive lands? This is as it should be, and it by no means implies that we have a literature.

But there is a third opinion, resembling neither of the two preceding ones, an opinion which claims that literature is the collective body of such artistic literary productions as are the fruit of the free inspiration and concerted (though unco-ordinated) efforts of men, born for art, living for art alone, and ceasing to exist outside of it, fully expressing and reproducing in their elegant creations the spirit of the people in whose midst they have been born and educated, whose life they live and spirit they breathe, expressing in their creative productions its intimate life to its innermost depths and

pulsation. In the history of such a literature there are not, nor can there be, any leaps: on the contrary, everything in it is consistent and natural, there are no violent or forced breaks effected by extraneous influences. Such a literature cannot be at one and the same time both French and German, English and Italian. This idea is not novel: it was expounded long ago a thousand times. There would seem to be then no reason in repeating it. But alas! How many common truths there are in our society that have to be repeated every day for everyone to hear! In our society, whose literary opinions are so fickle and precarious, whose literary problems so dark and puzzling; in our society, where one man is displeased with the second part of *Faust*, and another is delighted with *The Black Woman*, one rails at the bloody horrors of *Lucrezia Borgia* and thousands enjoy the novels of Messieurs Bulgarin and Orlov; in our society, where the public represents a veritable Tower of Babel, where

> One cries for water-melons
> Another for pickled cucumbers;

where, lastly, the laurel wreaths of genius are so cheaply sold and bought, where every manifestation of shrewdness, abetted by arrogance and brazenness, wins for itself loud repute, insolently reviling under a baronial mask all that is great and sacred to humanity;[12] in our society, where the purchase-deed on a whole literature and all its geniuses brings thousands of subscribers to a commercial periodical; where preposterous ravings resurrecting the forgotten learned opinions of men like Tredyakovsky and Emin, are loudly proclaimed as *universal* articles destined to effect a sweeping change in Russian history?... No: you must write, talk, shout—anyone who has the slightest feeling of disinterested love of his country, of truth and goodness; I do not say *knowledge*, for many deplorable experiences have shown us that in the matter of truth, knowledge and profound erudition are by no means identical with impartiality and fairness....

And so, does our literature justify the latter definition which I have cited? To settle this point let us cast a cursory glance at the progress of our literature from Lomonosov, its first genius, to Mr. Kukolnik, its latest genius.

(The next sheet will show.)

LITERARY REVERIES

(Continuation)

La verité! la verité! rien plus que la verité!

"How now, what is this? Not a review, surely?" the alarmed readers ask me.

Yes, dear sirs, though perhaps not quite a review, but something like it. And so—*silence!* But what do I see? You make a wry face, you shrug your shoulders, you shout at me in chorus: "No, sir, that's an old trick—you cannot fool us.... We have not yet forgotten the previous reviews, they made us feel bad enough! We could probably read out to you in advance by heart everything you are going to preach. We know all that ourselves, as well as you do. These are not the old times, when men of your kidney, self-appointed reviewers, could fool us poor readers—now every one has acquired wits of his own and can torture a question as well as anyone...."[13]

What can I say to this unavoidable greeting? Really, I am completely at a loss.... Well then ... read it, if merely to beguile the time—there is nothing to read nowadays, you know, so this might prove a stop-gap.... Perhaps—strange things happen sometimes!—perhaps you will find in my brief (did you hear me—*brief*!) review things which though not too cunning may not be too absurd, and if not too novel will be not too threadbare.... Then, surely, truth is worth something too, and impartiality and good intentions.... What, you do not believe me? You turn away, shake your head, wave your hands, stop your ears? Well, just as you like, you may read it or not; after all, you're free to do as you please! On second thoughts, what am I haggling with you for? Please don't be angry—but whether you like it or not, you have got to read it: what did you go to school for? And so, here goes!

You, my gentle readers, will perhaps expect me, according to the laudable custom of our very learned and dexterous Aristarchuses, to begin my review from the beginning of all beginnings—from the eggs of Leda, in order to show you how Russian literature was influenced by the creation of the world, the fall of Adam, then Greece, Rome, the great migration of nations, Attila, chivalry, the crusades, the invention of the compass, gunpowder

and the printing press, the discovery of America, the Reformation, the Thirty Years' War, and so on and so forth? Or perhaps you have become alarmed in earnest, expecting me, without any show of ceremony, to seize you by the collar, drag you on board *John Bull* and fly, as on a magic carpet, straight to India, to that wonderful cradle of humanity, that lovely land of the Himalayas, elephants, tigers, lions, boa constrictors, monkeys, gold, jewels and cholera; you perhaps may think that I will expound to you the contents of the *Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata*, describe the matchless beauties of *Sákuntalā*, unfold before you all the riches of this copious and lavish mythology of the priests of Mahadeva and Siva and dilate, by the way, on the striking resemblance between Sanskrit and Slavonic? No, my dear sirs, deceive not yourselves with such flattering hopes; they will not be realized, fortunately for you, I believe; for—I frankly admit—the holy writings of the Vedas are all Greek to me, and I have never looked upon Hindoo poems or plays even in a translation. Neither need you expect that from the banks of the sacred Ganges I will lead you to the luxuriant banks of the Tigris and Euphrates, where infant-man smashed the idols and worshipped fire; do not expect me with rude hand to tear the virgin veil from the mysteries of the ancient Magi or priests of Osiris and Isis on the banks of the swollen Nile; do not imagine that I shall lure you in passing into the deserts of Arabia, there to interpret to you the seven golden poems of the *Mo'allaqāt* amid the sandy ocean, by a babbling spring, in the shade of a broad-leafed palm. True, I know the way to those countries no worse than do all our other reviewers; but I am afraid to set out with you on such a long journey: I should be sorry to see you getting tired or losing your way. Neither will you hear me speak of Greece and of her elegant and rich literature, and eternal Rome, too, will I pass in fateful silence. No—you need have no fear! I will not imitate our past, present and, possibly, future reviewers, who always begin after a single pattern, from the eggs of Leda, and end up in nothing at all; who, tired of their own protracted and modest silence, strain their mental faculties and pour out of their heads all at once the whole inexhaustible stock of their vast and diverse knowledge and crowd it on a few small pages of an accommodating magazine or almanac—I do not wish to disturb the bones of Homer and Virgil,

Demosthenes and Cicero and their like. They are plagued enough without me, poor fellows. I shall not only make no attempt to delve into the question as to what genre the earliest poets used when they started to write or sing, *hymns* or *prayers;* I shall not even play you a prelude on the literature of the middle and new ages, but will start straightaway with Russian literature. More than that, I shall not even dwell on *classicism* and *romanticism*, blessed be their memory!

Well, decide for yourselves, dear readers!—am I not a queer fellow, really? Is it possible indeed that one should take upon himself such an important office as that of a reviewer and not avail himself of such an excellent opportunity of displaying his profound learning, borrowed from Russian periodicals, of expressing a multitude of shining, harsh, albeit all too familiar and sickening truisms, seasoning this mixture, this hotchpotch with a hint of this, that and the other, sprinkling it with puns, arraying it in a motley kaleidoscopic style, even in defiance of common sense!... What, you look surprised, dear sirs? But did I not tell you: read it, you may not repent it.... Think it over, and meanwhile let me repeat, to your great chagrin, that there will be nothing of the kind—and if you want to know why, read further and wonder.

Firstly, because I do not wish to afflict you with a fit of yawning, from which I suffer pretty badly myself.

Secondly, because I do not want to act the charlatan, that is, speak presumptuously of what I do not know, or, if I do, only very confusedly and dimly.

Thirdly, because it is all very well in its proper place, but has not the slightest bearing on Russian literature, the subject of my review—I hope to do the trick in a much simpler way.

Fourthly, because I firmly bear in mind the wise maxim of our erstwhile critic of blessed memory, Nikodim Aristarchovich Nadoumko, that "it is silly to unfold a nautical chart when crossing a pool in a canoe." Say what you like, but I am prepared to swear that the deceased spoke the truth. There was a time when every one stopped his ears to the latter's irreverent thrusts at the *geniuses* of that day, and now every one is sorry that there is nobody to raise a little scare among the geniuses of today: the world is hard to please! However, I said that by the way, *à propos*—now I hasten to begin.

The French call literature the "expression of society"; that definition is not new: we have met it long ago. But is it just? That is another matter. If we are to understand by the word *society* a select circle of highly educated people or, in short, *fashionable society*, the *beau monde*, that definition will have a specific meaning and significance, even a profound significance, but only with the French. Every nation, according to its character, formed by locality, by the unity or diversity of the elements which have gone to make up its life, and the historical conditions under which it proceeded, plays its own specific role assigned to it by Providence in the great family of mankind, and contributes its share to the common treasure of its achievements in the field of self-improvement; in other words, every nation is the expression of some single aspect of the life of mankind. Thus, the Germans have taken possession of the boundless realm of speculation and analysis, the English are distinguished for their practical activities, the Italians for their artistic proclivities. The German applies to everything a common view, deduces everything from a single principle; the Englishman navigates the seas, lays roads, builds canals, trades with the whole world, establishes colonies and relies in everything on experience and calculation; the life of the Italians in former times was love and art, art and love. The French have a predilection for life, a life that is practical, ebullient, restless and for ever in motion. The German creates thought, discovers new truth; the Frenchman makes use of it, lives it, spends it, so to speak. The Germans enrich mankind with ideas, the English with inventions ministering to the comforts of life; the French give us the laws of fashion, prescribe the rule of etiquette. courtesy and good breeding. In a word, the life of the Frenchman is society life, the drawing room; the drawing room is his milieu, wherein he displays the brilliance of his mind, knowledge, gifts, wit and education. To the French a ball, a social gathering is what the *forum* or *Olympic games* were to the Greeks; it is a battle royal, a tournament, which is a contest not of arms but of intellect, witticism, culture and education, where ambition is foiled by ambition, where many a lance is broken and many a victory won and lost. That is why no other nation can vie with the French in that sociability, that elegant dexterity and courtesy of expressing which in words

only the French language is capable; that is why all the efforts of European nations to equal the French in this respect have always proved futile; that is why all other societies have ever been and always will be merely ludicrous caricatures, pitiful parodies, malicious epigrams of French society; that is why, I say, the definition of literature as an "expression of society" is so profound and true with the French. Their literature has always been a true reflection, a mirror of society, has always gone hand in hand with it, oblivious of the mass of the nation, for their society is the supreme manifestation of their national spirit, their national life. For French writers society is a school where they learn the language and borrow a system of opinions, and which they portray in their works. Quite different is it with other nations. In Germany, for example, it is not the rich man or one admitted to the best houses and brilliant society who is the learned man: on the contrary, the genius of Germany prefers the garret of the poor, the modest lodging of the student, the wretched dwelling of the pastor. There everybody writes or reads, there the pub'ic is numbered in millions, and writers in thousands; in a word, literature there is not the expression of society, but that of the people. In the same way, though not for the same reasons, the literature of other nations, too, is not an expression of society, but an expression of the national spirit; for there is not a single nation whose life is manifested preeminently in society, and it may be affirmed that France is the only exception in this respect. And so, literature must necessarily be the expression, the symbol of a nation's inner life. It is by no means its definition, though one of its most essential attributes and conditions. Before I speak of Russia in this connection I deem it necessary to expound here my conceptions of *art* in general. I want the reader to see the point of view from which I regard a subject I have presumed to pass judgment on, and for what reasons I understand things in this particular way and not in any other.

The whole infinite, beautiful, divine world is nothing but the breath of a single, eternal *idea* (the idea of a single, eternal God) manifesting itself in innumerable shapes as a great spectacle of absolute unity in infinite diversity. Only the ardent feeling of a mortal can, at its lucid moments comprehend how

great is the *body* of this soul of the universe, whose heart is formed by immense suns, its veins by Milky Ways and its blood by the pure ether; for this idea there is no repose: it lives perpetually, that is, it perpetually creates in order to destroy, and destroys in order to create. It is incarnate in the radiant sun, in the magnificent planet, in the errant comet; it lives and breathes in the turbulent ebb and flow of the ocean tides and violent desert storms, in the murmuring of leaves and the babbling brook, in the roar of the lion and the tears of the babe, in the smile of beauty, in the will of man, in the harmonious creations of genius.... The wheel of time revolves with incredible speed; in the boundless expanses of the heavens luminaries go out like extinct volcanoes, and new ones light up; on the earth families and generations pass away to be replaced by new ones, death destroys life, life destroys death; the forces of nature struggle and war with each other and are appeased by intervening forces, and harmony reigns in this eternal ferment, in this struggle of elements and substances. And so—the *idea* lives: we can clearly see it with our feeble eyes. It is wise, for it is all-prescient and keeps everything in equilibrium; it sends fertility in the wake of the floods and lava, the sweet pure air after the devastating thunderstorm; it has domiciled the camel and the ostrich in the sandy wastes of Africa and Arabia, and the reindeer in the icy wastes of the North. There is its wisdom, there its physical being: where, then, is its love? God created *man* and endowed him with mind and senses so that he may cognize this idea with his own mind and perception, so that he may be married to *its* life in a warm and living sympathy and share *its* life in a feeling of infinite, creative love! And so, it is not only wise, but loving! Be proud, be proud, man, with thy lofty destination; but forget not that the divine *idea* which has begotten thee is just and equitable, that it has endowed thee with mind and volition which place thee above all creation, that it lives within thee, and life is action, and action struggle; forget not that thy infinite, supreme felicity consists in the dissolution of thy *Self* in the feeling of love. So there are these two roads, two inescapable paths: forswear thyself, suppress thy egoism, trample underfoot thy self-interested *Ego*, breathe for the happiness of others, sacrifice all for the weal of thy neighbour, thy country, for the good of mankind, love truth

and goodness not for the sake of reward, but for the sake of truth and goodness, and suffer under a heavy cross to merit thy reunion with God, thy immortality, which must consist in the destruction of thy *selfhood*, in a feeling of infinite delight!... What? Thou durst not? That deed fills thee with dismay, it seems beyond thy strength? Well, then here is another path which is wider, less disturbing, easier: love thyself more than anything on earth; shed tears, perform kindness only for the sake of profit; fear not evil when it bringeth thee advantage. Remember this rule: it will assure you comfort everywhere! If thou art born among the great ones of the earth, bend thy *spine*, crawl like a snake among tigers, hurl thyself like a tiger upon sheep, ravage, oppress, drink blood and tears, weigh down thy brow with laurel wreaths, stoop thy shoulders beneath the burden of unearned honours and titles. Gay and brilliant will be thy life; thou wilt not know the meaning of cold or hunger, oppression or insult, all will quake before thee, everywhere thou wilt meet obedience and servility, flattery and praise, and the poet will dedicate to thee an epistle and ode in which he will compare thee to the demigods, and the journalist will clamour from the housetops that thou art the protector of the weak and orphaned, the pillar and prop of the mother country, the right hand of the Sovereign! What matter it that thy soul will be torn every minute by a dreadful, bloody drama, that thou wilt be in perpetual conflict with thyself, that thy soul will languish from too much heat and thy heart from too much cold, that the wails of those thou hast oppressed will haunt thee during thy rounds of pleasures and on the soft couch of sleep, that the wraiths of those thou hast ruined will revisit thy sickbed, will perform a hellish dance around it and make merry with frenzied laughter over thy last anguish of death, that to thy eyes will open a horrible scene of moral destruction beyond the grave, of everlasting torment!... Ah, my dear man, thou art right: life is a dream and will pass before one knows it!... But then thou wilt have lived merrily, ate sweetly, slept softly, wielded authority for a time over thy neighbours, and surely that is worth something! And if, at thy birth, nature has placed on thy brow the stamp of genius, given thee the pregnant lips of the prophet and the sweet voice of the bard, if the fates that rule the world have destined thee to be a mover of mankind, the apostle of truth and

knowledge, then again there are two inescapable roads before thee. Sympathize with Nature, love and study it, create disinterestedly, toil without reward, open the soul of thy neighbours for receiving the impress of the good and the true, expose sin and ignorance, bear the persecutions of the wicked, eat thy bread drenched with tears, and do not withdraw thy pensive gaze from the beautiful fond sky. It is hard? Painful?... Well, then trade thy divine gift, place a price on every prophetic word God sends thee in hallowed minutes of inspiration: thou wilt find buyers, they will pay generously, and thou but lay the flattering unction to the soul, learn to bow thy crowned head in the dust, forget fame, immortality, posterity, and be content if the obliging hand of a mercenary journalist will proclaim thee a great poet, a genius, a Byron, a Goethe!...

Such is the moral life of the eternal *idea*. Its manifestation is the struggle between good and evil, love and egoism, like the monomachy of contractive and expansive forces in physical existence. There is no merit without strife, no reward without merit, and no life without action! Mankind represents what the individuals represent; it struggles every minute, and every minute improves itself. The torrent of barbarians that flooded Europe from Asia resurrected life instead of suppressing it and renovated the decrepit world; powerful nations sprang up from the decayed corpse of the Roman empire and became the vessels of benefaction. What are the campaigns of Alexanders, the restless activity of Caesars and Charleses but the movement of the eternal *idea* whose life consists in incessant activity?

What then is the purpose and aim of art? *To portray, to reproduce in words, sounds, lines and colours the idea of the universal life of nature*: such is the sole and everlasting theme of art! Poetical inspiration is the reflection of the creative forces of nature. Hence the poet, more than any one else, should study nature, both physical and spiritual, entertain for it affection and sympathy; more than any one should he be pure and chaste of soul; for one may tread its sanctuary only with bare feet and cleansed hands, with the mind of a man and the heart of an infant, for only such shall *inherit the kingdom of heaven*, for only in the harmony of mind and sentiment lies the supreme perfection of man! The greater the genius of the poet, the deeper and wider

does he embrace nature and the more effectively does he present it to us in its highest affinity and life. If Byron has *plumbed the depths of horror and pain*, if he has apprehended and expressed only the anguish of the heart, the inferno of the soul, it means that he has apprehended only one aspect of the universe's existence, that he has torn out and shown us only one of its pages. Schiller has disclosed to us the secrets of heaven, shown us only the beautiful side of life as he understood it, sung to us only his cherished thoughts and dreams: life's evil he has shown us either wrongly or distorted by exaggeration; Schiller in this respect is equal to Byron. But Shakespeare, the divine, the great, the peerless Shakespeare, has apprehended all of hell and earth and heaven: king of nature, he has taken equal tribute of good and bad, and obtained a glimpse, in his inspired clairvoyance, of the throbbing pulse of the universe! Each of his dramas is a world in miniature; he has not, like Schiller, favourite ideas and favourite heroes. See how heartlessly he laughs at poor Hamlet, endowed with the purpose of a giant and the will of a child, who stumbles at every step beneath the burden of voluntary deeds beyond his strength!... Ask Shakespeare, ask that king of wizards—what made him create Lear a doddering half-crazed old man instead of the ideal of a tender parent, as Ducis or Gnedich have done; why has he represented Macbeth as a man who became villain through weakness of character and not through a penchant for evil, and Lady Macbeth a villainess through sentiment; why has he made Cordelia a tender, loving daughter with a soft womanly heart, and endowed her sisters with the furies of envy, vanity, and ingratitude? He would tell you in reply that that is how things happen in the world, that it cannot be otherwise! Yes! That impartiality, that coldness of the poet, who seems to say: *so it was, but what care I!*—is the acme of artistic perfection, it is true creative genius, the lot of the chosen few, of whom it is said:

> Living at one with nature, he knew
> The message of murmuring showers;
> He heard the fond whisper of leaves to the dew,
> He suffered the chill of the flowers.
> The book of the heavens was open to him;
> The waves of the seashore had spoken to him.[14]

Indeed, can one positively call this or that thing beautiful and the other ugly? . . . Is it not one and the same divine spirit that has created the gentle lamb and the bloodthirsty tiger, the graceful steed and the hideous whale, the beautiful Circassian girl and the ugly Negro? Does it love the dove more than the hawk, the nightingale more than the toad, the gazelle more than the reptile? Then why must the poet describe only what is beautiful, what appeals to the heart and emotions? If Han d'Islande has a place in nature then I really cannot see why he is worse than Karl Moor or even Marquis von Posa. I love Karl Moor as a man, worship Posa as a hero and abhor Han d'Islande as a monster, but as creations of fantasy, as particularities of general life, they look all equally beautiful to me. If the poet describes, after the style of a Sue,[15] only what is horrible and evil in nature, it proves that his outlook is narrow, that his creative genius is shallow, but does not by any means reveal him to be a bad, immoral person. But when he tries in his works to make you look at life with his eyes, he is no longer a poet but a thinker, a bad, ill-intentioned thinker, deserving to be held up to execration, for poetry has no purpose beyond itself. So long as the poet involuntarily follows the momentary flash of his imagination, he remains moral and remains a poet; but as soon as he sets before himself a purpose, a theme, he becomes a philosopher, a thinker, a moralist, he loses his magic power over me, breaks the spell, and compels commiseration if he possesses true talent and pursues a laudable aim, and scorn if he attempts to enmesh my soul in the tenets of evil thoughts. Do you like Derzhavin's ode *God?* But the same Derzhavin wrote *The Miller.*[16] You censure Pushkin for the license he frequently indulges in in *Ruslan and Ludmila?* But the same Pushkin gave you *Boris Godunov.* Why such contradictions in their artistic trend? Because they very well remember the maxim:

> Now ardent seek the life of splendour,
> And strive each moment to prolong;
> To each impassioned challenge render
> The answer of responsive song.

Yes, *art is the expression of the great idea of the universe in its endless diversity of phenomena!* It has been splendidly said somewhere that *a novel is a brief episode from the endless poem*

of human destinies! This definition of the novel applies to all genres of artistic productions. The entire art of the poet should consist in placing the reader at such an angle of vision from which he could view all nature in diminution, in miniature, like the world on a map, giving him to feel the breath of that life which animates the universe, imparting to his soul the flame that warms it. The enjoyment of the beautiful should consist in a momentary obliteration of our *Ego,* in a lively sympathy with the universal life of nature; and the poet will always achieve this noble aim if his production is the fruit of a lofty mind and ardent feeling, if it flows freely and spontaneously from his soul.

(Still not the end.)

LITERARY REVERIES

(Continuation)

Though born with the idea that every country's finer,
A little we might take from our good friends in China,
Of their most wise contempt for ways that aren't their own.
When shall the foreigner have ceased his endless sermons,
That even if by our speech alone,
Our good, our clever folk may tell us from the Germans.

"Wit Works Woe." Act III

And so, we now have to *decide* the following point: what is our literature—an expression of society or an expression of the national spirit? The answer to this question will be the history of our literature and, incidentally, the history of the gradual evolution of our society since the times of Peter the Great. Keeping true to my word, I will not deal with the beginnings of literature among all the nations and the history of its development, for that should be a commonplace to every reading person.

Every nation, by the inexorable law of Providence, must express, by its life, some single aspect of the life of all mankind; otherwise that nation does not live, but vegetates, and its existence serves no purpose. One-sidedness is bad for every man, par-

ticularly for mankind. When the whole world became Rome, when all the nations began to think and feel the Roman way, the progress of the human intellect was interrupted, for it no longer possessed an aim, for it believed it had set up the Pillars of Hercules in its realm. The wearied lord of the world reposed on his laurels: his life had come to an end with the termination of his activity, the pursuit of which was exhibited only in libertine orgies. He committed a terrible mistake in thinking that there was no world, no light, no civilization, outside Rome, who had inherited the treasures of Greek culture by virtue of the right of the conqueror! What a disastrous delusion! It was one of the principal causes of the moral demise of this great colossus. For the renascence of mankind it needs must be that amidst this chaos of death and decay there should sound the blessed word of the son of man: *"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."* It needs must be that hordes of barbarians should destroy that colossal power, segregate it with their sword into a multitude of powers, receive the word and go each its own way to a common goal.

Yes—only by traversing different paths can mankind achieve its common goal; only by living its original life can each nation contribute its share to the common treasure. What does the originality of a nation consist in? It consists in a specific mentality and outlook, in religion, tongue and especially *customs* peculiar to that one nation. All these circumstances are exceedingly important, intimately connected and interdependent, and all originate out of a single common source—the primary cause—*climate and locality*. Among these distinguishing features of every nation *customs* probably play the most important role and constitute its most characteristic trait. It is impossible to imagine a nation without religious notions vested in forms of divine worship; it is impossible to imagine a nation that does not possess a single language common among all social estates; still less is it possible to imagine a nation possessing no characteristic customs of its own. These customs comprise manners of dress, the explanation of which is to be found in the country's climate; forms of domestic and public life, whose origins are latent in the nation's creeds, superstitions and beliefs; of forms of intercourse among indivisible states, whose nuances are rooted in civil enactments and differences of social es-

tates. All these customs are fortified by tradition, consecrated by time, and go down from family to family, from generation to generation as the heritage of descendants from ancestors. They constitute the physiognomy of the nation, and without them the nation is a form without features, a figment and a dream. The younger a nation, the more striking and colourful are its customs, and the more importance does it attach to them; time and education adapt them to the common level; but they can change only steadily, imperceptibly, and one at a time. The nation itself must voluntarily relinquish some of them and accept new ones; but even here there is struggle and mortal combat, there are Old Believers and dissenters, classics and romanticists. The nation strongly cherishes its customs as its most sacrosanct possession, and any attempt at their sudden and determined reform without its acquiescence it regards as an attempt on its existence. Look at China: there a mass of people confess several different faiths; the highest social estate, the mandarins, confess none, and perform religious rites merely for the sake of decorum; but what unity and community of customs they have, what independence, what specific and peculiar character! How tenaciously they cling to them! Yes, customs are a sacred matter, inviolable and subject to no power other than the force of circumstance and the progress of enlightenment! The utterly depraved person, of the most inveterate vice, who reviles everything that is holy, submits to custom even though he may inwardly deride it. Destroy customs suddenly without immediately replacing them, and you will destroy all the props, break all the ties of society, in a word, you will destroy the nation. Why is that so? For the same reason that the fish feels at home in the water, the bird in the air, the beast on the earth and the vermin in the earth. A nation violently introduced into an alien sphere resembles a man tied hand and foot and whipped to make him run. Any nation may borrow from another, but it necessarily places the impress of its own genius on these *loans* which assume with it the character of *imitation*. It is this striving for independence and originality, displayed in devotion to native customs, that constitutes the cause of mutual enmity among unsophisticated infant nations. For reasons such as this the Russian used to call the German a heathen, while the Turk even now holds every Frank to be unclean and will not eat with him from

the same dish: religion in this case does not play a paramount part.

In the east of Europe, on the borderline of the two parts of the earth, Providence has settled a nation that differs sharply from its western neighbours. Its cradle was the radiant South; the sword of the Asiatic-Russ gave it its name; moribund Byzantium bequeathed to it the beneficent word of salvation; the chains of the Tatar held together its disunited parts in a strong bond, the hand of the khans sealed them with that nation's own blood; Ivan III taught it to fear, love and obey its tsar, forced it to look upon the tsar as Providence, as sovereign fate, meting out punishment and mercy at his own single will and admitting above himself the single will of God. And that nation became as cool and calm as the snows of its native land when it lived peacefully in its hut; as swift and terrible as the heavenly thunder of its brief but blazing summer when the hand of the tsar pointed out the enemy; as reckless and riotous as the blizzards and storms of its winters when it held wassail; as sluggish and lazy as the bear of its primeval forests when it had plenty of bread and home-brew; as intelligent, shrewd and cunning as the cat, its domestic penate, when necessity becomes the mother of invention. It stood stoutly for the church of God, the faith of its forefathers, and was staunchly true to its royal "little father," the orthodox tsar; its favourite saying was: *we all are God's and the tsar's*; God and the tsar, the grace of God and the grace of the tsar were mingled with it into a single concept. It jealously guarded the crude and simple ways of its ancestors and honestly believed foreign ways to be *devilry*. Beyond this the poetry of its life did not extend: for its mind was sunk in quiet slumber and had never ventured outside its conventional precincts; for it had never bent the knee to Woman, of whom its proud and savage force demanded slavish submission and not sweet reciprocity; for its life was a monotony, enlivened only by boisterous games and the daring hunt; for war alone stirred the whole power of its cold, iron soul, for only the sanguinary riot of battle gave it unbridled scope and full play. This was an original and characteristic life, but one-sided and isolated. At a time when the active, ebullient life of the older representatives of the human race was moving onwards in an incredible medley, not one of this nation's wheels

was caught in the springs of its movement. And so, this nation had to join in the common life of mankind, form a part of the great family of the human race. And then there appeared a tsar among this nation, a tsar great and wise, gentle without weakness, stern without tyranny;[17] he was first to perceive that German people were not infidels, that they had much which would be useful to his subjects, too, and much they could well do without. And he began to show marks of kindness to people from Germany and to invite them to his table, and bade his people learn their clever artifices. He built himself a little boat and had intended to put to sea, that sea which to his people was still an awe-inspiring mystery; he bade comedians from foreign lands amuse his royal majesty, at the same time sternly forbidding the orthodox Russian, under pain of losing his nose, to sniff tobacco, that foul and accursed herb. It may be said that in his days Rūs for the first time tasted the flavour of foreign ways, hitherto never seen nor heard of. Then that good tsar died and the throne was ascended by his young son [18] who, like the doughty knights of Vladimir's days, had in his childhood hurled hundred-pooded maces above the clouds, twisted them in his hands and broken them across his knee. He was the incarnate power, the incarnate ideal of the Russian people in the active moments of his life; he was one of those giants who lifted the globe of the world on their shoulders. His iron will, which admitted no impediments, knew only one aim—the welfare of the nation. He decided upon a great plan, and for him to decide was to act. He had seen wonderful and amazing things in foreign lands and decided to transplant them to his native soil, refusing to consider the fact that this soil was still too hard for foreign plants, that the Russian winter would not be congenial to them; he had seen the fruits of age-old civilization and wanted them appropriated for his people in a single minute. The thought conceived, the word is given, the deed done: the Russian does not like to wait. Well, Russian, begirt thyself, *by Tsar's command, by boyar's demand, by German brand....* Avaunt, ye venerable and bushy beards! Farewell, too, ye simple and noble crowns of hair which went so well with those time-honoured beards! You have been displaced by enormous wigs besprinkled with flour! Farewell, ye long-skirted cloaks of our boyars, inlaid and embroidered with silver and gold! You have been superseded by caf-

tans and vests with breeches and Hessian boots! Farewell you, too, lovely poetic sarafans of our boyar ladies, and you muslin smocks with broad sleeves, and you, tall pearl-studded head-dress—simple, charming habit that so well suited the high bosoms and bright colour of our fair-skinned and blue-eyed beauties! You have been substituted by robes with hoop-petticoats and enormous trains! Paint and powder, please make way a little, give room to the black beauty-spot! Farewell, too, you mournful Russian songs, and you, noble and graceful folk dance: our beauties will no longer coo like doves, nor sing like the gushing nightingale, nor float in stately measure! No! Arias and romanzas have become the fashion, with the invariable upper notes on:

...My God! Into my golden chamber come!

the picturesque posing of minuets, the voluptuous whirl of waltzes....

And everything spun in a whirl, swept along in a headlong race. It seemed as if Rūs in thirty years wished to make up for centuries of immobility. As by the wave of a magic wand the little boat of tsar Alexei was transformed into the formidable fleet of the Emperor Peter, the unruly retinues of the *Streltzi* into well-formed regiments. At the walls of Azov the glove was thrown to the Porte: Woe to thee crescent moon! The disgrace of the battle of Narva was cruelly avenged on the fields of Lesnaya and the banks of the Vorskla: praised be Menshikov, praised be Danilich! Roads and canals were cut through the virgin soil of Russia and trade began to stir; hammers began to beat and looms to rattle: industry came to life!

Yes—much was accomplished that was great, useful and glorious! Peter was quite right: he could not afford to wait. He knew that he would not live twice, and so he hastened to live, and for him to live was to create. But the people thought otherwise. It had long been sleeping when suddenly a mighty hand roused the giant from his sleep: he opened his heavy lids with difficulty and was astonished to see that foreign customs had invaded his home, like uninvited guests, without taking off their boots, without bowing before the holy icons or saluting the host; that they had seized him by the beard, which was dearer to him than his head, and plucked it out; stripped off his majestic raiment and clad him

in motley, marred and mutilated his virginal language and insolently desecrated the sacred customs of his forefathers, outraged his fondest beliefs and cherished customs: he saw and stood aghast.... It was awkward, uncustomary, uncomfortable for a Russian to go about with his hands thrust into his pockets; he stumbled when coming up to kiss a lady's hand, and fell when he tried to make a decent show of scraping. Having borrowed the forms of Europeanism he merely became the parody of a European. Enlightenment, like the glowing word of expiation, should be received in prudent degrees, by earnest persuasion, without insult to sacred, ancestral customs: such is the law of Providence! ... Believe me, the Russian people has never been a sworn enemy of enlightenment, it was ever ready to learn; but it had to begin its schooling from the alphabet and not from philosophy, from the school and not the academy. The beard has not been an impediment to star-gazing: they know that in Kursk.[19]

What was the outcome of it all? The mass of the people stubbornly remained what it was before; but society steered its course along the path on which the strong hand of genius had launched it. What kind of society was it? I will not dilate on it: read *The Minor, Wit Works Woe, Eugene Onegin, The Nobles at Elections* and Lazhechnikov's new novel, when it sees light of day: read them, and you will know it better than I....

Then, at least, give us your review of Russian literature which you promise in every issue of the *Molva* and which we have not set eyes on yet! Judging by these elaborate preliminaries we shudder to think that it will be longer and duller than Baron Brambeus' *Fantastic Journey*.

I do not know myself, dear readers, how long it will be. Perhaps it will turn out to be a laughable little monster: a hut on chicken's legs, a hop-o'-my-thumb tsar, an elfin beard, and a head like a tun. It cannot be helped, I am not the first and not the last; it has become the fashion with us. However, if my preliminaries have not damped your interest in the conclusion, if you have as much patience to read as I have to write, you will see the beginning, and perhaps the end, of my review.

(Following.)

LITERARY REVERIES

(Continuation)

Onward, onward, my tale!

Pushkin

And so, the *nation* or, better to say, the mass of our people and *society* went separate ways. The former retained its pristine, rude and half-savage mode of life and its melancholy songs in which it poured out its heart in grief and joy; the latter apparently underwent a change if not an improvement, forgot everything Russian, forgot even how to *parler* Russian; forgot the poetic lore and legends of its native land, those beautiful songs full of a deep sadness, sweet yearning and boisterous revelry, and begot itself a literature which was a faithful mirror of itself. It should be observed that both the *mass of the people* and *society* split up, especially the latter, into a multitude of species and degrees. The former evinced certain signs of life and movement among the social estates having direct relations with *society*, among the estates of townsfolk, artisans, petty tradesmen and manufacturers. Necessity and the competition of foreigners who had settled in Russia made them active and enterprising when it was a matter of profit; forced them to shake off old habits of sloth and the supineness induced by the amenities of the old Russian stove, and roused a striving after improvement and the innovations hitherto so odious to their mind; their fanatical dislike of *Germans* abated from day to day and has now disappeared entirely; they have even managed to obtain a sort of education and cling ever more strongly to the wise maxim bequeathed them by their ancestors: *instruction is light and ignorance is darkness.* This promises well for the future, the more so that these estates have not lost caste by a wit and have preserved their national features. As for the lower stratum of *society, viz.*, the *middle estate*, it has in turn divided up into numerous categories and genera, among whom the most prominent place, by virtue of their majority, is occupied by the so-called *commoners.* This estate more than any other defeated the hopes of Peter the Great: it always purchased learning with *brass farthings* and applied its Russian sagacity and shrewdness to the reprehensible pursuit of *interpreting the royal ukases;* in learning

how to bow and kiss the hands of ladies it did not unlearn the performance with noble hands of ignoble corporal chastisement. The upper class of society, on the other hand, plunged headlong into imitation, or rather mimicking, of foreigners....

But that is not the point. The muses are said to be fond of quiet and fear the clash of weapons; that is sheer fallacy! However that may be, the reign of Peter was rife with nothing but sermons, which have survived only in the memory of scientists and not of the people; for these *chequered, mosaic* flowers of speech, or rather *confusion of speech,* were nothing but a noxious graft from the blighted tree of Catholic scholasticism of the Western clergy, and not the live, convincing voice of the holy truths of religion. This has not yet been properly examined and appraised with us. If we are to believe the utterances of our literary teachers we almost surpass the European nations in religious rhetoric. I will not undertake to pass judgment, for I merely mentioned the fact in passing, *à propos* as of a matter that has no direct bearing on the subject of my review; moreover, I am not very familiar with the specimens of our religious rhetoric which is no doubt not devoid of happy instances.

Neither will I dilate on Cantemir; I will only say that I very much doubt his poetical vocation. It seems to me that his celebrated *satires* were the fruit of mind and cold observation rather than of quick and ardent feeling. No wonder he began with *satires*—the fruits of autumn, and not with *odes*—the fruits of spring! He was a foreigner, and, consequently, could not sympathize with the people and share its hopes and fears; his withers were unwrung. That he was no poet is proved by the fact that he is forgotten. Obsolete language!—nonsense![20] The English themselves read Shakespeare with a glossary.

Tredyakovsky had neither wit, nor feeling, nor talent. That man was born to wield the plough or axe; but fate, as though in mockery, bedecked him in a frock coat: no wonder he was so ludicrous and garish.[21]

Yes—the first essays were all too feeble and ineffectual. Then suddenly, using the happy expression of one of our compatriots, Lomonosov shone forth like the aurora borealis on the shores of the Arctic Ocean. Dazzling and beautiful was this appearance! It went to prove that a man is a man in any condition and any

clime, that genius can triumph over all the obstacles that an inimical fate places in its path, that, finally, the Russian can achieve the great and beautiful no less than any European; but at the same time, I say, this gratifying spectacle also corroborated, to our misfortune, the irrefragable truth that the pupil will never surpass the teacher if he regards him as a model instead of a rival, that the genius of a nation is always timid and tied when it does not act originally and independently, that its productions in such cases will always resemble artificial flowers: bright, exquisite, resplendent, but inodorous and lifeless. With Lomonosov our literature takes its rise; he was its father and mentor; he was its Peter the Great. Need one say that he was a great man, marked with the seal of genius? It is infallible gospel. Need one call to witness that he gave a trend, albeit a temporary one, to our language and our literature? That is still more obvious. But what trend? That is a different matter. I will not say anything new on this point and will, perhaps, merely repeat more or less familiar ideas.

But first of all I should like to make the following remark. Our literature, as I have already mentioned, is still governed by an abject sense of childish veneration for authorities; in literature, too, we highly esteem *the table of ranks and classes* and are afraid to speak the truth aloud about *highly-placed persons*. In speaking of an eminent writer we always confine ourselves to empty utterances and turgid eulogies; to say the harsh truth about him is sacrilege. 'Twere not so bad if this were the result of conviction. But it is due merely to absurd and pernicious decorum or to a fear of being considered an upstart, a *romanticist*. Look what the foreigners do in similar cases: with them every writer is treated according to his deserts; they are not content to say that Mr. So-and-So's plays contain many fine passages, though some verses are not quite smooth and suffer from some faults, that Mr. So-and-So's odes are excellent but the elegies poor. No, they consider the whole range of activity of a writer, determine the extent of his influence on contemporaries and posterity, examine the spirit of his works in general and not the particular beauties or deficiencies, take into consideration the circumstances of his life in order to discover whether he could do more than he had done and explain why he did it in this particular way and not in any other;

and, after weighing all these circumstances, decide what place he is to occupy in literature and what repute he shall enjoy. Readers of *The Telescope* should be familiar with many such critical biographies of famous writers. Where are ours? Alas! How many times, for instance, have we heard that Lomonosov's *Evening and Morning Reflections on the Greatness of God* are beautiful, that the stanzas of his odes are sonorous and majestic, that the periods of his prose are rich, rounded and picturesque; but has the measure of his merits been taken, have the shady sides of his work been shown with the bright? No—God forbid! It is sinful, impertinent, ungrateful! Where is criticism whose object is to cultivate taste; where is truth, which should be dearer than all the authorities on earth? . . .

Great knowledge, experience, time and labour are needed to worthily appraise such a man as Lomonosov was. Lack of time and space and, perhaps, ability, do not allow me to undertake too comprehensive an enquiry. I will therefore confine myself to a general outline. Lomonosov is the Peter of our literature: that, I believe, is the truest estimate of him. Indeed, do you not notice an astonishing similarity both in the mode of operation of these great men and in the consequences of that mode of operation? On the shores of the Arctic Ocean, in the kingdom of winter and death, a son is born to a poor fisherman. The child is tormented by a mysterious demon who gives him no peace by day or night and whispers into his ear thrilling words which make his heart palpitate more strongly and his blood course more hotly; at whatever the child looks he wants to know its why and wherefore; endless questions oppress and weigh down his young soul—and there are no answers! He teaches himself to read and write, and the secret promptings of his invidious demon sound in his heart like the seductive tinkling of Vadim's bell[22] luring him to the misty distance. . . . And so he forsakes his father and flees to white-stoned Moscow. Flee youth, flee! There you will learn all, there you will quench your keen thirst at the fount of knowledge! But alas! Your hopes have been dashed; your thirst is still stronger—you have only whetted it. On, on, daring youth! Thither, to learned Germany, where there are gardens of paradise, and in those gardens grows the tree of life, the tree of knowledge, the tree of good and evil. . . . Its fruits are sweet—hurry to taste them. . . . And he

hies him hence, he enters the charmed gardens and beholds the tempting tree and greedily devours the fruits thereof. How many wonders, how many enchantments! How regretful he is that he cannot take it all away with him and transfer it to his *dear country*, his holy native land! But ... why not try? Is he not a Russian, for whom no thing is impossible? Is not Shuvalov waiting for him? Then he need have no fear of prejudices, enemies and enviers! And so Rūs rings with odes, looks at tragedies, admires epic poems, laughs at tales, listens to Cicero and Demosthenes, discourses gravely on electricity and lightning conductors: why tarry? Verily Peter himself would exclaim with pleasure: *that is our way!* But the same thing happened to Lomonosov as happened to Peter: Allured by the dazzle of foreign enlightenment he closed his eyes to his native. True, in his childhood he learned by heart the barbarous rhymes of Simeon Polotsky, but left the folk songs and fables without attention. He would seem not to have heard of them. Do you notice in his works the faintest trace of the influence of the chronicles and, generally, of popular Russian legend? No—there was nothing of it. It is said that he deeply fathomed the properties of the Russian language! I will not deny that—his grammar is a great, a wonderful thing. But why did he stretch and twist the Russian language to the pattern of the Latin and German? Why is every period of his speeches crammed with such a needless profusion of subordinate clauses barbed at the end with a verb? Was that required by the genius of the Russian language whom this great man had unriddled? A language cannot be made, for it is created by the people; philologists merely discover its laws and reduce it to a system, while writers merely employ it in conformity with these laws. In the latter instance as well one cannot cease wondering at the genius of Lomonosov: he has stanzas and whole poems which, in purity and correctness of style, greatly approximate those of the present day. Consequently, servile imitativeness was his undoing; consequently, this alone is the reason why no one reads him, why he is unacknowledged and forgotten by the people, and why he is remembered only by professional men of letters. Some say that he was a great scientist and a great orator, and not at all a poet; on the contrary, he was more poet than orator; nay, I will say more: he was a great poet and a poor orator. What, indeed, are

his *eulogiums*? Mere verbiage and platitudes partly borrowed from ancient forensic art, partly his own, the fruits of bespoken work, full of din and declamation and decidedly not the expression of fervent, quick and genuine feeling which alone is the source of true eloquence. Separate passages couched in excellent language prove nothing; it is the whole that matters. Is it surprising that this should have happened? Even today we have little call for eloquence, and still less did they have then; consequently, it came into existence without need, out of sheer imitativeness, and could not therefore be felicitous. But Lomonosov's poetical work bears the stamp of genius. True, here too mind dominates over feeling, but that was simply because his craving for knowledge engulfed his whole being, was his ruling passion. He always held his vigorous fantasy in the tight leash of cold reason and did not allow it full play. Voltaire, if I am not mistaken, said of Corneille that in the composition of his tragedies he resembled the great Condé, who laid his plans for battle coolly and fought them hotly: there is Lomonosov! This is what makes his poetry sound oratorical, this is why we so frequently glimpse the dry skeleton of syllogism through the prism of its rainbow tints. This was the result of system and certainly not of a lack of poetical genius. System and servile imitativeness made him write the prosaic *Letter Concerning the Utility of Glass*, two frigid and inflated tragedies, and, finally, that clumsy *Petriade* which was the most pitiful aberration of his mighty genius.[23] He was born a lyric poet, and the sounds of his lyre, when not muffled by his system, were harmonious, noble and majestic....

What can we say of his rival, Sumarokov? He wrote in all genres, in poetry and prose, and meant to be a Russian Voltaire. Possessing the servile imitativeness of Lomonosov he did not have a spark of his talent. His whole artistic industry was nothing but a pitiful and ludicrous affectation. He was not only no poet, but did not have the slightest idea, the slightest notion of art, and refuted, on his own showing, the strange claim of Buffon that genius is patience in a supreme degree. Yet this sorry *scribbler* enjoyed such popularity! Our *literati* do not know how to thank him enough for being the father of the *Russian theatre*. But why do they stint gratitude to Tredyakovsky for being the father of the Russian *epic*? Truly, they are not far removed from each other.

We should not impugn Sumarokov too strongly for being a braggart: he was deceived in himself as much as his contemporaries were deceived in him: *in a waste every one can be king*, consequently it is pardonable, the more so that he was not an artist. Now today it is a different matter.... Of course, it is ludicrous and pitiful to see the way some youngsters make great poets in their bad plays prophesy their coming into the world....

(Please wait a little longer.)

LITERARY REVERIES

(Continuation)

It was the day, the age of Catherine,
Awakened to the ancient glory of Rūs,
When Oleg the imperial city vanquished,
And Svyatoslav's bark the Danube subdued:
Rimnik, Cheshme, the battle of Kagul,
Eagles at the city of Leonide;
Renascent Taurida,
The fateful day of Ismail,
And Prague drenched with the blood
Of Moscow's wrong avenged!

Zhukovsky

Catherine II ascended the throne, and a new, a brighter page was opened in the life of the Russian nation. Her reign was an epic, an epic stupendous and daring in design, majestic and bold in execution, sweeping and comprehensive in conception, brilliant and magnificent in exposition, an epic worthy of Homer or Tasso! Her reign was a drama, a drama complex and involved in plot, swift and dynamic in action, vivid and colourful in complexity of characters, a Greek tragedy in regal majesty and the gigantean prowess of its heroes, a creation of Shakespeare in the originality and colourfulness of its personages, in variegation of scenes and their kaleidoscopic mobility, and, finally, a drama the spectacle of which forces from you an involuntary cry of delight and joy! We look with astonishment and even with a sort of incredulity upon that time which is so near to us that some of its representa-

tives are still living; which is so remote from us that we cannot discern it clearly unaided by the telescope of history; which is so wonderful and amazing in the annals of the world that we are ready to regard it as a fabulous age. Then for the first time since Tsar Alexei did the Russian spirit display itself in all its prodigious strength, in all its boisterous revelry and, as the saying goes, *had its fling*. Then did the Russian people, more or less accustomed to the constraining and unfamiliar forms of its new life, inured and almost reconciled to them, and bowing its head, as it were, to the verdict of an inexorable and inevitable fate—the will of Peter—for the first time breathe freely, smile cheerfully, look proudly, for it was no longer being driven to a great goal but led of its own free will and consent; for the awesome sound of *word and deed* was no longer heard, and instead a voice sounded from the throne, saying: *I will better spare ten guilty persons than punish a single innocent one; we believe, and consider it our bounden duty to declare, that we live for our nation; God forbid that any other nation be happier than the Russian*; for the Statute of Ranks and the Patent of the Nobility were combined with the inviolability of the rights of nobleness; for the ears of Rūs were caressed by the incessant thunder of victories and conquests. Then it was that the Russian mind awoke, and schools were founded, and all the necessary textbooks were published for elementary education, and everything worthy was translated from European languages; the Russian sword was unsheathed, monarchies were shaken to their foundations, kingdoms shattered and merged with Rūs! . . .

Do you know what was the salient feature of the age of Catherine II, that great epoch, that bright hour in the life of the Russian nation? I believe it was *nationality*. Yes—*nationality*, for though still trying to tread in alien footsteps Rūs, as though in defiance of itself, remained Rūs. Remember those grave and genial boyars whose homes resembled hotels for all, whither came the invited and uninvited alike, and, without a greeting to the convivial host, sat down to his oaken tables covered with checked cloths and laden with rich viands and honeyed drinks; those proud and dignified grandees who kept open house, whose dwellings resembled the royal palaces of Russian legend, who had their own staffs of courtiers, admirers and adulators, who lit fireworks with government bonds;

who knew how to feast and make merry after the ancient custom of their grandfathers, with the sweeping abandon of an expansive Russian nature, but who knew how to wield the sword and the pen for the cause of their mother-empress: would you not call this an independent life, an original society? Remember Suvorov who knew not war, but whom war knew; Potemkin who bit his nails at banquets and between jests decided in his mind the fates of nations; Bezborodko, who is said in his cups to have read to the empress from sheets of white paper the diplomatic epistles of his own composition; Derzhavin who, in his most flagrant imitations of Horace remained Derzhavin despite himself, and bore as much resemblance to the Augustan poet as the vigorous Russian winter does to the luxurious summer of Italy: would you not say that nature had cast every one of them in a special mould and, when it had done so, shattered the mould to smithereens? Is it possible, however, to be original and independent without being *national?* Why was that so? Because, I repeat, the Russian mind was unleashed, because the Russian genius began to walk about with hands untied, because the great woman had shown herself capable of establishing kindred ties with the spirit of her people, because she profoundly respected the national dignity and cherished everything Russian, so much so that she herself composed various works in Russian, conducted a periodical, and for contempt of their native language inflicted upon her subjects the dire punishment of *Telemachida!*[24]

Yes—that was a wonderful, a marvellous time, but still more wonderful and marvellous was its society! What a mixed, motley, diverse crowd! How many heterogeneous elements, bound together and animated by a single spirit! Atheism and fanatism, coarseness and refinement, materialism and piety, novelty-mania and a fanatical tenacity for old usage, feasts and victories, luxury and ease, pleasures and Herculean exploits, great intellects, great characters of all shades and shapes and, among them, *Minors, Prostakovs, Taras Skotinins* and *Brigadiers*; a nobility whose refinement amazed the French court, and a nobility who sallied forth with their peons on errands of brigandage!

And this society was mirrored in literature; it was portrayed, for the most part, by two poets, of widely unequal genius: the trumpet-tongued songs of Derzhavin were a symbol of the might,

glory and joy that were Russia; the caustic and witty caricatures of Fon-Vizin were the mouthpiece of the conceptions and outlook of the most educated class of people of the time.

Derzhavin—what a name! Yes, he was right: Only Navin[25] is a fit rhyme for it! How becoming to him is that half-Russian and half-Tatar attire in which he is shown in portraits: place in his hand the lily sceptre of Oberon, add to that sable cloak and beaver hat a hoary flowing beard, and there you have the Russian magician whose breath makes the snows and icy mantles of rivers melt and roses bloom, whose charmed words docile nature obeys and assumes any shape and guise that he desires! Superb phenomenon! A poor nobleman, almost illiterate, a child in understanding: an unsolved riddle to himself; where did he get that prescient and prophetic word that stuns the heart and delights the soul, that profound and sweeping vision that grasps nature in all its infinity, like the young eagle that seizes the palpitating prey in its mighty claws? Or did he really meet a *six-winged seraph* somewhere on the *crossroads?* Or is it true that *fiery feeling* raises mortal man in fleeting moments of his life to the level of nature without any effort on his part, and she obediently reveals to him her hidden mysteries, allows him a glimpse of her throbbing heart, gives him leave to draw from her bosom, the source of life, that *running water* which imparts the breath of life both to metal and to marble? Or is it true that *fiery feeling* gives mortal *all-seeing eyes,* and annihilates him in nature, and nature in him and he, her omnipotent sovereign, rules over her with absolute authority and, together with her, casts himself at will, like Proteus, into a thousand wonderful images, assumes a thousand magical shapes, which he will then call his *creations?* Derzhavin is the complete reflection, the living chronicle, the solemn hymn and ardent dithyramb of the age of Catherine, with its lyrical ardour, its pride in the present and hopes for the future, its enlightenment and ignorance, its epicureanism and craving for great deeds, its festal idleness and inexhaustible practical activity! Seek not in his songs, now bold and triumphant like the peal of victory, now merry and jocose like the table-talk of our great-grandfathers, now tender and sweet like the voices of Russian girls, seek not in them a subtle analysis of man with all the windings and turnings of his heart and soul, as in Shakespeare, or the sweet yearning for sky and lofty dreams

of the great and sacred things in life, as in Schiller, or the harrowing shrieks of a glutted but insatiable soul, like in Byron: no, we had no time then to dissect human nature, to delve into the mysteries of heaven and life, for we were then deafened by the thunder of victories, dazzled by the blaze of glory, engrossed with new legislation and reforms; for we had not yet had time to be satiated with life, we had only just begun to live and therefore loved life: and so, seek none of this in Derzhavin! Seek in him rather poetical tidings of how great was the peerless, the *god-like Felitza of the Kirghiz-Kaisak Horde,*[26] how that *angel in human shape* sowed and scattered around her the blessings of life and happiness and, like God, created everything out of nothing; how wise were her faithful servants, her zealous advisers; how the hero of the North, the *prodigy knight,*[27] hurled castle towers above the clouds, how the darkness fled before his brow and the dust before his boisterous whistle, how mountains shivered beneath his tread and sea-depths boiled, how cities fell before him and kingdoms collapsed, how he, amid thunder and lightning and the grim conflict of the infuriated elements, struck down the stronghold of Ismail or crossed the precipices of St. Gothard, how *once upon a time* there lived Russian lords of prodigal hospitality, of *Russian sybaritism* and Russian wisdom; how the ardent glances and arched brows of Russian maids smote the souls of lions and the hearts of eagles, how their white foreheads glowed with golden ribbons, how their gentle breasts rose and fell beneath precious pearls, how the rosy blood coursed through their blue veins and love had left its burning dimples in their tender cheeks.

It is impossible to count the countless beauties of Derzhavin's creations. They are as diversified as Russian Nature, but are all tinged with a common colour: in all of them imagination rules over feeling and everything is represented in exaggerated, hyperbolical dimensions. He does not stir your breast with powerful emotion, does not draw a tear from your eyes, but, as an eagle its prey, he swoops down on you suddenly and unexpectedly and bears you on the wings of his mighty stanzas straight to the sun and, giving you no time to collect your wits, soars with you over the vast expanse of the sky; the earth disappears from your view, your heart is gripped with a feeling akin to thrilled amazement mingled with terror, and you see yourself as though hurled by the gust of a

storm into an immense ocean; the wave now draws you into the chasm, now shoots you up to the sky, and your soul is filled with a delicious sense of freedom in this vastness. How sonorous and majestic is his song to God! How deeply has he spied the outer splendour of nature and faithfully reproduced it in his marvellous creation! And yet he glorified therein only the wisdom and power of God, with merely a hint of the divine love, the love that besought men: *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest!*, the love that invoked the Father from the shameful cross of torture: *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do!* But blame him not for this: those times were not what they are today, that was the eighteenth century. Then you must not forget that Derzhavin's was a Russian mind, a positive mind, foreign to mysticism and the occult, that his element and his triumph was external nature, and his ruling sentiment patriotism, that in this respect he was merely true to his unconscious trend and was consequently genuine. How awe-inspiring is his ode *On the Death of Meshchersky:* one's blood runs cold and hair stands on end as the sleeping soldiers in the alarm, as Shakespeare said, when the sinister footfall of *inexorable Time* strikes on the ear and the grisly apparition of Death with the scythe in her hand floats before the eyes! What vigorous and savage beauty pervades his *Waterfall,* that song of the grim North, chanted by silver-haired Skald in the depths of the sacred forest amid the gloomy night, by a flaming oak set on fire by lightning, amid the deafening roar of the cataract!

His epistles and satires represent an entirely different world, no less splendid and enchanting. They reveal the practical philosophy of the Russian mind, their chief characteristic being their *nationality*, a nationality which consists not of a mere selection of rustic words or a laboured copying of songs and tales, but in the workings of the Russian mind, the Russian way of seeing things. In this respect Derzhavin is national to a supreme degree. How ludicrous are those who call him the Russian Pindar, Horace, Anacreon; for this very triad shows that he was neither the first, the second, nor the third, but all three of them together and, consequently, superior to every one of them separately! Would it not be equally ludicrous to call Pindar or Anacreon a Greek, or Horace a Latin Derzhavin, for though he may not have served as a model

to anyone, neither did anyone serve as a model to him? Generally it should be pointed out that his *ignorance* was the cause of his *nationality*, whose worth, by the way, he did not know; that saved him from imitativeness, and he was original and national without knowing it. Had he possessed the universal erudition of a *Lomonosov*, it would have meant farewell to the poet! For, who knows, he might have embarked on tragedy and, what is more likely, the epic: his abortive efforts at drama prove the justice of such an assumption. But fate rescued him, and we have in Derzhavin *a great Russian* poet *of genius* who was the faithful echo of the life of the Russian nation, the true reflection of the age of Catherine II.

Fon-Vizin was a man of uncommon intellect and talent; to affirm that he was born a *comic author* is difficult. Indeed, can you descry in his dramatic works any evidences of the *idea of eternal life?* A droll anecdote in the form of a dialogue between various beasts could hardly be called a comedy. The object of a comedy is not to correct morals or ridicule the vices of society; no, a comedy should depict the *discrepancies between life and purpose,* should be the fruit of bitter indignation aroused by the degradation of human dignity, should be sarcasm, and not an epigram, convulsive laughter and not an amused grin, should be written with bile and not diluted salt, in a word, it should embrace life in its highest significance, that is, in its eternal struggle between good and evil, love and egoism. Can that be said of Fon-Vizin? His fools are very amusing and repellent, but that is because they are too faithful copies from nature and not the creatures of fantasy; his clever people are merely puppets uttering conned rules of good behaviour; and all because the author endeavoured to teach and improve. That man was very risible by nature; he all but choked with laughter when he heard the sound of the Polish language in the theatre; he visited France and Germany and saw nothing there but the ludicrous: there you have his comicality. Yes, his comedies are no more than the fruit of good-natured humour making fun at everything, the fruit of wittiness, but not the offspring of fantasy and ardent feeling. They appeared in good season and therefore met with unusual success; they were the expression of the prevailing ideas of educated people and therefore were popular. Though they are not artistic productions in the full sense of the word, they are

nevertheless incomparably superior to anything of the kind that has been written heretofore, with the exception of *Wit Works Woe*, of which more will be said anon. This alone is sufficient proof of the author's giftedness. His other works are perhaps still worthier, but he reveals himself there as an intelligent observer and a witty writer but not as an artist. Their characteristic trait is ridicule and facetiousness. In addition to genuine talent they are remarkable for diction, which comes very close to that of Karamzin; they are particularly inestimable in that they contain many salient features of the spirit of those curious times.

Can we forget Bogdanovich? What fame he enjoyed during his lifetime, how contemporaries admired him, and how some readers today still admire him! What is the reason for this success? Imagine yourself stunned by noisy bombast, surrounded by people talking in monologues about the most commonplace things, and you suddenly meet a man of simple and intelligent speech: would you not greatly admire him? The imitators of Lomonosov, Derzhavin and Kheraskov had stunned everybody with loud singing of odes; people had begun to believe that the Russian language was unsuited for so-called *light poetry*, which flourished so highly with the French, when a man appeared with a tale, written in a simple, natural and humourous style, unusually light and smooth for the time: all were amazed and delighted. There you have the reason for the extraordinary success of *Dushenka*, which is, admittedly, not without merit and talent. Modest Khemnitzer was not understood by his contemporaries; posterity is now justly proud of him and ranks him with Dmitriev. Kheraskov was a kind, clever and well-intentioned man and an excellent versifier for his time, but decidedly not a poet. His commonplace *Rossiada* and *Vladimir* were long objects of wonder to contemporaries and posterity who called him the Russian Homer and Virgil and conducted him into the temple of immortality under the shield of his long and dull poems; Derzhavin himself venerated him; but, alas! nothing saved him from the all-engulfing waves of Lethe! Petrov compensated his lack of real sentiment by bombast and sealed his own doom by his barbarous language. Knyazhnin was a diligent writer, not ungifted in regard to language and form, which is especially noticeable in comedy. Though he borrowed completely from French writers, it is to his credit that he was able to form an integral whole out of these pira-

cies and greatly excelled his kinsman Sumarokov. Kostrov and Bobrov were good versifiers in their time.

There you have all the geniuses of the age of Catherine the Great; they all enjoyed widespread fame and all, with the exception of Derzhavin, Fon-Vizin and Khemnitzer, are forgotten. But they are all remarkable as the pioneers of Russian literature; judging by the time and means their successes were important; and principally accrued from the time and encouragement of the empress, who searched high and low for talents and discovered them everywhere. But among them all Derzhavin alone was a poet whose name we can proudly range with the great names of poets of all ages and nations, for he alone was the free and solemn expression of his great nation and his wonderful age.

(Till the next issue.)

LITERARY REVERIES

(Continuation)

Amicus Plato, sed magis amica veritas

The pioneers of literature are never forgotten; for, whether talented or talentless, they are in either case *historical figures.* Not alone in the history of French literature do the names of Ronsards, Garniers and Hardys precede those of the Corneilles and Racines. Happy men! How cheaply they have won immortality! In my previous article I have committed an unpardonable error, for in dealing with the poets and writers of Catherine's age I have overlooked some of them. I therefore consider it my bounden duty to mend this fault and mention Popovsky, a fair verse and prose writer of his times; Maikov, whose productions, since times of yore in all poetics belong to a class of *comic poems,* contributed in no little measure to the spread of bad taste in Russia and provoked our famous playwright, Prince Shakhovskoy, to compose a pretty tawdry poem entitled *The Stolen Coats;* Ablesimov who, unintentionally as it were, or by mistake, managed among many bad plays to write an excellent popular vaudeville, *The Miller,* a work which was such

a favourite with our good grandfathers and is not without its merits even today; Ruban who, through the *complacence* and by the grace of our erstwhile literary arbiters procured immortality at a very cheap price; Neledinsky whose songs, through their overlay of sentimentality, betray occasional feeling and a spark of talent; Yefimiev and Plavilshchikov, once considered good playwrights, but now, alas! entirely forgotten, despite the fact that our honourable Nikolai Ivanovich Grech himself admitted that they had some merits. Furthermore, the age of Catherine II was marked by a wonderful phenomenon so rare with us, for whose reappearance we sinners will very likely have a long time to wait. Who has not heard the name, at least by hearsay, of Novikov? What a pity that we have so little information about this remarkable and, I venture to say, great man! It is always so with us: people will not cease clamouring about a man like Sumarokov, a writer without talent, and forget about the beneficent deeds of a man whose whole life and activity were devoted to the common weal!

The age of Alexander the Beneficent, like the age of Catherine the Great, belongs to the happiest moments in the life of the Russian nation and, to some extent, was its continuation. It was a carefree and merry life, proud of the present, and filled with sanguine hopes for the future. Catherine's wise legislation and innovations had taken root, became naturalized, so to speak; the new beneficial institutions of the young and gentle tsar consolidated the welfare of Russia and accelerated the country's further progress. Indeed, what a lot was done for education! How many universities, lyceums, gymnasiums, county and parish schools were founded! Education began to spread among all classes of the nation, for it became more or less accessible to all classes. The patronage of an enlightened and educated monarch, the worthy grandson of Catherine, everywhere discovered gifted men and gave them full scope and the wherewithal to pursue their chosen calling. At that time the idea of the country needing a literature of its own first cropped up. In the reign of Catherine literature had existed only at the court; people engaged in it because the empress engaged in it. It would have gone hard with Derzhavin had Catherine been displeased with his *Epistle to Felitza* and *The Grandee*, it would have gone hard with Fon-Vizin had she not laughed to tears over his *Brigadier* and *The Minor;* little respect would have been shown the bard of *God* and *The Wa-*

terfall had he not been *privy councillor* and *knight of various orders.* Under Alexander everyone began to engage in literature, and title began to be separated from talent. A new and hitherto unheard-of phenomenon made its appearance: writers became the movers, the leaders and educators of society; attempts were made to establish a language and literature. But alas! these attempts were neither durable nor substantial; for attempt presupposes calculation, and calculation presupposes volition, and volition frequently runs counter to circumstances and clashes with the laws of common sense. There were many talents but not a single genius, and all literary phenomena did not arise as the result of necessity, spontaneously and unconsciously, they were not engendered by events and the national spirit. Men did not ask: what must we do and how? They were told: do what the foreigners are doing, and you will be doing the right thing. Is it surprising that, despite all efforts to create a language and literature, we then had neither the one nor the other, nor do we have them now! Is it surprising that at the very commencement of the literary movement we had so many literary schools, but not one that was genuine and fundamental; that they sprang up like mushrooms after a rain and vanished like soap bubbles; and that we, as yet possessing no literature in the full sense of the word, had contrived to become classics and romanticists, Greeks and Romans, French and Italians, Germans and English?...

Two writers met the age of Alexander and were justly considered to be the adornment of that age's dawn: Karamzin and Dmitriev. Karamzin—there was the actor of our literature who, at his very first debut, his first appearance on the stage, was greeted with loud applause and loud hisses! There is a name for which so many sanguinary battles were given, so many fierce skirmishes fought, so many lances broken! And is it long since the turmoil of battle and clash of arms have subsided, since the warring factions have sheathed the sword and now rack their brains to understand what they were fighting about? Which of my readers has not been a witness to those fierce literary battles, has not heard the deafening noise of extravagant and senseless praise and criticism, some just, some ridiculous? And now, on the grave of the never-to-be-forgotten hero—has victory been decided, has one or the other side triumphed? Alas, not yet! On the one hand we are called upon as *loyal sons of the motherland* to *pray on the grave of Karamzin* and *utter*

his sacred name in a whisper; and on the other, men listen to this appeal with an incredulous and amused smile. It is a curious spectacle! The conflict of two generations who do not understand each other! Indeed, is it not ridiculous to imagine that victory will be on the side of Messieurs Ivanchin-Pisarevs, Somovs and the like? Still more preposterous is the idea that the palm of victory will go to Mr. Artsibashev and his fraternity.

Karamzin ... *mais je reviens toujours à mes moutons*.... Do you know what has been, still is and, I believe, for a long time will continue to be the greatest hindrance to the spread of serious concepts of literature and the cultivation of taste in Russia? *Literary idolatry!* Children, we all still pray to and worship the numerous gods of our populous Olympus without a thought of more frequently consulting the birth certificates to make sure that the objects of our worship are really of celestial origin. It cannot be helped! Blind fanaticism has always been the lot of infant societies. Do you remember what Merzlyakov had to pay for his criticisms of Kheraskov? Do you remember what Mr. Kachenovsky's comments on the *History of the Russian State* cost him? Those comments of a venerable gentleman which expressed almost everything that was subsequently said about Karamzin's history by young men? Yes, we need a great measure, too great a measure, of selfless love of truth and strength of character to assail a catchpenny authority, leave alone a real authority: would you find it pleasant to be publicly decried as a hater of your country, an envier of talent, a heartless Zoilus, *an ingrate*? And by whom? By almost illiterate men, ignoramuses, embittered against the successes of intellect, clinging obstinately to their little shell when everybody around them is hurrying, rushing, flying past! Are they not right in this respect? What, for instance, can Mr. Ivanchin-Pisarev, Mr. Voyeikov or Prince Shalikov expect for themselves when they hear that Karamzin is not an artist, not a genius and similar sacrilegious opinions? They, who lived on the crumbs that fell from the table of this man and founded thereon the edifice of their immortality? Mr. Artsibashev comes along with critical little articles in which he argues that Karamzin frequently and needlessly deviated from the chronicles which served him as source material, frequently at his own sweet will or whim misinterprcted their meaning. And do you think that Karamzin's admirers promptly instituted a comparison and convicted Mr.

Artsibashev of slander? Nothing of the sort. Odd people! Must you make a fuss about envy and Zoiluses, about stonemasons and sculptors, must you pounce on empty trifling passages in footnotes, fence with shadows and make much ado about nothing? What if Mr. Artsibashev does envy the fame of Karamzin: believe me, he will not kill Karamzin that way if he enjoys deserved fame; what if he does set out to prove with an important air that Karamzin's diction is *not euphonic*—who cares—it is only ludicrous, and not at all annoying. Would it not be better if you took the chronicles into your hands and proved that either Mr. Artsibashev was a slanderer, or that the oversights of the historian were insignificant and negligible; or perhaps say nothing at all? But, poor fellows, that task is beyond you; you have never set eyes on the chronicles, you are weak in history:

> But say, for this excitement, where's the call?[28]

However, say what you may, there are many of this kind of people, unfortunately.

> Lo! the opinion of the rabble
> Is honour's mainspring, I'll be bound—
> The thing that makes the world go round.[29]

Karamzin's name marked an epoch in our literature; his influence on contemporaries was so great and strong that a whole period of our literature from the 'nineties to the 'twenties is, in good reason, called the Karamzin period. This in itself sufficiently proves that Karamzin was quite a head above his contemporaries in education. Besides his name as an historian he still holds, though not very firmly and definitely, the repute of a writer, poet and artist. Let us examine his claims to these titles. Posterity has not yet come for Karamzin. Who of us in childhood has not been solaced with his stories, has not laughed and cried over his works? The memories of childhood are so sweet, so alluring—can one be impartial here? However, let us attempt it.

Imagine for yourself a society diverse in character, multifarious, one might say, heterogeneous: one section of it read, spoke, thought and prayed to God in French; the other knew Derzhavin by heart and ranked him not only with Lomonosov, but with Petrov, Sumarokov and Kheraskov; the former knew Russian very badly; the

latter had been brought up on the grandiloquent and scholastic language of the author of *Rossiada* and *Cadmus and Harmony*; the common trait of both was a semi-savage, semi-sophisticated condition; in a word, a society disposed to reading, but devoid of any luminous ideas on literature. And there appears a youth with a soul open to all that is good and beautiful, but who, though endowed with happy talents and a great intellect, had not received his fair share of education and scholarship, as we shall see below. Not having raised himself to the level of his age, he was incomparably superior to his society. This youth looked upon life as an exploit, and, full of youthful virility, he craved for the fame of authorship, craved for the honour of being a promoter of his country's progress along the path of enlightenment, and all his life he was a votary of this sacred and sublime cause. Is not Karamzin a remarkable man, worthy of the highest respect, if not veneration? But do not forget that the *man* must not be confused with the *writer and artist.* Otherwise there is the risk, of course without application to Karamzin, that even Rollin would bid fair to claim sainthood. Design and execution are two different things. Now let us see how Karamzin performed his high mission.

He saw how little had been done with us, how little his fellow-writers understood what was to be done, saw that high society had reason to spurn their native language, because the written language was at loggerheads with the spoken. That was an age of *phraseology*, pursuit of words, when ideas were matched to figures of speech merely to make sense. Karamzin was endowed by nature with a musical ear for language and a faculty for facile and eloquent expression; consequently, it was not difficult for him to remodel the language. It is said that he patterned our language after the French, as Lomonosov had patterned it after the Greek. That is true only in part. Probably Karamzin strove to write the language the way it was spoken. In this respect he was to blame for having neglected the idiom of the Russian language, for not having lent an ear to the vernacular of the common people and generally for not having made a study of native sources. But he rectified this mistake in his *History*. Karamzin set before himself the aim of *developing in the Russian public a reading habit.* I ask you: can the vocation of an artist lend itself to a premeditated aim, no matter how splendid that aim may be? More: may an artist debase

himself, bend, so to speak, to the public which does not reach above his knees and is therefore incapable of understanding him! Let us presume that it is permissible; then another question crops up: can he in such a case remain an artist in his creations? Undoubtedly not. The person who converses with a child becomes a child himself for the moment. Karamzin wrote for children, and wrote childish-fashion; is it surprising that these children forgot him when they grew up, and in their turn passed his works over to their children? It is in the nature of things: the child listened with rapt credulity to the tales of his old nurse, who held him in leading strings, about ghosts and dead men, and laughed at her stories when he grew up. You have the custody of a child: now mind, that child will become an adolescent, then a youth and eventually a man, therefore watch the development of his gifts and, in conformity with it, change the method of teaching, be always above him; otherwise you will have a bad time: that child will begin to laugh at you before your face. While teaching him, learn still more yourself, or he will outstrip you: children grow quickly. Now tell me frankly, *sine ira et studio*, as our truebred scholars say, who is to blame that *Poor Liza* is now being laughed at as much as it was once cried over? You can say what you like, messieurs Karamzin admirers, but I would rather read the stories of Baron Brambeus than *Poor Liza* or *Natalia the Boyar's Daughter*! New times, new customs! Karamzin's stories inculcated a desire for reading, and many people learned to read from them; then let us be grateful to their author; but let us leave them in peace, even tear them out of the hands of our children, for they will cause considerable mischief: they will corrupt their feeling with false sentimentality.

Apart from this Karamzin's works lose much of their value in our days because he was rarely *sincere* and *natural* in them. The epoch of *phraseology* is passing for us; in our conception a phrase should be chosen for the purpose of expressing thought or feeling; formerly thought and feeling were sought for the sake of phrase-mongery. I know that we are not entirely blameless even today in this respect; at least, today if tinsel can easily be foisted off as gold, stilted mind and affected feeling as the play of intellect and the flame of emotion, it is not for long, and the stronger the delusion all the harsher the disillusionment; the greater the veneration of false deities, the more cruelly does disgrace punish the impostor.

People have become generally more candid nowadays: any man of true education will sooner admit that he does not understand the beauties of this or that work than adopt an insincere attitude of admiration. Hence you will scarcely find a well-meaning simpleton these days who believes that Karamzin's copious torrents of tears flowed from his heart and soul and were not the favourite coquetry of his talent, the habitual stilts of his authorship. Such falsity and affectation are all the more deplorable when the author is a man of talent. It would not occur to anyone to blame, for example, sensitive Prince Shalikov for such a fault, for it would not occur to anyone to read his sentimental works. Thus, prestige here is not only no justification, but a double fault. Indeed, is it not strange to see a grown-up person, be it Karamzin himself, shedding copious tears at the sight of the squint eye of "The Great Man of Grammar,"[30] or at the spectacle of the vast sands surrounding *Calais*, or over the dear little leaves and petals, and all God's little insects? After all:

> We cannot always tearful rivers
> Over great calamities shed![31]

This tearfulness, or better say, plaintiveness, not infrequently mars the best pages of his history. People will say: it was that kind of age. That is not true; the eighteenth century was by no means characterized by mere plaintiveness; besides, common sense is older than the ages, and it forbids tears when a man wants to laugh, or laughter when he wants to cry. It was simply a droll and pitiful infancy, a queer and inexplicable mania.

Now another question: Did he accomplish as much as he could, or less? I reply emphatically: *less.* He undertook a journey: what a splendid opportunity he had of unfolding before the eyes of his compatriots the great and alluring picture of the fruits of centuries of education, the progress of civilization and social organization of the noble members of the human race! ... That was so easy for him to do! His pen was so eloquent! His credit with contemporaries so high! And what did he do instead? What are his *Letters of a Russian Traveller* filled with? We learn from them, for the most part, where he dined, where he supped, what dishes were served him and how much the tavern keeper charged him; we learn how Mr. B— paid court to Madame N— and how a squirrel

scratched his nose; how the sun rose above a Swiss village through which a shepherd girl with a bouquet of roses pinned to her breast was driving a cow.... Did he have to travel so far to see this? Compare *The Letters of a Russian Traveller* in this respect to Fon-Vizin's *Letters to a Grandee* of an anterior date: what a difference! Karamzin met many German celebrities—and what did he learn from his conversations with them? That they were all kindhearted people, enjoying peace of mind and sereneness of spirit. And how modest, how commonplace were his talks with them! In France he was more fortunate in this connection, for a well-known reason: remember the meeting of *the Russian Scythian* with *the French Plato*.[32] How did it happen? Because he had not prepared himself properly for the journey, he was not sufficiently learned. But, despite this, the triviality of his *Letters of a Russian Traveller* was due more to his personal character than to insufficient information. He was not quite conversant with Russia's requirements in the intellectual field. Of his verses little need be said: they are the same phrases but in rhyme. There, as everywhere else, Karamzin is a reformer of the language, but certainly not a poet.

These are the shortcomings of Karamzin's works, this is the reason why he was so soon forgotten, why he almost outlived his fame. In justice to him it should be said that his works, where he has not been carried away by sentimentality and is sincere, are pervaded by a warm candour; that is especially evident in the passages where he speaks of Russia. Yes, he loved the good, he loved his country and served it to the best of his ability; his name is immortal, but his works, with the exception of his *History* have died and will never be resurrected despite all the declamations of men like Messrs. Ivanchin-Pisarev and Orest Somov!

The History of the Russian State is Karamzin's most important exploit; there he is mirrored with all his faults and merits. I do not venture to pass a *learned* judgment on this work for, I frankly confess, I would by no means be equal to such a task. My opinion (by no means new) will be that of an amateur and not an authority. Considering all that was done for systematic history before Karamzin one cannot deny that his study was a prodigious feat. Its chief fault consists in his view of things and events, often childish and always, at any rate, unmanly; in vociferous rhetorics and a misplaced desire to be didactic and edifying where the facts speak

for themselves; in a partiality for the heroes of his narrative which does credit to the author's heart but not to his intelligence. Its chief merit consists in interesting narrative and skilful presentation of events, not infrequently in artistic delineation of characters and, above all in style, in which he decidedly excels. Nothing has yet been written in our country that would resemble it in this respect. Karamzin's style in *The History of the Russian State* is pre-eminently a Russian style; it can only be compared to the verses of Pushkin's *Boris Godunov*. It is nothing like the style the author has used in his minor works; for there the author has drawn on native sources, is permeated with the spirit of historical monuments; here his style, with the exception of the first four volumes which are for the most part mere rhetorical flourish but in which the language is nevertheless remarkably well-finished, is dignified, majestic and vigorous, and frequently becomes truly eloquent. In brief, according to the expression of one of our critics, *The History of the Russian State* is a monument to our language against which Time will break his scythe. I repeat: the name of Karamzin is immortal, but his works, with the exception of his *History*, are already dead and will never be resurrected!

Almost contemporaneously with Karamzin the literary field was taken by I. I. Dmitriev. He was in a certain respect a reformer of poetical language and his works, prior to Zhukovsky and Batyushkov, were righteously considered as standards. His poetical talent has never been called in question. The principal element of his talent is wit, by reason of which *Borrowed Sense* is his best work. His fables are excellent; they needed only nationality to make them perfect. In tales Dmitriev had no rivals. Besides these his talent occasionally rose to lyric power, proof of which is to be found in his admirable work *Yermak* and especially in his translation, imitation or adaptation (call it what you will) of Goethe's play, known under the name of *Meditations on Thunder*.

Krylov brought the fable in Russia to the acme of perfection. Need one prove that this Russian poet was a genius, that he eclipsed all his rivals? I think no one entertains any doubts on that score. I will merely point out, as others have done before me, that the fable's amazing success in Russia was due to the fact that its birth was not accidental but the outcome of our nationality which is so passionately fond of fiction and parables. There you have the most

convincing evidence that literature must emphatically be national if it is to be enduring and everlasting! Remember the many ineffectual attempts on the part of foreigners to translate Krylov. Consequently they are cruelly mistaken who believe that only by servile imitation of foreigners can we attract their notice.

Ozerov has the reputation of being the reformer and founder of the Russian theatre. Of course he is neither; for the Russian theatre is the dream of the excited imagination of our good patriots. It is true that Ozerov was our first dramatist with a genuine though not immense talent: he did not create the theatre, but introduced the French theatre into our country, *i.e.*, he was the first to speak in the true language of the French Melpomene. He was not, however, a dramatist in the full sense of the word: he did not know man. Bring a man to a Shakespeare or a Schiller performance who possesses no learning, no education, but with an inborn intelligence and receptive to the beautiful; not being versed in history he will nevertheless grasp at once what is going on; not understanding historical personages he will perfectly understand the human; but if he looks at an Ozerov tragedy he will understand nothing at all. Perhaps that is the common fault of the so-called *classical tragedy*. But Ozerov has other faults which derive from his personal character. Endowed with a soul tender but not deep, impulsive but not energetic he was incapable of depicting powerful passions. That is why his women are more interesting than his men; that is why his villains are merely the personification of common, generic vices; that is why he made an Arcadian shepherd out of Fingal and made him speak with Moina in madrigals, more befitting an Erast Chertopolokhov than the stern worshipper of Odin. His best play is undoubtedly *Aedipus*, and his worst *Dmitri Donskoy*, an inflated piece of rhetoric adapted to dialogue. No one today will deny Ozerov's poetical talent, but neither will any one read him, still less admire him.

Zhukovsky's appearance amazed Russia, and not without reason. He was our country's Columbus who discovered for it German and English literatures, the existence of which it had never suspected. Moreover, he completely transformed the language of poetry, and excelled Karamzin in prose:* these are his chief merits. He has

* I have in mind the minor pieces of Karamzin.

few original works of his own; his productions are either translations, or adaptations or imitations of foreign works. A style that was bold, vigorous, though not always concordant with feeling, and a one-sided romantic tendency said to be the outcome of personal experience—such are the characteristics of Zhukovsky's works. It is a mistaken notion that he was an imitator of the Germans and the English: he would not have written otherwise had he not been familiar with them, if he only wished to be true to himself. He was not a son of the nineteenth century, but was, so to speak, a *proselyte;* add to this that his works were perhaps really the outcome of his personal experiences, and you will understand why they do not contain world ideas, ideas of humanity, why *Karamzinian* ideas frequently seem to lurk under the most gorgeous forms (for example *My friend, protector, angel mine!* etc.), why his finest works (as, for example, *The Poet in the Camp of the Russian Warriors*) contain a number of purely rhetorical passages. He was self-contained, and that is the reason for his one-sidedness, which in his case was supreme originality. In the profusion of his translations Zhukovsky is related to Russian literature as Voss or August Schlegel were related to German literature. Authorities assert that he did not translate but assimilated to Russian literature the works of Schillers, Byrons, etc.; that, I believe, is beyond a shadow of doubt. In short, Zhukovsky is a poet with a remarkably vigorous talent, a poet who has rendered Russian literature an inestimable service, a poet who will never be forgotten, who will never cease to be read; but nonetheless, not the kind of poet one would call a genuine Russian poet whose name could be proclaimed at a European tournament where *national* fames contend for supremacy.

Much of what has been said of Zhukovsky applies to Batyushkov. The latter stood definitely on the borderline of two ages; he was alternately captivated and repelled by the past, refused to recognize and was himself denied recognition by the present. He was a man of great talent, though not a genius. What a pity he did not know German literature: he needed little to achieve perfect literary treatment. Read his article on morals, based on religion, and you will understand the yearning of the soul and its craving for the infinite after voluptuous delights which permeate his harmonious creations. He wrote of life and the impressions of a poet

where, amid childish thoughts, one catches a gleam of modern ideas, and also wrote of what he called light poetry, as though there were a heavy poetry. Do you not agree that he did not belong entirely to either age? Batyushkov, with Zhukovsky, was the reformer of our poetical language, that is, he wrote in a pure, melodious language; his prose, too, is better than that of Karamzin's minor pieces. In point of talent Batyushkov ranks with our second-rate writers and is, in my opinion, inferior to Zhukovsky; the idea of comparing him to Pushkin is ridiculous. Only in the 'twenties could people believe in a triumvirate in which our men of letters included Zhukovsky, Batyushkov and Pushkin.

It remains for me to mention Merzlyakov and I will be done with the whole *Karamzinian* period of our literature, with the list of all its celebrities, its aristocracy: there remain the plebeians, of whom little need be said unless it is to prove the fickleness of our celebrated authorities. Merzlyakov was a man of uncommon poetical talent and one of the most touching victims of the spirit of the times. He expounded the theory of the elegant, and yet that theory remained an unsolved riddle to him throughout his life; he was considered the oracle of critique and did not know the fundamentals of criticism; finally, he was all his life under a delusion as regards his talent, for, while having written several immortal songs, he also composed numerous odes which reveal here and there an occasional gleam of a mighty talent that scholasticism was unable to kill, but for the rest is sheer rhetoric. Despite this, I repeat: his was a powerful, vigorous talent: what depth of feeling, what ineffable yearning pervade his songs! How keenly in them did he sympathize with the Russian people, and how faithfully did he express in his poetic notes the lyrical side of its life! These are not the ditties of a Delvig, this is not an adaptation to the popular measure—no, it is a living, natural effusion of feeling, where everything is unartificial and natural. After reading or hearing any of his songs one feels an impulse to exclaim with him:

> Ah! that song so precious was:
> It wrung with pain the bosom fair,
> Yet one would fain forever listen
> To those strains of sweet despair![33]

And this man, conversant with the German language and literature, this man with a poetic soul and deep feeling, wrote solemn odes, translated Tasso, declared from the professorial pulpit that *only the miraculous genius of the Germans likes to place gallows on the stage,* discovered genius in Sumarokov and was charmed, infatuated with the spurious and bedizened poetry of the French while reading Goethe and Schiller!... He was born a practical man of poetry, and fate made him a theoretician; ardent feeling attracted him to songs, while system compelled him to write odes and translate Tasso!...

Now come the remaining men of letters of the *Karamzinian* period, noteworthy for talent or prestige.

Kapnist belongs to three reigns. He once enjoyed the reputation of being a poet of unusual talent. Mr. Pletnev even claimed somewhere and sometime that Kapnist was endowed with something that Lamartine lacked: *le bon vieux temps*! Today Kapnist is entirely forgotten, possibly because he wept in his verses according to the *best threnetic* rules and, still more, because barely perceptible glimmers of talent are insufficient to save an author from the all-engulfing waves of Lethe. He created quite a stir with his *Slander*, but this notorious *Slander* is neither more nor less than a farce written in a language that was barbarous even in those days.[34]

Gnedich and Milonov were true poets: if they are rarely read today it is because they were born too early.

Mr. Voyeikov (Alexander Fedorovich, as he appears in Mr. Grech's literary *Who's Who*, known under the title *History of Russian Literature*) once played the role of *celebrity* in our literature. He translated Delille (whom he regarded as a poet, and a great poet at that); he had intended writing a didactic poem himself (everyone in those days explicitly believed in the possibility of didactic poetry); he translated (as best he could) the ancients; then he devoted himself to the publication of various periodicals in which he set about with indefatigable zeal unmasking the notorious friends Messrs. Grech and Bulgarin (a lofty mission—upon my word!); now, in his old age, he alternately, or rather by issues, reviles Baron Brambeus and bends his knees before him, and above all sings the praises of Alexander Filippovich Smirdin for paying authors high fees; reprints old verses and articles from the *Molva*

for 1831. What is to be done? From the sublime to the ridiculous is but one step, Napoleon said! ...

Prince Vyazemsky, the Russian Charles Nodier, wrote in verse and prose about all and everything. His critical articles (*i.e.*, prefaces to sundry publications) were quite unusual in their time. Many of his innumerable poems are noteworthy for sparkling wit, both genuine and original, and sometimes feeling; many of them are far-fetched, as for instance *No Thank You!* and others. But, generally speaking, Prince Vyazemsky ranks among our distinguished poets and men of letters.

(Till the next issue.)

LITERARY REVERIES

(Continuation)

There was a time! ...
A popular saying

In the preceding article I reviewed the *Karamzinian* period of our literature, a period which lasted a full quarter of a century. A whole period in literature, a whole quarter of a century are marked by the influence of a single talent, a single man, and a quarter of a century means much, much too much, for a literature that had five years to go to its second century!* And what did that period create that could be considered great and enduring? Where are the geniuses it used to flaunt? Only one among them all was unquestionably great and immortal, and that one did not pay to Karamzin the tribute he usually exacted even from those who stood above him in talent and education: I speak of Krylov. I repeat:

* The origin of our literature unquestionably dates to 1739 when Lomonosov sent in his first ode from abroad—*On the Capture of Khotin.* Is there need to repeat that not with Cantemir, nor Tredyakovsky, still less with Simeon Polotsky, did our literature take its rise? Is there need to prove that *The Lay of Prince Igor's Regiment, The Legend of the Battle of the Don,* the eloquent *Epistle of Vassian to Ivan III* and other historical records, folk songs and scholastic ecclesiastic rhetoric have as much relation to our literature as the records of antediluvian literature would have had, if discovered, to Sanskrit, Greek or Latin literature? Only Messrs. Grech and Plaksin need to have such truisms explained to them, and I do not intend to enter into a learned discussion with them.

What was done in that period for immortality? One has acquainted us to some extent, and that one-sidedly, with German and English literature, another with the French theatre, a third with French seventeenth century criticism, a fourth.... But where is literature? Seek it not: your labour will be in vain; transplanted flowers are short-lived: that is an axiom. I said that the idea of a literature was first born in our country at the beginning of that period: a consequence of it was the appearance of literary magazines. But what did these magazines represent? An innocent pastime, pursuits of idleness, and sometimes a means of making a little money. Not one of them followed the progress of education, not one of them passed on to its compatriots the successes achieved by mankind in the realm of self-improvement. I remember a certain sentimental magazine—I believe it was in 1813—announcing the appearance in England of a new poet by the name of Biron who wrote in a sort of *romantic style* and became particularly popular for his poem "Shild Harold": so there you are. Of course, at that time people not only in Russia but to some extent in Europe regarded literature not through the clean glass of reason, but through the dim phial of French *classicism*; but the movement there had started, and the French themselves, sobered by the Restoration, had grown a good deal wiser and had even become entirely regenerated. In the meantime our literary observers were dozing peacefully and were only roused when the foe burst into their homes and began to rule the roost there; only then did they raise a hue and cry: help! murder! bandits! romanticism!...

The *Karamzinian* period of our literature was followed by the *Pushkin* period which lasted almost exactly ten years. I say the *Pushkin* period, for who will not agree that Pushkin was the head of that decade, that everything then centred around him? I do not, however, mean to say that Pushkin quite signified for his day what Karamzin had been for his. The very fact that his was the unconscious activity of the artist and not the practical and deliberate activity of a writer, implies that there was a great difference between him and Karamzin. Pushkin held sway solely by the power of his talent and the fact that he was the son of his age; Karamzin's sway has latterly been founded on blind homage to his authority. Pushkin did not say that poetry was this and this, and science that and that; no: he provided in his works a standard for the former and to a

certain extent showed the *contemporary* value of the latter. At that time, namely, in the 'twenties (1817-1824) the echo of the intellectual revolution that was taking place in Europe had a faint reverberation in our country; men at that time began to speak, albeit timidly and uncertainly, that the drunken savage Shakespeare was immeasurably superior to starched Racine, that Schlegel was alleged to know more about art than La Harpe, that German literature, far from being inferior, was incomparably higher than the French; that the honourable Messieurs Boileau, Batteux, La Harpe and Marmontel had unconscionably traduced art, since they had but a faint notion of it themselves. Of course, now no one doubts this, and an attempt to prove such truisms at this time of the day would draw down derision on one's head; but it was really no laughing matter then; for even in Europe in those days such impious ideas were fraught with risk of the inquisitorial *auto-da-fé;* can you imagine the danger people ran in Russia who had the temerity to assert that Sumarokov was not a poet, that Kheraskov was heavy, and so on? It is obvious then that Pushkin's excessive influence was due to the fact that, in relation to Russia, he was the son of his time in the full sense of the word, that he kept abreast of his country, was the representative of its intellectual progress; consequently his sway was legitimate. Karamzin, on the contrary, as we have seen above, was in the nineteenth century, the son of the eighteenth, and even that he did not in a certain sense fully express, for he had not even raised himself to its level in his ideas, and consequently his influence might be considered legitimate only until the appearance of Zhukovsky and Batyushkov, when his powerful influence began to act only as a drag on the progress of our literature. Pushkin's appearance on the scene was a touching spectacle; the poet-youth, receiving the benediction of the anointed seer Derzhavin standing on the edge of the grave into which he was making ready to lay his laurelled head; the poet-man stretching forth his hand to him across the vast gulf of a century which morally separated two generations; and, finally, standing beside him and together with him forming a radiant twin constellation in the desolate firmament of our literature.

Classicism and *romanticism*—these were two words that dominated the *Pushkin* period of our literature; these were the two words on which books, dissertations, magazine articles and even verse

were written, with which we went to sleep and woke up, for which we fought to the death, over which we argued ourselves to tears in classrooms and drawing rooms, in the streets and on the squares. Now these two words have become somehow vulgar and ridiculous; it is somehow strange and bizarre to come across them in print or hear them in conversation. But is it so long since that *then* ended and that *now* began? How can one help saying after this that everything is rushing onward on the wings of the wind? Unless it be some place like Daghestan where one can still gravely discuss those departed martyrs—*classicism* and *romanticism*—and impart to us as news that Racine is somewhat mawkish, that the Encyclopaedists occasionally blundered, that Shakespeare, Goethe and Schiller are great and Schlegel spoke the truth, and so on. But that is not at all surprising: for is not Daghestan in Asia?

In Europe *classicism* was literary *Catholicism*. The late Aristotle, without his knowledge and consent, was elected its *pontiff* by an unauthorized *conclave;* its *inquisition* was French *critique;* its grand *inquisitors*: Boileau, Batteux, La Harpe and company; objects of worship: Corneille, Racine, Voltaire and others. Willy-nilly messieurs the inquisitors enrolled in their calendar the ancients too, among them the eternal old Homer (together with Virgil), Tasso, Ariosto and Milton who (perhaps with the exception of the bracketed) were innocent of *classicism* both in body and soul, for they were natural in their creations. Such was the state of affairs until the eighteenth century. Then everything turned topsy-turvy: white became black, and black white. The hypocritical, depraved, mawkish eighteenth century resigned its breath, and with the advent of the nineteenth century intellect and taste were reborn to a new and better life. Its dawn was heralded in by the appearance of a terrible meteor, the son of Fate, vested with all her appalling might, or, better to say, Fate herself appeared in the form of Napoleon, the Napoleon who became the *master of our thoughts*, in speaking of whom mediocrity itself was exalted to poesy.[35] The age assumed gigantic proportions and prodigious grandeur; France became ashamed of herself and began to point her finger with reviling laughter at the wretched ruins of bygone days which, seemingly oblivious of the great upheavals taking place before their eyes, even at the fateful passage of the Berezina, sat perched on the bough of a tree curling their ringlets with stark hand and sprinkling them

with traditional powder, while around them raged the winter blizzard of the implacable North and men dropped by the thousands stricken with terror and cold.... And so, the French, stunned by these great events, grew more staid and serious, stopped skipping about on one leg; this was the first step to their conversion. Then they learned that their neighbours, the clumsy Germans, whom they had always held up as an example of aesthetic bad taste, possessed a literature, a literature deserving deep and serious study, and they also realized that their own illustrious poets and philosophers had not by any means set the pillars of Hercules to the genius of man. Everyone knows how that happened, and therefore I will not expatiate on how Châteaubriand became the godfather and Madam de Staël the midwife of young romanticism in France. I will merely say that that *romanticism* was just a return to naturalness and, consequently, to originality and nationality in art, a preference for idea over form and the overthrow of alien and restringent forms of antiquity which suited the works of modern art as much as the Greek tunic or Roman toga would suit a powdered wig, an embroidered vest and a shaved chin. It ensues from what has been said that so-called *romanticism* was a very old novelty and by no means the offspring of the nineteenth century; it was, so to say, the *nationality* of the new Christian world of Europe. Germany since time immemorial was pre-eminently a romantic country due both to its feudal forms of government and the idealistic trend of its intellectual activity. The Reformation killed capitalism in Germany and, together with it, classicism. The same Reformation, though in a somewhat different shape, enabled England to cast off the trammels: Shakespeare was a romanticist.[36] Romanticism apparently was something new only to France and perhaps to states which had no literature of their own, such as Sweden, Denmark, etc. France pounced upon this novelty with all her characteristic vivacity and drew the unliterated states after her. Youthful literature[37] is merely a reaction to the old; and since public life and literature in France go hand in hand it is no matter for surprise that their present literature is distinguished for its excesses: reactions are never moderate. Today everyone in France, for the sake of mere fashion, wants to be profound and energetic after the style of a Ferragus[38] as previously everyone for the sake of fashion wanted to be frivolous, nonchalant, gullible and insignificant.

And yet, how strange! never had there appeared in Europe such a unanimous and powerful impulse to throw off the trammels of *classicism, scholasticism, pedantism* or *stupidism* (they all amount to the same thing). Byron, another *master of our thoughts,*[39] and Walter Scott crushed with the weight of their creations the school of Pope and Hugh Blair and restored romanticism to England. In France there appeared Victor Hugo with a crowd of other potent talents, in Poland Mickiewicz, in Italy Manzoni, in Denmark Oehlenschläger, in Sweden Tegnér. Was Russia alone fated to remain without her literary Luther?

Classicism in Europe was neither more nor less than literary *Catholicism*: then what was it in Russia? That question is not difficult to answer: in Russia *classicism* was merely the faint reverberation of the European echo, for an explanation of which one had no need to travel to India by the *John Bull.*[40] Pushkin was not stilted, he was always truthful and sincere in his feelings, and created his own forms for his ideas: that was his romanticism. In this respect Derzhavin, too, was a romanticist very much after Pushkin's pattern; the reason for this, I repeat, was his *ignorance.* Had that man had learning, we would have possessed two Kheraskovs between whom it would have been difficult to draw the line.

Thus, the third decade of the nineteenth century was notable for the dominant influence of Pushkin. What can I say of this man that the reader has not already heard? I confess that this is the first time I find myself nonplussed in undertaking to pass an opinion on Russian literature; it is the first time I regret that nature has not endowed me with poetical talent, for there are things in nature of which it is a sin to speak in humble prose!

In contrast to the slow and irresolute, or rather limping, pace of the *Karamzin* period, the *Pushkin* period moved along swiftly. It may be affirmed that life came into our literature only in the last decade—and what a life—disturbing, seething, active! Life is action, action is struggle, and at that time people fought a mortal fight. Polemics with us, especially *magazine* polemics, are often deprecated. That is quite natural. Can people indifferent to intellectual life be expected to understand how one can prefer truth to the conventions, and for the sake of truth lay himself open to persecution and hatred! O, they will never understand what rapture it is, what voluptuous delight of the soul to be able to tell a *genius*

in retirement without the right to wear the uniform that he is ridiculous and pitiful with his childish pretensions to greatness, to make him realize that it is not to himself but to some blustering journalist he owes his literary repute; to tell some veteran that he is enjoying his prestige on credit, for old times' sake, by force of habit; to prove to some literary teacher that he is short-sighted, that he has fallen behind his times, that he must learn again from the ABC; to tell some humbug from God knows where, some cunning blade and Vidocq,[41] some literary huckster that he is an insult both to the literature he represents and the good people whose credit he enjoys, that he has mocked at the sanctity of truth and the sanctity of knowledge, to brand his name with the infamy of ostracism, to tear the mask off him, though it be a baronial one, and show him to the world in all his nakedness....[42]

I repeat, there is indescribable rapture in this, a boundless voluptuous delight! Of course, in literary jousts the rules of decorum and sociality are sometimes infringed; but a clever and educated reader will ignore the vulgar innuendos regarding *ingrates, duck's beaks, seminarists, cheap whiskey, merchants,* and *chandlers*;[43] he will always be able to distinguish truth from falsehood, a man from weakness, talent from delusion; the ignorant readers, on the other hand, will be none the wiser or foolisher. If everything was nice and proper, everywhere compliments and courtesy, what scope there would be for dishonesty, humbug and ignorance: there would be no one to give people the lie, no one to utter the stern word of truth!...

And so, the *Pushkin* period was marked by a movement of life to a supreme degree. During that decade we experienced, relived and re-thought the whole intellectual life of Europe whose echo reached us by way of the Baltic Sea. We had threshed and argued it all out and mastered it without having reared, nurtured or created ourselves. Others had worked for us and we had merely taken it ready-made and used it: that is the secret of our incredibly swift successes and the reason for their incredible instability. This, I also believe, is one of the reasons why Pushkin is almost the only one who has survived that brisk and active decade so replete with talents and geniuses, and now, forlorn and sad, sees the names of those who mounted with him the horizon of our literature disappearing one by one in the waters of oblivion, like an unfinished word vanish-

ing into the air.... Indeed, what has happened to those youthful hopes of which we used to be so proud? Where are the names which were once on everybody's lips? Why have they so suddenly become mute? Say what you like, but I think there is something wrong! Or can it be true that Time is the most severe, most truthful of Aristarchuses? Alas!... Was the talent of Ozerov or Batyushkov beneath that, say, of Mr. Baratinsky or Mr. Podolinsky? Had Kapnist, V. and A. Izmailovs and V. Pushkin appeared at the same time as Pushkin, in the heyday of their youth, they really would not have been so ridiculous despite the scant gifts with which nature had endowed them. Why is that so? Because such talents may be or may not be, depending on circumstances.

Like Karamzin, Pushkin was greeted with loud applause and hisses, which have only recently ceased to pursue him. Not a single poet in Russia enjoyed such popularity and fame during his lifetime, and not one was so cruelly insulted. And by whom would you think? By men who first cringed before him in the dust and then cried: *chûte complète.* By men who blazed abroad that they had more sense in their little fingers than there was in the heads of all our men of letters: precious little fingers—it would be interesting to take a look at them. But that is not the point. Remember the state of our literature prior to the 'twenties. Zhukovsky had then run the greater length of his career; Batyushkov was silent for ever. Derzhavin was admired with Sumarokov and Kheraskov in accordance with the lectures of Merzlyakov. There was no life, there was nothing new; everything dragged along in the old rut; then suddenly there appeared *Ruslan and Ludmila,* a creation that was emphatically peerless both in harmony of verse, form and content. Men without pretension to scholarship, men who believed in their feeling and not in textbooks on poetics, or were at all acquainted with contemporary Europe, were enchanted by this poem. The literary judges, holding in their hand the mace of criticism, gravely opened La Harpe's *Lycée* (*Lykei* in Mr. Martinov's translation) and Mr. Ostolopov's *Dictionary of Ancient and Modern Poetry,* and finding that the new composition did not tally with any of the known categories and that it had no model in Greek and Latin, solemnly declared it to be a bastard of poetry, an unpardonable aberration of talent. Not every one believed it, of course. That was when the fun began. Classicism and romanticism fell upon each

other tooth and nail. But let us leave them in peace and speak about Pushkin.

Pushkin was the perfect expression of his time. Endowed with sublime poetic feeling and an amazing faculty of receiving and reflecting all possible sensations, he assayed all the timbres, all the tones and chords of his age; he paid his due to all great contemporary events, phenomena and thoughts, to everything that then moved Russia, who had ceased to believe in the infallibility of *age-old rules derived by wisdom itself from the writings of great geniuses,*[44] and learned with surprise of the existence of other worlds of thoughts and concepts, and of new, unsuspected views on long-familiar things and events. It is unfair to aver that he imitated Chenier, Byron and others; Byron possessed him not as a standard, but as a fact, as the master of thoughts of the age, and I said that Pushkin had paid his due to every great occurrence. Yes—Pushkin was the expression of his contemporary world, the representative of contemporary man, but of the Russian world, Russian man. It cannot be helped! We are all self-taught geniuses; we know everything without having learned anything, we have acquired everything without shedding a drop of blood, blithely and in sport; in short:

> Since but a random education
> Is all they give us as a rule[45]

From the noisy revelry of youth Pushkin passed to stern toil,

> To keep abreast the age in education,[46]

from toil he turned once more to the feasts of youth, sweet idleness and light-winged intoxication. All he lacked was a German artistic training. The spoiled child of nature, he filched from her in wanton sport and play the most enchanting images and forms and she, indulgent to her favourite, lavished upon him the colours and sounds for which others sacrifice to her the delights of youth and purchase at the price of self-renunciation.... Like a wizard he drew from us tears and laughter at one and the same time, and played at will upon our emotions.... He sang, and Russia stood amazed at the sounds of his songs, for, verily, she had never yet heard their like; how avidly she listened to them, for, verily, they thrilled with all the fibres of her life. I remember that time, that happy time, when in some provincial backwater, in the seclusion

of a little country town, those sounds on a summer's day floated through open windows *like the murmur of waves* or *the babbling of a brook.*[47]

It is impossible to review all his creations and define the character of each of them, for it would mean enumerating and describing all the trees and flowers in Armida's garden.[48] Pushkin has few, very few, short verses; they are mostly poems: his poetical obits over the urns of the great, namely, his *Andre de Chenier,* his *mighty discourse* with the sea, his *prophetic meditations* on Napoleon are poems. But the most precious jewels in his poetical crown are indubitably *Eugene Onegin* and *Boris Godunov.* I would never end did I begin to speak of these works.

Pushkin reigned ten years: *Boris Godunov* was the last of his great deeds; in the third part of his collected poetry the melodious sounds of his lyre are no longer heard. Now we do not recognize Pushkin; he is dead, or, perhaps, only mute for a time. Perhaps he has ceased to be, or may be he will rise from the dead; the answer to that question, that Hamletian *to be or not to be* is wrapped in the mist of the future. At any rate, judging by his poem *Angelo* and other works published in *Novoselye* and *The Readers' Library* we should be lamenting a grievous, irrevocable loss. Where are now those sounds rich with the flavour of rollicking festivities and wistful yearnings, where are those flashes of deep and passionate feeling that thrilled the heart, smote and stirred the soul, those flashes of subtle and caustic wit, that irony at once trenchant and sad, whose sparkling play so amazed the mind; where are those scenes of life and nature before which life and nature paled? Alas! We now read instead verses with correct caesural accents, with male rhymes and female rhymes, with poetic license, which Bishop Apollos and Mr. Ostolopov have discussed at such great length and with such satisfaction and profundity! . . . *It is mighty strange, very odd!* Can it be that Pushkin, who emerged unscathed through the frenzied praise of zealots, the eulogies of hucksters, the strong and sometimes just attacks and censure of his antagonists, can it be, I say, that this Pushkin has been killed by Mr. Smirdin's *Novoselye?* However, let us not be too hasty and precipitate in our conclusions; let us leave this tangled problem to time. It is no easy matter to pronounce an opinion on Pushkin. You must have read his *Elegy* in the October issue of *The Readers' Library*? You must

have been astounded by the deep feeling which pervades this creation? This *Elegy*, apart from the comforting hopes it inspires for Pushkin, is remarkable for the fact that it contains the truest characterization of Pushkin as artist:

> At times I shall be drunk on music still,
> Or at a moving tale my eyes will fill.

Yes, I utterly believe that he fully shared the inconsolable anguish of rejected love of the dark-eyed Circassian girl, or of his charming Tatiana, that best and most beloved ideal of his fantasy; that he shared with his grim Girei the yearnings of a soul satiated with delights without having tasted delight; that he was consumed by the fierce flame of jealousy with Zarema and Aleko, and rioted in the savage love of Zemfira; that he grieved over and took delight in his ideals, that the *ripple of his verses* matched his sobbing and his laughter.... People will say this is bias, idol worship, puerility, folly, but I would rather believe that Pushkin is mystifying *The Readers' Library* than that his talent is extinguished. I believe, I think, and it is a comfort to believe and think, that Pushkin will gladden us with new creations that will surpass those he has already written.

With Pushkin there arose a host of talents, now mostly forgotten, or being forgotten, who possessed in their time altars and worshippers; now we can say of them:

> ... Alas, some now are distant,
> Some are no more as Saadi said.[49]

Mr. Baratinsky has been ranked with Pushkin; their names have always been inseparable, and once even two compositions by these poets were published in one book, under a single cover. Speaking of Pushkin I forgot to mention that he is only now receiving his due meed, for the reaction has passed, the factions have cooled. And today no one even in jest would place Mr. Baratinsky's name alongside that of Pushkin. That would be a cruel joke on the former and a misjudgment of the latter. Mr. Baratinsky's poetical talent does not raise the slightest doubt. True, he wrote a bad poem *Feasts*, a bad poem *Edda* (a *Poor Liza* in verse), a bad poem *The Concubine*, but he also wrote some excellent elegies pervaded with genuine feeling, of which that *On the Death of Goethe* could be

called exemplary, and several epistles distinguished for their keen wit. He was formerly exalted beyond his merits; now, it appears, he is being unreasonably humbled. It should be mentioned, too, that Mr. Baratinsky once laid claim to possessing a critical talent; now, I think, he no longer believes in it himself.

Kozlov was one of the remarkable talents of the *Pushkin* period. His compositions in form were always imitative of Pushkin, but in the feeling that dominated them they were, I believe, influenced by Zhukovsky. It is common knowledge that misfortune awakened Kozlov's poetical talent: hence the wistful feeling, the meek resignation to the will of Providence and the hopes of reward beyond the grave that constitute the characteristic feature of his creations. His *Monk*, over which fair readers have shed so many tears and which is a replica of Byron's *Giaour*, is particularly conspicuous for this one-sidedness of character; the poems that followed it were consecutively weaker. Kozlov's minor pieces are remarkable for their genuine fee'ing, gorgeous picturesqueness, rich and harmonious language. What a pity he wrote ballads. A ballad without nationality is a spurious genus and cannot evoke sympathy. Moreover, he took great pains to create something in the nature of a *Slav* ballad. The Slavs lived a long time ago and we know very little about them; then why go to the trouble of dragging Germanized Vsemilas and Ostans onto the stage? Kozlov further derogated from his artistic fame by giving an impression that he sometimes wrote out of sheer boredom: that particularly applies to his present works.

Yazikov and Davidov (D.V.) have much in common. They are both noteworthy appearances in our literature. One, a student-poet, carefree and bubbling over with youthful ardour, sings the sports of youth feasting at the carnival of life, the rosy lips, black eyes, lily breasts and delicate brows of lovely girlhood, nights of flaming passion and unforgettable scenes,

> Where rollicking youth
> Ran its noisy race.

The other, a warrior-poet, with utter military candour and an ardour uncooled by time and labour, narrates to us in spirited verse the vagaries of youth, wild frolics, dashing sorties, Hussar revels, his passion for some proud beauty. One and the other often pluck loud, strong and triumphal notes from their lyre; often stir us with an

expression of vivid and ardent feeling. Their one-sidedness constitutes their originality, without which there can be no real talent. Podolinsky held out the most flattering hopes, but, unfortunately, he did not fulfill them. He commanded poetical language and was not devoid of poetic feeling. It seems to me that the reason for his failure to achieve success was that he was unaware of his natural bent and trod the wrong path.

F. N. Glinka ... but what can I say of him? You know how fragrant are the flowers of his poetry, how moral and chaste his artistic trend: that should be enough to disarm any one. But though giving due to his poetical gift one cannot help realizing that it is too glaringly one-sided; morality is a good thing, but too much of a good thing is boring. Glinka wrote a good deal, and, therefore, among many fine pieces, he has a large number of signally mediocre ones. The reason for this, I believe, is that he looks upon art as an occupation, as an innocent pastime, and not as a sublime calling, and generally he holds a mean view of many things. He owes his best poems to religious inspiration. His poem *Karelia* is full of beauty, but, perhaps, still more of blemish.

Delvig ... but Yazikov wrote Delvig a beautiful poetical Mass, and Pushkin considers Delvig to be a man of unusual talent; dare I dispute with such authorities as these? Delvig was once considered a Grecized German: is that true? *De mortuis aut bene aut nihil*, and therefore I will not reveal my own opinion of this poet. This is what the *Moskovsky Vestnik* once wrote about his poems: *"They may be read with light pleasure, but not more."* There were many such poets in the past decade.

(Not all yet.)

LITERARY REVERIES

(Penultima)

Land! Land!
A threadbare expression

The *Pushkin* period is remarkable for its unusual number of versifiers: it is emphatically a period of versification that became a perfect mania, to say nothing of poetasters, of authors of Kirghiz, Moscow and other prisoners, of authors of Belsky and other Eugenes[50]

under diverse names, a period teeming with men of surprising *ability*, if not *talent*, for versification, if not poetry. The innumerable magazines and almanacs were flooded with verses and fragments of poems, the bookshops with essays in verse, collections of verse and poems. And Pushkin alone was to blame for it all: that was probably his sole, albeit unintentional, sin against Russian literature. And so, the literary hacks can claim neither our attention nor our censure: Lethe has dealt out to them retributive justice a long time ago. Better speak of men who were conspicuous for some measure of *talent*, or at least, *ability*. Why were they so soon thrown into the shade? Perhaps they have written themselves dry? Nothing of the sort! Many of them are still writing, or at any rate can still write as well as before; but, alas! they can no longer excite the reader's enthusiasm. Why is that? Because I repeat, they *might have been* or *not have been*, because they mistook youthful ardour for the fervour of inspiration, the faculty of absorbing impressions of the beautiful for an ability of striking others with impressions of the beautiful, the ability of *describing any given matter with some measure of imitative fiction** in melodious verse for an ability to reproduce in words the phenomena of the universal life of nature. They borrowed from Pushkin the musical and sonorous verse and to some extent the poetical beauty of expression that constitute but the outward aspect of his creations; they did not, however, borrow from him the deep and poignant emotion which he breathes and which alone is the source of life of all artistic production. That is why they seem to glide over the surface of nature's and life's phenomena like the pallid ray of the wintry sun without vitally penetrating their depths; that is why they seem merely to be describing or discussing things, without feeling them. And that is why you will read their verses sometimes with pleasure, if not delight; but they will never leave an indelible impression in your heart, never stay in the memory. Add to this the one-sidedness of their trend and the monotony of their cherished dreams and thoughts, and there you have the reason why these verses which once charmed you, no longer touch your heart. These are different days: only verses that bear the stamp of high talent, if not of genius, can now make themselves read. There is no longer a demand

* *Vide: Rules of Poetics* by Apollos.

for verses born of *suffering*, verses echoing the cry of a soul undergoing hellish torture; in short,

> Unnatural cries are vexing,
> Affected wails absurd. . .[51]

One of our young and most remarkable writers, Mr. Sheviryev, who has since an early age devoted himself to science and art, who has since an early age followed the noble career of acting for the common weal, has only too well realized and felt this deficiency so common to all his compeers and colleagues. Endowed with poetical talent, which is especially noticeable in his translations from Schiller, many of which Zhukovsky would not have been ashamed to call his own; enriched with lore, well versed in the universal history of literature, which is evidenced by his numerous critical works and especially by his competent discharge of the office of professor at the Moscow University—he had, judging from his original works, decided to effect a reversion in the then existing trend of literature. Every one of his verses is based on deep and poetic thought, aspires to Schillerian broadness of outlook and profundity of feeling, and, indeed, it should be admitted that his verse was always admirable for its vigorous pithiness, crispness and expressiveness. But purpose is bad for poetry; and the man who places before himself such a lofty purpose should possess the ample means for doing justice to it. Hence, most of Mr. Sheviryev's original works, with the exception of a very few that reveal genuine feeling, frequently display, for all their merits, an effort of mind rather than an effusion of ardent inspiration. Venevitinov alone was able to combine thought with feeling, idea with form, for of all the young poets of the *Pushkin* period he was the only one who was able to embrace nature with fervid sympathy and not cold mind, penetrate her holy places by the power of love, and

> Not merely with a cold and wandering glance,
> Thou dost permit me in her depths profound,
> As in the bosom of a friend to gaze,[52]

and then describe in his works the exalted secrets which he had descried on that inaccessible altar. Venevitinov is the only one of our poets who was understood and duly appreciated even by his

contemporaries. That was a fair dawn, the precursor of a fair day; all parties agreed with this. Justice demands mention of Polezhayev who, though a one-sided talent, was nevertheless remarkable. Who does not know that this man was the sad victim of the aberrations of his youth, the unhappy sacrifice to the spirit of the times, when talented youth rode post haste along the road of life, strove to slake its thirst for the pleasures of life instead of studying it, looked upon life as a boisterous orgy instead of painful achievement? Do not read his translations (except Lamartine's *l'Homme, à Lord Byron*), which somehow do not go to one's heart; do not read his facetious verses which savour too much of tavern carousal; do not read his bespoken verses; but read those of his works which have some sort of bearing on his own life; read *Thoughts by the Sea,* his *Evening Twilight,* his *Providence*— and you will feel Polezhayev's talent, see feeling!...

I must now mention a poet unlike any of those cited above, an original, unique poet who did not come under the influence of Pùshkin and was practically his equal: I have in mind Griboyedov. That man carried too many hopes away with him to the grave. He was preordained to be the creator of Russian comedy, the creator of the Russian theatre.

The theatre!... Do you love the theatre as I love it, that is, with all the strength of your soul, with all the enthusiasm and vehemence of which only impulsive youth, passionately craving for the impressions of the beautiful, is capable? I should rather say, are you capable of loving the theatre more than anything on earth, except goodness and truth? Does it not, indeed, represent the essence of all the charms, all the spell and fascination of the fine arts? Is it not the supreme master of our emotions, ready at any moment and under any circumstances to kindle and stir them like a storm that raises a sand blizzard in the trackless plains of Arabia?... What other of all the arts possesses such a powerful means of impressing and playing at will upon the soul.... Lyricism, epos, drama: have you a definite preference for any one of them or do you like them all in equal measure? It is a difficult choice, is it not? For do not the powerful stanzas of the mighty Derzhavin and the varied melodies of Proteus Pushkin depict the same scenes of nature that are in Byron's poems or Walter Scott's novels, and these latter the same that are in the plays of Shake-

speare and Schiller? Nevertheless I prefer the drama, and I believe that is the general predilection. Lyricism mirrors nature dimly and is, as it were, its musical expression; its subject is all nature in its utter infinity; the subject of the drama, on the other hand, is solely man and his life, in which is displayed the higher, spiritual aspect of the general life of the universe. Drama among the arts is what history is among the sciences. Man has always been and will forever be the most curious object for man, and the drama depicts that man in his eternal strife with his *Self* and his designation, in his eternal activity, the spring of which is a striving after some dim ideal of happiness, rarely perceived and still more rarely achieved. Even epos borrows its merits from the drama: a novel shorn of dramatism is dull and boring. The epos is in a way merely a peculiar form of the drama. We shall presume then that the drama, if not the best, is the species of poetry that lies nearest to our hearts. What then is the theatre, where this powerful drama is clothed from head to foot in a new power, where it enters into league with all the arts, invokes their aid and appropriates all their means and all their weapons, each of which by itself is not sufficiently strong to tear you from the narrow world of vanities and plunge you into the vast world of the sublime and the beautiful? What then is this theatre, I ask you? O, it is the veritable temple of art, upon entering which you are instantly lifted from the earth and released of worldly trammels. The sounds of the instruments being tuned in the orchestra thrill your soul with the expectation of something wonderful, stir your heart with a foretaste of exquisite rapture: the people filling the vast amphitheatre share your suspense, and you merge with them in a single emotion; that brilliant and gorgeous curtain, that flood of light hint to you of the wonders and marvels scattered throughout God's lovely creation and concentrated within the narrow compass of the stage! And now the orchestra strikes up, and its sounds fill you with a sense of coming impressions; and now the curtain is rung up, and you gaze upon an endless pageant of human passions and fates. The supplications of gentle and loving Desdemona mingle with the ravings of jealous Othello; at dead of night appears the figure of Lady Macbeth with bared bosom and dishevelled hair, trying in vain to wipe from her hands the bloodstains which she imagines in the pangs of vengeful conscience; here comes poor

Hamlet with his tortured query: *to be, or not to be;* before you pass the figures of the divine dreamer Posa and those two flowers of paradise—Max and Thekla[53]—with their heavenly love, in a word, the whole gorgeous and infinite world created by the prolific imagination of Shakespeares, Schillers, Goethes and Werners.... Here you live a life, you suffer woes, you are gladdened by joys, and tremble before perils that are not your own; here your cold *Ego* vanishes in the flaming air of love. If you are tormented by the grievous thought of your own life's ordeal and your frailty, here you will forget it; if your heart has ever craved for love and rapture, if some lovely image has ever flitted across your imagination like an airy vision of night, an image long forgotten and as unattainable as a dream, here that craving will flare up with new inexorable force, here that image will reappear before you, and you will see its eyes turned upon you with love and yearning, you will drink its lovely breath, shudder at the fiery touch of its hand.... But is it possible to describe all the charms of the theatre, its magical power over the human soul? O, how good it would be to have our own, a national, Russian theatre!... Verily, to see on the stage the whole of Rūs, with her good and her evil, with her exalted and her ridiculous, to hear her valiant heroes summoned from their graves by the power of imagination, to feel the pulsation of her vigorous life.... O, go to the theatre, live there, die there if you can!...

But, alas! this is all poetry, and not prose, dreams and not reality! There, that is, in that great house we call the Russian theatre, there, I tell you, you will see parodies of Shakespeare and Schiller, ugly and absurd parodies; there the convulsions of imagination will be served to you as tragedy, there you will be shown a travesty of life; in a word

> ...Where Melpomene's bold gesture
> Displays to the indifferent crowd
> The tawdry glitter of her vesture,
> The while she howls both long and loud![54]

I tell you: do not go there; it is very dull entertainment! But we must not be too severe: it is not the theatre's fault that it is so bad. Where is our dramatic literature, where our dramatic talents? Where are our tragedians and comedians? They are many, very

many; their names are known to all, and I will therefore not enumerate them, for my praises will add nothing to the wide fame they rightly enjoy. I turn, then, to Griboyedov.

Griboyedov's comedy, or drama (I do not quite understand the difference between those two words; as for the meaning of the word *tragedy*—I am baffled) has long circulated in manuscript. Griboyedov, like all men of note, has been much discussed and talked about; some of our geniuses envied him, while marvelling at Kapnist's *Slander;* men who marvelled at every Tom, Dick and Harry would not give Griboyedov his due. But the public had its own opinion: Griboyedov's comedy, long before it was printed and presented, had an enormous private circulation throughout Russia.

Comedy, in my opinion, is as much drama as what is usually called tragedy; its subject is the presentation of life in opposition to the idea of life; its element is not innocent wit which makes good-natured fun of everything out of a mere desire to sneer; no, its element is splenetic *humour,* stern indignation, which does not smile jocularly but laughs fiercely, which pursues triviality and egoism not with epigrams but with sarcasm. Griboyedov's comedy is truly a *divina comedia*! It is by no means a droll little anecdote in dialogue, not the kind of comedy where the characters are named Goodmans, Sharpsters, Knavesons, etc.; its characters have long been familiar to you in life, you have seen and known them before reading *Wit Works Woe,* yet they strike you as phenomena entirely new to you: there lies the supreme truth of poetical fiction! The personages created by Griboyedov are not figments, but life-size copies from nature, drawn from the wells of reality; their virtues and vices are not written on their foreheads; but they are branded with the seal of their own insignificance, branded by the vindictive hand of the artist-executioner. Every line of Griboyedov's is a sarcasm wrung from the breast in the heat of indignation; his style is colloquial *par excellence.* Recently one of our noted writers, only too familiar with society, remarked that Griboyedov alone succeeded in versifying the conversation of our society: without doubt that did not cost him the slightest effort; but nevertheless it is a great merit of his, for the colloquial language of our comic writers.... But I have already promised not to speak of our comedians.... Of course, this work has its faults as an integral

piece, but it was the first essay of Griboyedov's talent, the first Russian comedy; besides, whatever its faults, it is still an exemplary, brilliant production not alone of Russian literature, which, in the person of Griboyedov, has lost a Shakespeare of comedy....

Enough of verse-poets, let us speak of prose-poets. Do you know whose name stands first amongst them in the *Pushkin period* of our literature? The name of Mr. Bulgarin, gentlemen. It is not surprising either. Mr. Bulgarin was a pioneer, and pioneers, as I have already had the honour to inform you, are always immortal, and therefore I dare assure you that Mr. Bulgarin's name is as deathless in the realm of the Russian novel, as was that of the Muscovite Matvei Komarov.* The name of the St. Petersburg Walter Scott, Faddei Venediktovich Bulgarin together with that of the Moscow Walter Scott, Alexander Anfimovich Orlov, will always form a shining constellation in the firmament of our literature. The witty Kosichkin[55] has already duly appraised these two famous writers and shown us their comparative merits and, therefore, not to repeat Kosichkin, I will venture an opinion on Mr. Bulgarin which has now become general, but has not yet been expressed in print. Do you really mean to say that Mr. Bulgarin is absolutely equal to Mr. Orlov? Certainly not; as a writer he is incomparably above him, but as an artist I would say he is somewhat below him. Would you care to know what is the principal difference between these luminaries of our literature? One of them has seen much, heard much, read much, has been and is going everywhere; the other, poor fellow, has not only never been in Spain, but has never crossed the Russian border;[56] though knowing Latin (a knowledge, by the way, uphe'd by no publications of Horace,[57] with his own or other men's annotations), he is none too strong in his mother tongue, which is not surprising: he had no opportunity of *listening to the language of good company.* The crux of the matter then is that the works of one are ironed out and polished like the floor of a drawing room, while the works of the other savour of the rag fair. It is amazing, however, that though the two wrote for different classes of readers, they found their public in one and the same class. And it is to be presumed that this public will be more disposed to Mr. Orlov who is more of the *poet,*

* The author of *Policion, My English Lord* and similar famous works.

whereas Mr. Bulgarin is more of the *philosopher*, and poetry is easier for all classes to understand than philosophy.

Mr. Marlinsky entered the literary field almost at the same time as Pushkin. He is one of our most notable writers, and today undoubtedly enjoys immense prestige: everybody now is on his knees before him; if not all unanimously hail him as the *Russian Balzac* it is merely because they are afraid it will debase him, and expect the French to hail Balzac as the *French Marlinsky*. While waiting for this miracle to happen let us cool-headedly examine his claim to such immense prestige. It, of course, requires great temerity to run a tilt at public opinion and make a set against its idols; but I venture to do so, prompted not so much by contempt of danger as by a disinterested love of truth. Moreover, I am emboldened by the fact that this formidable public opinion is gradually rallying to after the tremendous shock inflicted upon it by the publication of Mr. Marlinsky's complete edition of *Russian Stories*; dark rumours are beginning to spread about some kind of affectation, weary monotony and such like. And so, I venture to make myself the mouthpiece of the new public opinion. I know that this new opinion will still find many adversaries, but be that as it may, truth is dearer than all the authorities in the world.

In the dearth of true talents in our literature the talent of Mr. Marlinsky is assuredly a notable phenomenon. He is endowed with genuine wit, is a master of narrative, often vivid and thrilling and has shown himself able sometimes to hold the mirror up to nature. At the same time it cannot but be admitted that his talent is exceedingly one-sided, that his pretensions to the flame of emotion are extremely dubious, that his creations lack depth, are devoid of philosophy, of dramatism; that, as a result, all the heroes of his stories are cast in the same mould and differ from each other merely in names; that he repeats himself in each new work; that he has more phrases than thoughts, more rhetoric than expression of feeling. We have few writers who have written so much as Mr. Marlinsky: but this fertility is not due to great giftedness, or a surfeit of creative activity, but is the result of habit and a knack of writing. If you only possess a few gifts, have educated yourself by reading, have laid in some stock of ideas and communicated to them some mark of your own character and personality,

you may pick up the pen and boldly write from morning till night. You will eventually achieve the art of being able at any time and in any mood to write on whatever subject you please; if you have prepared some pompous monologues you will not find it difficult to hitch a novel onto them, or a drama, or a story; merely look after form and style: they must be original.

Things are best understood by comparison. If two authors write in the same way and have some sort of similarity between them they can only be appraised in relation to each other by drawing a parallel: that is the best touchstone. Look at Balzac: he has written a lot, yet will you find in his stories a single character that would in any degree resemble another? O, what superlative art in the delineation of characters with every shade of individuality. Have you not been haunted by the cold and terrible aspect of Ferragus, has not his image harassed you by day and night, followed you as closely as a shadow? O, you would know him among thousands; yet in Balzac's narrative he stands in the shade, drawn lightly, by the way, and obscured by personages around whom centres the main interest of the poem. Then why does that figure excite the reader's interest and take such strong hold of his imagination? Because Balzac created him and did not imagine him, because the image floated in his mind before he had written the first line of his story, because it haunted the artist until he lifted it from the realm of his soul for everyone to behold. We now see on the stage another of the thirteen: Ferragus and Montriveau are apparently men of the same cast, men with a soul as deep as the ocean, with a strength of will as inexorable as the will of fate; yet, I ask you: do they in any way resemble each other, is there anything in common between them? How many female portraits have come from under the prolific brush of Balzac, but has he ever once repeated himself in them? ... Can we say the same of Mr. Marlinsky's creations? His *Amallat-Bek*, his Colonel B—, his hero of *Dreadful Divination*, his Captain Pravin are all brothers of the same flesh and blood whom their own parent would scarcely be able to distinguish. The first perhaps differs somewhat from the others because of his Asiatic colour. Is that creation? And then how much affectation! It could be said that *affectation* is a hobby horse of Mr. Marlinsky's from which he rarely dismounts. Not a single one of his personages says things simply, they always pose,

always speak in epigrams or puns or similes; in short, every word of Mr. Marlinsky's aims at stage effect. It must be admitted in all justice that nature has lavishly endowed him with a sense of humour, gay and good-natured, which pricks but does not wound, titillates but does not bite; but even here he often overdoes it. He has entire voluminous stories, as, for instance, *Incursions*, which are nothing but voluminous affectation. He has a talent, not a great one, but a talent rendered impotent by constant duress, misspent and battered against the molehills of laboured wit. I think the novel is not his sphere, for he has no knowledge of the human heart, no dramatic tact. Why, for example, did he make the prince, for whom all the joys of heaven and earth consisted in his oysters, for whom a good dinner was dearer than his wife and honour—why did he make him deliver a pathetic monologue to the defiler of his nuptial bed, a monologue that would have done honour to Pravin himself? It is just a bit of affectation, stage trappings; the author wanted to be moral, after the manner of Mr. Bulgarin. Generally he is no master-hand at concealing the stage-machinery on which the edifice of his stories revolves; it is always in full view. However, one does sometimes come across passages in his stories that are really fine, sketches that are truly masterly: such, for instance, is the description of the Russian popular Mephistopheles, and generally all the scenes of country life in *Dreadful Divination*, such are many pictures of nature, excluding, of course, *Caucasion Sketches* which are stilted to the point of nauseation, *nec plus ultra*. If you ask me his best stories are *The Test* and *Lieutenant Belozor*: here one may frankly admire his talent, for here he is in his own element. He laughs at his own versification, but I find his translation of the Mountaineers' Songs in *Amallat-Bek* better than the story itself: they contain so much feeling, so much originality, that Pushkin would not be ashamed to call them his own. His *Andrei Pereyaslavsky*, too, especially the second chapter, contains some truly poetic passages though the work as a whole is too infantile. The strangest thing about Mr. Marlinsky, however, is that he recently confessed with amazing modesty to a sin of which he is innocent both in body and soul, namely, that he opened the door to Russian literature for nationality: now, that, I vow, is untrue! These stories are the least happy of his attempts and he is no more national in them than Karamzin, for his

Rūs is overpoweringly reminiscent of his beloved Livonia. Time and space do not allow me to substantiate my opinion of Mr. Marlinsky's talent by citing his works: however, that can easily be done. I say nothing of his style. The word *style* is now beginning to lose its former broad significance, for it is no longer being separated from thought. In short, Mr. Marlinsky is a writer not devoid of talent, and he would be higher if he were more natural and less given to affectation.

The *Pushkin* period was the most flourishing period of our literature. It should be reviewed historically and in chronological order; I did not do that, because I had another object. We may affirm that we then possessed if not a literature, at any rate the shadow of a literature; for then it had movement in it, life and even a sort of steady development. How many new appearances, how many talents, how many claims to one and the other! We had really sincerely begun to believe that we had a literature, that we had our Byrons, Schillers, Goethes, Walter Scotts and Thomas Moores; we were as happy and proud as children in new holiday clothes. And who was our disillusioner, our Mephistopheles? Who came as the powerful grim reaction to cool our ardour? Do you remember Nikodim Aristarchovich Nadoumko; do you remember how he came out on the stage on his *frail clay feet* and dissipated our fond dreams with his sly, good-natured: *hee! hee! hee!*[58] Do you remember how we clung to our authorities, great and small, and defended them tooth and nail against the onslaught of the terrible Aristarchus? I don't know about you, but I remember quite well how everybody was angry with him; I remember being angry myself. What then? The greater part of his ominous predictions have come true and no one is any longer angry with the deceased gentleman! Yes! Nikodim Aristarchovich was a remarkable figure in our literature; what a turmoil he created, how many sanguinary wars did he launch, how valiantly he fought, how cruelly he smote his adversaries with that style of his, sometimes original to the point of triviality, but always apt and mordant, with that hard syllogism and that mockery, ingenuous and deadly at the same time....

> And where, O knight, is the dust of thee?
> In what grave thy bed?...[59]

What shall I say of the *magazines* of those days? Can I pass them by in silence? They had then acquired so much importance in the eyes of the public, had commanded such a lively interest, played such an important role!... I will say that practically all of them, willy-nilly, deliberately and involuntarily, promoted the spread of new notions and views; we took our lessons from them and were educated on them. They all did the utmost that was within their respective powers. Who did most? I cannot give a positive answer, since special circumstances, carrying weight, by the way, for me alone, forbid me to say everything I think. I very well remember the wise maxim of Montaigne and keep many truths clenched in my fist. The main thing is that I am still too inexperienced in chameleonistics and am foolish enough to set store on my opinions, not as a man of letters and a writer (the more so that I am not yet either), but as the opinions of an honest and conscientious man, and I somehow feel awkward about writing a panegyric on one magazine without giving another its due....[00] It cannot be helped, my notions are still those of Arcadia!... And so, not a word about the magazines! Now I contemplate my huge writing desk on which these dead lie in heaps and piles, as though in a coffin, reconciled to each other by my indolence and the disorder reigning in my room, mingled one on top of the other—I contemplate them with a wistful smile and say:

'Tis all boon and blessings!

(Conclusion to follow)

LITERARY REVERIES

(Conclusion)

One more, the final record,
And my annals are ended and complete.
Pushkin

The *cholera* year of 1830 was veritably the *black* year of our literature, a truly fateful epoch which inaugurated an entirely new period of its existence, sharply contrasting at its very outset with the preceding period. But there was no transition between

these two periods; there was instead a sort of unnatural break. Such abnormal leaps are, in my opinion, the best proof that we have no literature and, consequently, no history of literature; for not one of its phenomena was the outcome of another, not one of its events originated from another. The history of our literature is neither more nor less than a history of abortive effort, by means of servile imitation of foreign standards, to create a literature of our own; literature, however, is not created; it creates itself like language and customs, independently of the will and knowledge of the people. And so, the year '30 terminated, or rather, put a sudden end, to the *Pushkin* period, for Pushkin himself had ended and, with him, the influence he had wielded; since then practically not a single familiar note has been plucked from his lyre. His associates, the companions in his artistic activity, sung out their old songs, their usual dreams, but no one listened to them any longer. Old tunes had palled, and they had nothing new to say, for they remained standing on the same spot on which they had first appeared and refused to budge. The magazines all died, as though from an apoplectic stroke, or perhaps really from the cholera morbus. The cause of this sudden death or this pestilence was the same as that which explains the absence of a literature in our country. They nearly all had come to life without need, out of sheer idleness or a desire to create a bit of a noise and therefore were devoid of character, independence, power and influence on society, and passed to their untimely grave unmourned. An exception may be made for only two of them; only two of them present a curious, instructive and rich result for the observer. One was a venerable elder who used to lead our young society in leading strings, who had of old enjoyed great authority and despotically governed literary opinions; the other was a youth with an ardent soul and noble aspirations towards the common weal, possessing all the means to achieve that splendid goal but failing to achieve it. The *Vestnik Evropi* outlived several generations, educated several generations, of which the last one it had nurtured violently mutinied against it; but it always remained the same, never changed and fought to the last: that was a noble battle, meriting respect, a battle for deep and sacred opinions and beliefs and not for petty private interest. It was killed by time and not by adversaries, and

therefore its death was a natural and not violent one.* The *Moskovsky Vestnik* had great merits, considerable intellect, much talent, much ardour, but little, extremely little sagacity and shrewdness and was therefore the cause of its own premature demise. In an epoch of life, in an epoch of strife and clash of thoughts and opinions it chose to maintain a spirit of moderation and eschewment of harsh judgments, was rich in competent and scientific articles but poor in reviews and polemics which constitute the life of a magazine, as well as in stories without which no Russian journal can prosper, and, most terrible of all, did not run a precise and detailed fashion chronicle and did not provide an illustrated fashions' supplement, without which a Russian magazine can hardly hope to secure subscribers. Well, there you are! One cannot conclude an advantageous peace without making small and, apparently, unimportant concessions. The *Moskovsky Vestnik* lacked the spirit of the times, and now you can read it as you would a good book that never loses its value, but a magazine, in the full sense of the word, it never was. Journalists, like poets, are born, and men become journalists by natural bent. I had not in-

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* A curious thing. Mr. Kachenovsky, who fell foul of the Pushkin generation and became the object of its savage persecution and attacks as a literary man and judge, found zealous followers and defenders in the next generation as a scientist, a student of Russian history. That is hardly surprising: one man cannot contain everything; universal genius and versatile talents are given to the chosen few. Therefore go to Mr. Gogol for his beautiful tales, and go to Mr. Kachenovsky for articles on Russian history written by him or under his influence and guidance, and bear in mind the Latin proverb: *suum cuique*, or better still the wise maxim of our great fabulist:

Woe when the cobbler begins pies to bake,
And the baker boots to make.[6]

I am no scientist and understand little about history: my opinions are those of a layman and not of a specialist: but then are not all the public laymen? Any honest opinion of a layman therefore is deserving of some attention, the more so if it is the echo of the *general, i.e.*, the *prevailing* opinion. We now have two historical schools: that of Schlözer and of Mr. Kachenovsky. One is based on old standing, usage, reverence for the authority of its founder: the other, as far as I know, on common sense and profound erudition. Though innocent of the latter I have some claims to the former, in consequence of which it strikes me as quite natural that the present generation, alien to memories of old times and the prejudices of authorities, have warmly received the historical views of Mr. Kachenovsky. Scientific literature, however, is not my field; I said that in passing, *à propos*.

tended speaking of magazines and have been carried away despite myself; while discussing the dead I should like to say a few words about one of the living without, however, mentioning its name, which it will not be difficult to guess. It has been in existence for a long time: it was first single, then double and triple, and was always distinguished from its fraternity by a peculiar sort of impersonality.[62] While the *Vestnik Evropi* was espousing the sacred cause of ancient traditions and fighting to the last breath against hateful modernity, while the younger generation of new magazines was, in its turn, waging mortal combat against the dull and irksome old ways of life and striving with noble self-denial to hoist the standard of the age, the magazine aforementioned developed for itself a new aesthetics according to which that work was lofty and beautiful in the realm of art which was published in a great number of copies and enjoyed a ready sale, and a new policy according to which a writer today excelled Byron, and the next day suffered *chûte complète*. As a result of that judicious policy some of our Walter Scotts wrote stories about Nikander Svistushkins, authors of the poems: *Jews* and *Thieves*, etc., etc.[63] In short, this magazine was a unique and unprecedented phenomenon in our literature.

And so, a new period in literature set in. Who was the head of this new, this *fourth* period of our callow literature? Who, like Lomonosov, Karamzin and Pushkin, took hold of the public interest, ruled it unchallenged, placed the seal of his genius on the works of his time, imparted life to it and set a trend for contemporary talents? Who, I ask, was the sun of this new world system? Alas! no one, though many claimed that exalted title. Literature found itself for the first time without a sovereign ruler, and its vast monarchy split up into a multitude of petty, hostile and envious independencies; there were many heads, but they fell as quickly as they rose; in a word, this period of our literary history is the dismal period of interregnum and pretenders.

The present period contrasts with the *Pushkin* period in the same way as the latter contrasted with the *Karamzin* period. Life and activity have ended; the clash of arms has died down, and the wearied combatants have sheathed the swords and rested on their laurels, each ascribing victory to himself and none of them having won it in the full sense of the word. True, at the beginning, espe-

cially during the first two years, they fought desperately, but that was the closing page of an old war and not a new one; it was a *thirty years' war* after the death of Gustavus Adolphus and the destruction of Wallenstein. That sanguinary war is also now over, but without the Treaty of Westphalia, without satisfactory results for literature. The *Pushkin* period was notable for a sort of violent versification mania; the new period, at its very outset, evinced an unmistakable tendency to prose. But alas! it was not a step forward, not renovation, but deterioration, decadence of creative activity. Indeed, things have come to such a pass when it is alleged that the most admirable verses can have no success these days. An absurd opinion! Apparently, like everything else, it is not ours, but a free imitation of the opinions of our European neighbours. They frequently repeated that epos could not exist in our age, and now, it seems, are wedded to the belief that the drama too has come to an end. Such opinions are very strange and unfounded. Poetry of all nations and at all times was essentially the same: only the forms have changed in keeping with the spirit, trend and progress of humanity as a whole and of each nation in particular. The division of poetry into classes is not arbitrary: its reason and necessity are inherent in the very essence of art. There are only three classes of poetry, and there cannot be any more. Every work, of whatever class, is valid in all ages and every minute, when in spirit and form it bears the stamp of its time and meets all its demands. It has been said somewhere that Goethe's *Faust* is the *Iliad* of our times: that is an opinion no one will challenge! Indeed, is not Walter Scott the Homer of the modern *epic*, if not the mirror fully reflecting the spirit of the times? The same with us now: if a new Pushkin appeared, not the Pushkin of 1835 but the Pushkin of 1829, Russia would again be humming with poetry; but who, besides the unhappy readers *ex officio*, would even think of glancing at the wares of our new troubadours, Messieurs Yershovs, Strugovshchikovs, Markovs, Snegirevs, etc.?

Romanticism was the first word that marked the *Pushkin* period; *nationality* is the alpha and omega of the new period. As every scribbler then stuck at nothing to pass for a *romanticist*, so now every literary buffoon lays claim to the title of *national* writer. *Nationality* is a wonderful tag! Your *romanticism* is not worth a fig in comparison! Indeed this striving after nationality is a striking

thing. Not to mention our novelists and our new writers generally, look what the worthy corypheuses of our letters are doing. Zhukovsky, that poet, that genius who was always chained to fog-ridden Albion and fantastic Germany, suddenly forgot his palladins clad in steel from head to foot, his lovely faithful princesses, his wizards and his enchanted castles—and plunged into Russian fairy tale.... Need it be proved that these Russian tales have as much in common with the Russian spirit, of which there is not a vestige in them, as the Greek or German hexameter has with Russian tales?... But we must not be too severe about this delusion of potent talent carried away by the spirit of the times: Zhukovsky has fulfilled his career and fully discharged his duty: we have no right to expect any more from him. But Pushkin is another matter: it is strange to see how this remarkable man who easily became national when he least tried to be, is now so little national when he fain would be; it is strange to see him offering us as something important what he formerly threw off casually as an excess, a luxury. It seems to me that this striving for nationality is due to a widespread realization of the instability of our imitative literature and the desire to create a national literature where formerly such pains had been taken to create an imitative one. And so, once more purpose. once more endeavours, once more the old tune to a new measure? But is Krylov national *par excellence* because he tried to be national? No, he never thought about it; he was national because he could not help being national; he was unconsciously national, without placing any value upon it, and he imparted to his creations the spirit of nationality without the slightest effort or endeavour. His contemporaries. at least, did not show much appreciation of this virtue: they often blamed him for *base nature* and placed other fabulists, far inferior to him, on the same footing with him. Consequently, our men of letters so intent on nationality, are labouring in vain. Indeed, what is our common conception of *nationality*? Everybody, absolutely everybody, confuses it with *commonalty* and partly with triviality. But this delusion has its reason, its foundation, and should not be attacked with violence. I will say more: as far as Russian literature is concerned *nationality* cannot be interpreted otherwise. What is nationality in literature? The impress of the national character, the type of the national spirit and national life; but do we possess a national character? That is a difficult

problem to solve. Our national character is for the most part preserved among the lower orders of the people; that is why our writers, those, of course, who possess talent, are national when they depict in the novel or the drama the morals, customs, notions and sentiments of the rabble. But is the nation made up of the rabble alone? Of course not. As the head is the most important part of the human body, so do the middle and upper estates pre-eminently make up the nation. I know that a man is a man in any condition, that the common man has the same passions, mind and feeling as the grandee and is therefore no less worthy an object of poetical analysis; but the supreme life of a nation is pre-eminently expressed in its upper strata, or, to be more exact, in the integral idea of the people. Hence, if you choose one part of it as the object of your inspiration, you will inevitably be guilty of one-sidedness. Nor will you avoid this extreme by allotting to your creative activity the history of our country up to the time of Peter the Great. The upper sections of our people have not yet acquired a definite form and character; their lives offer little to poetry. Do you not agree that Bezglasni's beautiful story *Princess Mimi* is somewhat shallow and sluggish? Do you remember its epigraph?—*"My colours are pale," said the painter; "but what can I do? There are no better in our town!"* There you have the poet's best vindication, and also the best proof that he is eminently national in this story. Does it mean then, that nationality in our literature is a dream? Almost so, but not quite. What is the chief element of our productions which are distinguished for their nationality? Sketches either of ancient Russian life (before Peter the Great), or the life of the common people, and hence the inevitable copying of the tone of the chronicles and folk songs, or of the language of our common folk. But these chronicles, this record of the life of bygone days, contain the breath of the general life of mankind appearing in one of its thousand forms; be able, then, to grasp it with your mind and feeling and to reproduce it through your imagination in an artistic creation. That is the crux of the matter. But you must be a genius to make your creations throb with the idea of Russian life: that is the most slippery path. We are so remote, or rather cut off by the era of Peter the Great from the life of our forefathers, that your work must necessarily be preceded by a profound study of that life. And so, match your strength to your purpose and do

not write too confidently: the Russians in such and such a year.[64] Then it should also be noted that *Russian life* before Peter the Great was too placid and one-sided, or, more truly, it was manifested in its own original way: you will easily slander it if you follow Walter Scott. The writer who will base the plot of his novel on love and direct his hero's endeavours towards winning the hand and heart of the faithful fair, will patently show that he does not understand Rūs. I know that our boyars did climb fences to reach the fair objects of their passion, but that was an outrage against and perversion of sedate, majestic and respectable Russian life and not its manifestation; such nocturnal knights were horse-whipped by jealous husbands and not challenged to the noble duel; such fair ladies were considered harlots and not the victims of passion evoking sympathy and compassion. Our grandfathers loved *by lawful permission*, or as a passing amusement, and they did not lay their hearts at the feet of their fair charmers, but showed them in advance the silk whip and followed undeviatingly the wise maxim: *Love thy wife as thy soul, and shake her as a pear tree*, or *beat her as a coat.* Generally speaking, our love even today is not quite of the chivalrous kind, and exceptions prove nothing.

As regards vivid and mirror-like portrayal of scenes from the life of the common peop'e, do not let yourself be deceived. I like very much in *Roslavlev* the scene at the inn, but that is because it effectively portrays the character of one of the classes of our people, a character that asserted itself during a crucial moment in the country's life; proverbs, sayings and broken language are, in themselves, in no way entertaining. It ensues from what I have said that our nationality for the time being consists in a faithful representation of scenes from Russian life, but not in any peculiar spirit and trend of Russian activity, which should be manifest in all creations irrespective of their subject and their content. Everyone knows that the French classics have *frenchified* Greek and Roman heroes in their tragedies: there you have genuine nationality, always true to itself even in misrepresentation! It consists in a mode of thinking and feeling peculiar to a given nation. I have not the slightest doubt that Goethe was a genius, though I am very inadequately acquainted with him owing to my ignorance of German; but, let me confess that I have little faith in the *Hellenism* of his *Iphigeneia*: the greater a genius the more is he a son of his age,

a citizen of his world, and such attempts on his part to give expression to an utterly alien nationality always presuppose a counterfeiting that is bound to be more or less a failure. Have we then a nationality of literature in this sense? No, we have not, nor can we expect to have it soon, despite the noble desires of enlightened patriots. Our society is still too young, still in the process of formation, not yet freed from European tutelage; its features have not yet taken form. Any European poet might have written *The Prisoner of the Caucasus,* the *Fountain of Bakhchisarai* or the *Gypsies,* but only a Russian poet could have written *Eugene Onegin* and *Boris Godunov. Absolute* nationality is only within the reach of men who are free from extraneous foreign influences, and that is why Derzhavin is national. Thus, *our nationality consists in a faithful portrayal of scenes of Russian life.* Let us see what progress the poets of our new literary period have made in this respect.

The beginning of this *national* trend in literature had been made during the *Pushkin* period; only then it was not so sharply defined. Its pioneer was Mr. Bulgarin. But as he is not an artist, a fact which no one now doubts except his friends, his novels rendered a service not to literature but to society, *i.e.,* each of them bore out a practical truth of life, namely:

1. *Ivan Vizhigin*: the harm done to Russia by foreign emigrants and artful dodgers offering their mercenary services in the capacity of tutors, stewards and sometimes writers;

2. *Dmitri the Pretender*: he who is a master-hand at describing petty knaves and rascals should not attempt to describe great scoundrels;[65]

3. *Peter Vizhigin: it is no use holding a farthing candle to the sun*; in other words: *make hay while the sun shines.*[66]

I repeat: Faddei Venediktovich is not a poet, but a practical philosopher, a philosopher of real life. The poetical aspect of his creations is only displayed in the vivid and faithful portrayal of dishonesties and knavery. It should in all justice be said that the extraordinary success of his novels, meaning their extraordinarily thriving sale, did much to revive our literary activities and produced an endless generation of novels. To him too the Russian public owes the appearance on the literary stage of Alexander Anfimovich Orlov.

The national trend was greatly advanced by Mr. Pogodin. In 1826 there appeared his short story *The Beggar*, and in 1829 *Black Death*. Both are admirable for their faithful description of Russian popular morals, for warmth of feeling and masterly narrative, and the latter, in addition, for the beautiful, poetic idea underlying it. If Mr. Pogodin advanced progressively in his stories Russian literature would acquire in him a writer it might be justly proud of. The honour of ushering in nationality by means of the story does not, however, belong to him alone; it was shared to a greater or lesser extent by other admirable talents.

Yuri Miloslavsky was the first good Russian novel. Though lacking artistic completeness and integrity it displays a remarkable skill in portraying the life of our ancestors, when that life is similar to the present, and it is permeated with unusually warm feeling. Add to this a quality of interesting narrative and the novelty of the chosen field wherein the author had had neither model nor precedent, and you will understand the reason for its extraordinary success. *Roslavlev* is distinguished by the same qualities of excellence and imperfections: incompleteness and lack of unity combined with vivid pictures of the popular life.

Mr. Ushakov's *Kirghiz-Kaisak* was an amazing and unexpected occurrence; it is distinguished by deep feeling and other attributes of really artistic production, though it comes from the pen of the author of *Puss Burmosek* and long and tedious essays on the theatre, on Polish literature and what not, characteristic for their toothless wit and amusing pretense to critical talent and learning. What is to be done? *Kirghiz-Kaisak* in this respect is the only thing of its kind in our literature; did not Ablesimov write, one might say *unintentionally*, *The Miller*, and Mr. Voyeikov *The Lunatic Asylum*? ...

The latest period was marked by the appearance of two new remarkable talents: Mr. Weltman and Mr. Lazhechnikov. Mr. Weltman writes in verse and prose and in both cases reveals genuine talent. His poems: *The Fugitive* and *Murom Woods* were an anachronism, and consequently met with no success. The latter, by the way, despite its faults, is remarkable for its vivid beauties; who does not know by heart the song of the highwayman: *Why Art Dimmed Bright Dawn?* The *Pilgrim*, save its excessive pretensions, is notable for its wittiness, which constitutes the predominant element

of Mr. Weltman's talent. In this respect, indeed, he rises to lofty heights: *Iskander* is one of the most precious jewels of our literature. Mr. Weltman's best work is *Kashchei the Deathless*: it reveals a deep study of ancient Rūs from the chronicles and folklore which the author has comprehended with the feeling of a poet. This is a series of delightful pictures which one cannot admire enough. It should generally be said of Mr. Weltman that he has been making sport too much and too long of his talent, the existence of which no one, except *The Readers' Library*, doubts. It is time he stopped amusing himself, time he presented the public with a work it rightfully expects of him; Mr. Weltman possesses so much talent, so much wit and feeling, so much originality and independence!

Mr. Lazhechnikov is not a new writer; he has long been known for his *Campaign Diary of an Officer*. That work brought him literary fame: but as it was written under the influence of Karamzin, it is now, despite its merits, forgotten, and the author himself calls it an aberration of his youth.* However that may be, Mr. Lazhechnikov made his repute as an author on it, and therefore everybody looked forward eagerly to his *Page*. Mr. Lazhechnikov did not deceive these hopes, he even surpassed the general expectation and is rightly acknowledged to be the first Russian novelist. Indeed, the *Page* is an uncommon work, marked with the stamp of consummate talent. Mr. Lazhechnikov possesses all the attributes of the novelist: talent, education, ardent feeling and life's experience. The chief fault of his *Page* is that it was his first work of that kind: hence the duality of interest, here and there an excessive loquacity and a too obvious dependence on the influence of foreign standards. But then what a daring and rich imagination, what perfect portraiture of men and characters, what diversity of scenes, what life and movement in the narrative! The epoch chosen by the author is the most romantic and dramatic episode of our history and offers the richest hunting ground to the poet. Though giving full meed to Mr. Lezhechnikov's poetical talent it should be said that he did not quite cope with the epoch of his choice, due, it would seem, to a certain misjudgment of it. This is especially borne

* I beg the pardon of the honourable author of *Page* for an unintentional offence. I knew very well that the beautiful song *Sweetly Sang the Nightingale!* belonged to him, for I had the honour of learning that from himself; my guilt was that I was not sufficiently explicit.

out by the chief character of his novel, who, in my opinion, is the worst character in the whole story. Can you tell me what there is in him that is specifically Russian, or at least individual? It is simply a featureless character, and a man of our days rather than of the seventeenth century. Generally the *Page* has many heroes but not a single principal actor. The most noteworthy and interesting is Patkul: he is painted at full length, and painted with a masterly brush. But the most interesting, the most beloved child of his fantasy I believe is the Swiss maid Rosa; this is a character Balzac himself might have envied. I have neither space nor time to give a full analysis of *Page*, though I could say a good deal about it! I conclude: it reveals in the author a considerable talent and establishes his claim to the honourable place of first Russian novelist; his faults, it seems to me, are due partly to the fact that the author did not take an altogether direct view of the epoch of Peter the Great, and, primarily, to the fact that *Page* was his first opus. Judging by fragments of his new novel there are hopes that it will turn out to be much better than the first and will fully justify the hopes the public places in his talent.

It remains for me now to mention one more highly noteworthy figure of our literature: that is the author who writes under the pseudonym of *Bezglasni*.[67] They say that this is ... but what has the name of the author to do with us, more so that he is himself loath to have it published? Since he recently announced that he was neither A, nor B, nor C, I will choose to call him O. This O. has been writing a long time, but his artistic talent has latterly revealed itself with great force. This writer has not yet been appreciated with us at his true worth, and requires special attention which I have neither the time nor space now to give him. All his works reveal a powerful and vigorous talent, a deep and sincere feeling, a perfect originality, a knowledge of the human heart, a knowledge of society, a high education and an observant mind. I said: a knowledge of *society*, and will add: especially of *high society*, of which, I have a suspicion, he is a traitor.... O, he is a terrible and retributive artist! How deeply and truly has he fathomed the unfathomable nothingness and insignificance of the class of people whom he pursues with such vehemence and unflagging perseverance! He inveighs at their insignificance, he brands them with the stigma of shame; he castigates them like Nemesis,

he condemns them for having lost the image and likeness of God, for having bartered the sacred treasures of the soul for the gilded dross, for having renounced the living God and worshipped the idol of worldliness, for having substituted the conventions for mind, feeling, conscience and rectitude! He ... why tell you so much about him? If you will understand my enthusiastic wonder before him, you will the better understand and appreciate the artist; there is no use otherwise in wasting words.... I take it that you have read his *The Ball*, his *Brigadier*, his *Mockery of the Dead*, his *How Dangerous It Is for Girls to Walk on Nevsky Prospect?* ...

Mr. Gogol, who has been masquerading so amiably under the name of *Beekeeper*, is an outstanding talent. Who does not know his *Evenings in a Farm near Dikanka*? How full it is of wit and lightness, poesy and nationality? Please God that he justify the promise he holds out! ...

Need I speak of the rest of our novelists and story-writers: Messieurs Masalsky, Kalashnikov, Grech and others? They are all considered to be almost geniuses! And before them, Mr. O. of whom we have just spoken above, must hide his diminished head! I am awed, I marvel, I am struck dumb, for I feel that I am not equal to pay them proper tribute.

I have counted, then, four periods in our literature: the *Lomonosov*, the *Karamzin*, the *Pushkin* and the *prosaic-national* period; there remains for me to mention a fifth, ushered in by the first part of *Novoselye*, which can and should be called the *Smirdin* period. Yes, dear sirs, I am quite serious, and repeat that this period of our literature should emphatically be called the *Smirdin* period; for A. F. Smirdin is the head and leader of this period. He is the springhead and he is the magnet; he approves and encourages youthful and decrepit talent with the entrancing ring of the coin of the realm; he gives the trend and points the way for these geniuses and semi-geniuses, keeps them busy, in a word, creates life and activity in our literature. You probably remember how our most honourable A. F. Smirdin, actuated by a striving for the common weal, declared with all the candour of a noble heart that our journalists were not successful because they relied on their knowledge, talents and activity instead of on live capital which is the soul of literature; you remember how he sent the rallying cry among our geniuses, grunted loudly and jingled the purse, and

announced a tariff on all species of literary production, and how our producers were enlisted in crowds into his company; you remember how magnanimously and zealously he took the lease of all our literature and the whole literary activity of its representatives! Assisted by the geniuses of Messieurs Grech, Senkovsky, Bulgarin, Baron Brambeus and other members of the illustrious company he concentrated the whole of our literature in his massive magazine. And what did this great patriotic commercial enterprise result in? There are some people who aver that Mr. Smirdin has murdered our literature, having decoyed its talented representatives with the promise of lucre. Need it be proved that these are mischievous people ill-disposed towards every unselfish enterprise aimed at reviving whatsoever branch of the national industry? I do not belong to this class of men, and, for instance, sincerely rejoice over the *Encyclopaedic Lexicon* though I am aware that Messieurs Grech, Bulgarin, etc., are among its compilers, though I have read Lomonosov's service record which is passed off as that great man's biography.[68] I possess the amazing faculty of seeing only the good side of things without noticing the bad, and at whatever I look I always repeat my favourite verse:

'Tis all boon and blessings!

for, I am honestly and sincerely convinced, I cherish the unshakeable belief, despite Professor Senkovsky, that the human race, by the grace of a vigilant and loving God, is moving to perfection and its progress along this path will be stopped neither by fanaticism, ignorance, malice, nor by Baron Brambeus, for these stoppers of the good are actually its prime movers. Destroy evil and you will destroy the good, for there is no merit without strife. Thus I view *The Readers' Library* in a quite different light: it has not raised our literature by a hair, but neither has it dropped it by a hair. To create something out of nothing is given to God alone and not to *The Readers' Library;* one can revive a dying man, but not one that is non-existent. You cannot create talent by money, nor can you kill it with money. Wherever they may write, to whatever magazine they may contribute their wares, and however much they may get for them Messieurs Grech, Bulgarin, Masalsky, Kalashnikov, Voyeikov will always and everywhere remain the same; but Mr. O. will not betray himself either in the

Novoselye or in *The Readers' Library*. And so, in my opinion, *The Readers' Library* has shown practically, *a posteriori*, and, consequently, beyond doubt, that we possess no literature: for having at its disposal all the necessary means it has made no headway. That is not its fault; for

> Never yet has frozen air
> Midst winter ever caused a flare![69]

Woe to the artist who writes for money and not through an unconscious urge to write! But when he has released from the world of his soul that disembodied ideal that has harassed and tormented him, when he has done feasting his eyes and senses over his creation, why should he not sell it?

> The composition is not for sale,
> But the manuscript can be sold.[70]

It is a different matter with a picture: in selling it the artist parts with his creation, loses the beloved child of his fantasy; however, a verbal composition, thanks to Guttenberg's ingenious invention, always remains with him: then why not use the gifts of nature to compensate the injustice of fortune? Was it not through money that the English and French magazines attained their present high state of perfection? *The Readers' Library* then is to blame not for paying too much to *Russian* authors, but for having thought, not of course without an eye on the main chance, that it could breed talents with the aid of money. One of the chief duties of a Russian magazine is to acquaint the Russian public with European progress. How does *The Readers' Library* discharge that function? It abbreviates, lops off, stretches out and recasts in its own way translations of articles from foreign magazines and even boasts of a peculiar method of its own for rendering them more interesting. It never occurs to it that the public wants to know what Europe thinks and not what *The Readers' Library* thinks on any given subject. Hence the translations in *The Readers' Library* are worth nothing. What stories, for instance, does it translate? The wares of Miss Mitford and others writing in the style of the late Ducray-Duminil and August La Fontaine and their kind. And what about its criticism? You are probably familiar with its reviews on Messieurs Bulgarin, Grech, Kalashnikov, and Messieurs Khomyakov, Weltman,

Teplyakov and others. In analysing *The Black Woman* the *Library's* critic expounded the whole system of *anatomy, physiology, electricity* and *magnetism,* of which the novel in question does not contain a vestige: wonderful criticism, I vow!

Who are the geniuses of the *Smirdin* period of literature? They are Messieurs Baron Brambeus, Grech, Kukolnik, Voyeikov, Kalashnikov, Masalsky, Yershov and many others. What can be said of them? I marvel, I am awed, struck dumb! Of the first one I will merely say that after the well-known article in *The Telescope* under the heading *Common Sense and Baron Brambeus* the worthy baron at first lapsed into silence, then launched into morality after the manner of Mr. Bulgarin, and from an imitator of *Young Literature* became an imitator of the author of the Vizhigins. Baron Brambeus is a *misanthrope,* a hater of mankind: a blend of Rousseau with Paul de Kock and Mr. Bulgarin, he sneers and reviles at everything and particularly assails education. There are two kinds of misanthropes: some hate mankind because they love it too much; others because they are aware of their own insignificance, and to avenge themselves as it were they pour out the vials of their wrath on everything that is in the least above them.... Without doubt Baron Brambeus belongs to the former class of misanthropes....

The last year, that is 1834, has been marked by the appearance of only two novels by Mr. Weltman and *Dmitri the Pretender* by Mr. Khomyakov; the rest is not worth mentioning. Mr. Khomyakov is one of the notable talents of the *Pushkin* period. His drama, however, is a noteworthy step forward for the author, but not for Russian literature. While possessing much lyrical beauty of great merit it has very little dramatism.

And so, I have related to you the whole history of our literature, enumerated its celebrities from Lomonosov, its first genius, to Mr. Kukolnik, its last genius. I began my article by saying that we had no literature: I wonder whether my review has convinced you of this fact; if it has not, the blame can only be imputed to my lack of skill, and certainly does not disprove my thesis. Indeed, Derzhavin, Pushkin, Krylov and Griboyedov—these are its sole representatives; there are no others yet, and you need not

look for them. But can four men who have appeared at different times constitute a whole literature? And were they not, moreover, an accidental occurrence? Look at the history of foreign literatures. In France Corneille was immediately followed by Racine, Molière, La Fontaine and many others; then in the age of Voltaire, how many famous literary names there were! Now: Hugo, Lamartine, Delavigne, Barbier, Balzac, Dumas, Janin, Eugène Sue, Jacob de Bibliophile and many more. In Germany: Lessing, Klopstock, Herder, Schiller, Goethe were contemporaries. In England recently Byron, Walter Scott, Thomas Moore, Coleridge, Southey, Wordsworth and many more appeared almost at the same time. Is that so with us? Alas! ... *The Readers' Library* has proved a great and lamentable truth. Apart from two or three articles by Mr. O., what have you read there worthy of any attention? Absolutely nothing. The combined efforts of all our men of letters have produced nothing above golden mediocrity! Where then, I ask you, is literature? We had many talents, big and little, but few, too few artists by calling, that is to say men for whom to write and live and to live and write is one and the same thing, men who have no existence outside of art, who do not stand in need of favours and patrons, or rather who perish through patrons, whom neither money, distinction nor injustice can kill, who till their last breath remain true to their sacred calling. We had our epoch of scholasticism, our epoch of lachrymosity, our epoch of versification, our epoch of novels and stories, and now we are having our epoch of drama; but we have not had our epoch of art, of literature. Our versification is over; the fashion for novels is also, apparently, passing; now we are torturing the drama. And all this without reason, through sheer imitativeness: when, then, will the epoch of genuine art in our country begin?

It will come, you may be sure of that! But for that we first need the education of a society that would express the character of the great Russian people, we need an enlightenment created by our own efforts, cultivated on our own native soil. We have no literature: I reiterate this with joy, with delight, for I see in that truth the earnest of our future successes. Take a good look at the trend of our society, and you will agree that I am right. See how the new generation, disillusioned in the genius and immortality of our literary works, instead of giving immature creations to the

world, is avidly studying the sciences and drinking the life-giving water of education at the fountainhead. The age of childhood is apparently passing! Please God it pass quickly! But please God still more that men's minds should quickly be disabused of the illusion that we possess a rich literature! Noble poverty is better than illusory riches! There will come a time, and enlightenment will spread throughout Russia in a broad torrent, the intellectual countenance of the nation will stand out clearly, and our artists and writers will then place on all their creations the stamp of the Russian spirit. But now we must learn, learn, learn! Tell me, for God's sake, can a half-taught boy nowadays attract attention, even though he were endowed by nature with intellect, feeling and talent? Eternal Homer, if he really did exist, did not, of course, study either at the Academy or Porticus; but that was because they did not exist at the time; that was because men in those days studied from the great book of nature and life; and Homer, if we are to believe legend, zealously studied nature and life, traversed almost the entire length and breadth of the known world, and gathered up in his own person the whole of contemporary lore. Goethe—there is the Homer, the prototype of the modern poet!

We need, then, not a literature, which will come in due season without any effort on our part, but education! And that education. through the vigilant guardianship of a wise government, will not be allowed to run to seed. The Russian people is intelligent and shrewd, zealous and ardent to all that is good and beautiful, when the hand of the father-tsar points out the goal, when his august voice calls to it! Can we fail to achieve that end when the government represents such a unique, such an unprecedented model of solicitude for the dissemination of education, when it expends such vast sums on the maintenance of schools, encourages teachers and students with magnificent awards, and has thrown open the door to distinction and benefit for the educated mind and talent! Does a year ever pass but an indefatigable government accomplishes new deeds for the benefit of education, or bestows new favours and new bounties upon men of science? The very fact that an institution of *domestic tutors and teachers* has been inaugurated is fraught with incalculable blessings for Russia, whom it will rid of the pernicious effects of foreign education. Yes! we shall soon have *our own,* our Russian, public education; we shall soon show that

we have no use for alien intellectual tutelage. And that will not be difficult for us to do, when eminent statesmen, the tsar's associates at the arduous helm of governance, appear amid knowledge-loving youth in the central temple of Russian learning to announce to them the sacred will of the monarch, to point the way to education in the spirit of *Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality*....[71]

Our society too, is nearing its complete enlightenment. The gentle nobility have finally become convinced of the necessity of giving their children a lasting, fundamental education in the spirit of faith, loyalty and nationality. Our young bloods, our *dandies*, possessing no learning other than the facile accomplishment of talking nonsense in French, are becoming ridiculous and pitiful anachronisms. On the other hand can one fail to see how rapidly our merchant class is becoming educated and in this respect approaches high society? Ah, believe me, it was not in vain that they clung so firmly to their venerable flowing beards, to their long-skirted caftans and the customs of their ancestors! The Russian character is more intact in them than in any one else and they will not lose it in embracing education, but will become the national type. See also what an active part our clergy are beginning to take in the sacred cause of national education.... Yes! the seed of the future is ripening today! And it will sprout and blossom, blossom forth in full splendour at the behest of affectionate monarchs! Then shall we have *our own* literature, then shall we be the rivals and not imitators of the Europeans....

And so I have not only come within sight of land, I am actually ashore, and standing there I gaze back with pride and pleasure upon the way I have travelled. It was certainly a long journey! And it is really tired and worn out I am! It was an unaccustomed and difficult road. However, before taking leave of you, dear reader, I should like to tell you another brief word. He who ventures to pass judgment on others incurs the risk of still harsher judgment on himself. Moreover, an author's vanity is more susceptible and resentful than any other kind of vanity. When beginning to write this article I merely had a mind to twit our modern literature, and did not imagine I would have drifted so far. I started out with a toast for the living and ended up with a prayer for the dead.

That often happens in the affairs of life. I admit, then, candidly: do not seek strict logical sequence in my *Elegy in Prose*. Elegists were never distinguished for punctilious reasoning. My object was to vent several truths, some of them known before, some of them the result of my own observations; but I had no time to ponder over and polish up my article; I have a love for truth and a desire for the common weal, though, perhaps, not substantial knowledge. What is to be done? These two qualities are rarely combined in a single person. However, I never spoke a word about what was beyond my understanding, and have therefore not touched on our *scientific* literature. I think and believe that any man may boldly and candidly express his views in the interests of promoting science and literature, the more so if these views, whether right or wrong, are the outcome of his convictions and do not pursue an ulterior motive. If therefore you find that I have erred, express your opinion in print and charge me with a false view on things: I ask that as proof of your love of truth and as a token of respect for me as a man; but do not be angry with me if you think otherwise. And so, dear readers: let me wish you a happy new year. Farewell!

Chembar, 1834. December 12th.

ESSAY ON A SYSTEM OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY

THE WORK OF ALEXEI DROZDOV, M. SC.
ST. PETERSBURG. PRINTER I. GLAZUNOV, 1835
PUBLISHER THE REV. F. SIDONSKY. V. 78 (12).
WITH THE EPIGRAPH:

Parve... liber....
Vade, sed incultus.
Trist. Ovid. Nas.[1]

WITH us the knowledge of philosophy is, generally speaking, not at all prevalent; indeed, the very interest in it is only beginning to awaken, and then only in a haphazard sort of way, by fits and starts. Nevertheless it is awakening despite the wild outcry of the ignorant who are pitting the whole force of their "secular" dialectics against "logical constructions." This interest is especially manifest among our clergy, who are pursuing this great science earnestly and with noticeable success. The pamphlet referred to at the top of this page, written and published by clericals, is evidence thereof.

Of course, not a word about this pamphlet has appeared anywhere, and it fell into our hands by chance. We have read it with a pleasure which we hasten to share with our readers. Among its merits may be mentioned: a correct view on many things, a splendid and inspired exposition of ideas, conscientious reasoning, simplicity and clarity; among its shortcomings: lack of strict system due to an erroneous first principle and, consequently, particular contradictions. In both cases we are impelled both by the importance of the subject and by our respect for a conscientious and unselfish work to deal with it at length.

The worthy author rightly begins with a definition of the idea of "moral philosophy," which he otherwise calls "active"; its distinction from "speculative" he presumes to consist in the fact that the subject of the latter is *truth*, while that of the former is *goodness*. He finds a "co-ordination" between the two which, though not rendering them separate branches of knowledge, presupposes the possibility of their being treated independently of each other.

The author then says that "moral philosophy cannot deduce its principles from *historical experiences* or any verisimilar rules, but requires exact and definite knowledge as to what is true, good and just in itself." This alone is sufficient to show that the pamphlet is worthy of attention and the author a man who understands his subject. There are two methods of investigating truth; *a priori* and *a posteriori*, that is to say, by pure reason and by experience. There has been much controversy on the respective merits of these methods, and even now these two warring factions will not be reconciled. Some say that cognition, to be correct, must proceed from reason as the source of our consciousness and must therefore be subjective, since all reality has meaning only in our consciousness and does not exist in itself; others believe that cognition is correct only when it is deduced from facts and phenomena, based on experience. The former admit the existence of consciousness alone, reality consisting only in reason and all the rest being exanimate, lifeless and meaningless in itself without relation to consciousness; in short, with them reason is king, law-giver, a creating force which gives life and meaning to what is non-existent and dead. To the latter the real consists in things, facts and the phenomena of nature, while reason is merely a menial, a slave of inanimate reality, accepting its laws and changing at its whim, consequently a dream, a vision. The whole universe, all being, is merely unity in multiplicity, an infinite chain of modifications of one and same idea; the mind, losing itself in this multiplicity, endeavours to reduce it in its consciousness to unity, and the history of philosophy is nothing but the history of this endeavour. The fact that the eggs of Leda, water, air and fire, were acknowledged as the cause and origin of all being, shows that the unsophisticated mind too manifested the same striving which it manifests now. The instability of the early philosophical systems deduced from pure reason consists not in the fact that they were not based on experience, but, on the contrary, that they were dependent upon experience, for the unsophisticated mind always regards as the fundamental law of its outlook not the idea immanent within itself, but one or another phenomenon of nature, and consequently deduces the ideas from facts, and not facts from ideas. Facts and phenomena do not exist by themselves: they are all inherent within us. Take for example a red square table: the red colour is the product of my visual nerve stimulated

by contemplating the table; the square shape is a type of form produced by my spirit inherent within myself and imparted by me to the table; the very meaning of the table is simi arly a concept that is inherent within me and created by me, since the invention of the table was preceded by the necessity for the table, and consequently, the table was the consequence of a concept created by man himself and not derived from any external object. External objects merely furnish an impulse to our Ego and induce it to form concepts which it imparts to them. This certainly does not mean that we reject the need for studying facts: on the contrary, we fully realize the necessity for such a study; but that study must necessarily be purely speculative, and the facts should be explained by idea, rather than idea deduced from facts. Otherwise matter will be the principle of spirit, and spirit the slave of matter. So it was in the eighteenth century, that age of experience and empiricism. And what did it lead to? To scepticism, materialism, irreligion, immorality and utter ignorance of truth despite extensive learning. What did the Encyclopaedists know? What were the fruits of their erudition? Where are their theories? They have all gone to pieces, burst like soap bubbles. Let us take just the theory of the beautiful, a theory deduced from facts and uphe'd by the authority of Boileau, Batteux, La Harpe, Marmontel and Voltaire: where is that theory, or, rather, what has become of it now? It is no more than a record of the impotence and nihility of the human mind operating not in accordance with the eternal laws of its activity, but accepting the optical delusion of facts. What has that theory led to? To the utter ruination and debasement of art which it has reduced to a mere trade. And why? Because these men wanted to create an ideal of art after the immortal pattern bequeathed by antiquity instead of bringing it forth from their own spirit. It will be said: they knew only Greek and Roman literature and hence could only judge by these literatures, they did not know Shakespeare, were not acquainted with medieval literature, the literatures of the peoples of the East, they lived before Schiller, Goethe, Byron. What of it? They had no need to know all that, because they had something more reliable than the works of Schiller, Goethe and Byron, they had reason, they had the self-conscious human spirit, and that reason and spirit contained the ideal of art, contained the dark and thrilling foreknowledge of genuine

works of creative genius. If the works of the ancients did not fit this ideal it merely meant that they did not understand them in the right way, or that these works were false and unartistic. To see this more clearly, let us take an example. I am convinced that poetry is the unconscious expression of the creating spirit, and that consequently a poet, during moments of creation, is a passive rather than an active being, and his work is the captured vision that has visited him in the sublime moment of revelation from above, hence it cannot be the figment of his mind, the deliberate production of his volition. Taking this as the absolute principle I recognize nothing as poetry that has not been created according to this law, nothing that pursues an end, or is the result of imitation. It will be objected that such and such works do not comply with this law. Then they are spurious, is my reply. But is your first principle right? Refute it then! Now let us proceed. I am convinced that the epic poem, to be a genuinely artistic production, must be a mirror of the life of the entire nation; to be so it must be begotten in accordance with the law of creation I have just mentioned, *viz.*, it must be the unconscious expression of the creating spirit, independent of the conscious volition of man, consequently it must be supremely original, eminently foreign to any imitation whatever. Such is the *Iliad* which, whether it be the work of a whole nation or of a blind Homer, is the symbol of the idea of heroic Greece; such is Goethe's *Faust*, the work of a single man, who was himself the complete mirror of Germany and who depicted in his work the symbol of the spirit of his fatherland in an original form characteristic of his age. But such are not *Aeneid*, *Gerusalemme Liberata*, *Paradise Lost*, *Messias* because they are not original, unconscious creations, but the consequents of the *Iliad*, and they therefore live a life that is not their own. Therefore they do not and cannot represent either a complete picture of the life of the nation to which they belong or a faithful reflection of the spirit of the times in which they appeared. Of course, they contain particularities of great beauty; but these works are nevertheless spurious and false. But have they not been acknowledged by all ages? Granted: but let anyone try to prove that my basic principles are wrong; I will then admit that the ages talked sense. But then poetry will no longer exist for me; poetry will become a trade, an amusement, an innocent pastime, something like a

game of cards or dancing. Let us adduce another example. One of our magazines recently defended a trivial work by a friendly author against the harsh attacks of common sense, for which it found no better way than to reject the possibility of poetry existing among uneducated and ignorant nations, as if poetry were the fruit of science and civilization and not the free product of the human spirit. The gallant champion of the said friend's book pounced upon the Russian song:

Our little yard
Is ever so hard–

to prove, as $2\times2=4$, that Russian folk songs lack poesy, since, you see, they were composed by illiterate muzhiks and not by "men of the world," by bachelors of art, masters of science and doctors; he did not even give himself the trouble of guessing that the song he quoted is no song at all, but the burden of a song, a sort of refrain, representing bald rhyme without reason, intended for the voice alone, as for instance "lulla, lulla, lullaby!" and so on. That is what comes of basing oneself on facts without thought! That is why, in reading that article one wonders whether he is reading about poetry or about new methods of fertilizing the fields for potato crops.... Absurd and contemptible! ...

I began, however, with the eighteenth century and the French, and did not notice my own digression which has brought me to the nineteenth century and us, Russians; that is because the eighteenth century is still alive and kicking in many of our books and magazines, especially those of the "secular" sort, and the French are still holding us childlike in the leading strings of their empiricism which they pass off as eclecticism. Mankind learned the meaning of art and philosophy only from the Germans, while the French showed us something in the nature of the cobbler's trade instead of art, and a game of spillikins instead of philosophy. Speculation is always based on the laws of necessity, and empiricism on the conditional phenomena of inanimate reality. Hence the former is an edifice built on rock; the latter an edifice built on sand which will topple over as soon as the wind dislodges a single grain of sand from its shaky foundation. Mathematics is a science preeminently positive and exact, and yet in no way empirical, being deduced from the laws of pure reason, which amounts to the same

thing: that $2\times2=4$ is a truth which we have learned not from experience, but from the spirit transferred to experience. What are all the hypotheses which form the foundation of astronomy if not speculation; yet it cannot be said that astronomy is not a positive science! The two greatest discoveries in the realm of our knowledge—that of America and the planetary system—were made *a priori*. Columbus and Galileo were ridiculed as madmen, because experience obviously confuted them, but they believed in their reason, and reason was vindicated by them.

Still more strange, it seems to us, is the idea of a sort of modern fusion of the speculative and empirical methods of investigating truth: Heaven save the mark! this is sheer nonsense which destroys a complete circle of knowledge and denies the possibility of any science whatever, since it refutes the validity of both speculation and experience itself: if speculation needs the aid of experience it means that it is inadequate; if experience needs the aid of speculation it, too, is inadequate. By admitting the inadequacy of experience we destroy the reality of facts independent of our consciousness, and predicate that we can learn nothing whatever from experience; by admitting the inadequacy of speculation we reduce our reason to a phantom and predicate that we can learn nothing by means of reason as well. What then will be the consequent of this fusion? Only two homogeneous things can constitute a whole. It is another matter to verify speculation by experience, to apply speculation to facts; that is feasible. If speculation is correct, experience should necessarily corroborate it in application, because, as we have said, experimental knowledge itself is essentially speculative, since the fact has being and meaning not in itself but according to the concept which it begets in our consciousness and which we impart to it. Consequently, if facts are correctly apprehended they should necessarily corroborate speculation. since speculation does not contradict speculation....

BOOK REVIEWS
1840–1841

THE ACTS OF PETER THE GREAT, THE WISE REGENERATOR OF RUSSIA, GATHERED FROM AUTHENTIC SOURCES AND ARRANGED CHRONOLOGICALLY

WORK BY I. I. GOLIKOV. SECOND EDITION. MOSCOW, 1837-1840. VOL. I-XIII

THE HISTORY OF PETER THE GREAT

WORK BY BENJAMIN BERGMAN. TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY EGOR ALADYIN. SECOND (CONDENSED) EDITION, REVISED. ST. PETERSBURG. 1840. THREE VOLUMES.[1]

Russia was covered in darkness for many years:
God said: let there be Peter—and there was light in Russia!

An ancient distich

The beard is an attribute of savage man; not to shave it is the same as keeping the fingernails uncut. It protects only a small part of the face against cold: and what a discomfort it is in the summer during the heat! What a discomfort it is in winter, too, to wear rime, snow and icicles on one's face! Were it not better to have a muffler that keeps the whole face warm and not merely the chin? To choose the best of everything is the act of an educated mind; and Peter the Great wished to educate the mind in every respect. The monarch declared war on our ancient usages, firstly, because they were crude, unworthy of the age; secondly, because they hindered the introduction of other, more important and useful foreign innovations. Inveterate Russian obstinacy had to have its neck wrung, so to speak, in order to render us supple, capable of learning and assimilating....

All the pitiable *jeremiades* concerning the change of the Russian character and the loss of the Russian moral features are nothing more than a jest or the result of a deficiency of sound reflection. We are not the men our bearded ancestors were: all the better! Inner and outward crudity, ignorance, sloth and boredom were their lot even among the highest conditions: for us all the roads are open to refined reason and the noble pleasures of the soul.

Karamzin, "Letters of a Russian Traveller," V. III.

ARTICLE 2

For Russia a time of consciousness is coming. Despite the coldness and indifference with which we, Russians, not without reason reproach ourselves, we are no longer content with platitudes and threadbare notions, and would rather err in judgment than repeat cut-and-dried opinions taken on trust through indolence or apathy. Thus, for example, many people, hearing no new opinions on Pushkin and doubting the justice of those long since expressed and obsolete, throw doubt upon the poetical greatness of Pushkin. And this is a happy sign: it expresses the need of independent reflection, the need of truth, which is more momentous than anything else, even Pushkin. *Amicus Plato, sed magis amica veritas* is an exceedingly wise apophthegm! What is truly great will always be impervious to doubt, and will not fall, nor diminish, nor be eclipsed, but will grow still stronger, greater and brighter from doubt and negation, which are really the first step to every kind of truth, the starting point of all wisdom. Falsehood alone fears doubt and negation, as artificial flowers and base metals fear water. We have repeated this axiom more than once in speaking of people who disavow the greatness of Pushkin as a poet. Our opinion is diametrically opposed to theirs; but if their opinion is not the outcome of ulterior and reprehensible motive, we are prepared to argue with them for the sake of truth, and are convinced that truth will be born out of such arguments and will enter the general consciousness, become a common conviction. All the farther are we from regarding these people as sectarians, as falsifiers of the truth, insulting the memory of a great poet and the feeling of national pride. We shall say more: we understand that there may be such negators of Pushkin's genius who are a thousand times more worthy of respect than many of his avowed admirers who repeat the words of others. The appearance of such negators reveals a growing love of truth on the part of society rather than coldness: for implicit acceptance without argument, without the test of reason, is more a sign of society's apathy to the cause of truth than doubt and negation. Nay, the appearance of such negators in a young society is a token of nascent reflective life. The unqualified honour that is rendered to authority and repute is sometimes expressive of love and life, but a love and life that are unconscious, ingenuous and

childish. It is absurd to demand or desire that society should remain static, in a state of childhood, when that is not demanded or desired of a man who, if in defiance of the laws of evolution remains for ever a child, he is despised as an idiot. It is said that doubt undermines truth: that is a fallacious, an *absurd and Godless* idea. If truth is so weak and impotent that it cannot stand on its own legs and requires protective cordons and quarantines against doubt, then why is it truth and in what way is it better or loftier than falsehood, and who is going to believe it? It is said that negation kills faith. Nay, it does not kill, it cleanses it. True, doubt and negation are sometimes sure signs of the moral death of entire nations; but what nations? Obsolete nations that have outlived their lives. that lead a mechanical existence like living corpses, similar to the Byzantians or the Chinese. Can one apply that to the Russian nation, so young, fresh and virginal, so mighty in the genetic perennial elements of its life, a nation that has within the hundred odd years of its new life to which it was called by the creative word of its gigantean tsar, manifested itself in great rulers and great soldiers, in great statesmen, great scientists and great poets; a nation that has within the hundred years of its new life managed to form its great past, that is "filled with the peace of proud faith" in the present, as the poet said, and whom a still greater and glorious posterity is awaiting? No, we would be debasing our national dignity if we began to be afraid of spiritual exercise, which is harmful only to the puny members of an effete society but is within the power and capacity of a young society full of health and zeal! Life manifests itself in consciousness and there is no consciousness without doubt, just as the body without movement is incapable of discharging its organic functions and vital growth. The soul, like the body, has its own form of exercise, without which the soul languishes and sinks into inertia.

In the previous article we spoke of how little has been *done* with us in the history of Peter the Great, and how much has been *spoken* about him. Indeed, he has had eulogiums dedicated to him, he has been praised in verse and prose. Lomonosov even made him the hero of an epic poem in the manner of the *Aeneid*. In imitation of Lomonosov's laudable and creditable work two other poets—Gruzintsev and Prince Shirinsky-Shikhmatov—have sung the fame of Peter with no less success in lyrico-epic poems. But all

this, both the good and the mediocre, somehow did not stir the soul. Everybody gave his unqualified approval to the worthy authors' praises of the Great, but rarely read them, if he read them at all. The reason was that all these writing gentlemen wrote and sang in the same manner and in the same voice, and the form of their phrases displayed a sort of weary monotony testifying to an absence of content, that is, thought. The warmest praises and most ecstatic effusions of wonder before the Great were distinguished by a sort of official character. And so it continued until the time of Pushkin who alone, as a great poet and mirror of the national consciousness, was able to speak of Peter in a language worthy of Peter. Works of a scientific nature, however, dealt with the subject in the old familiar way, differing only from the past in that they no longer evoked frigid acquiescence, but rather annoyance. Finally, several years ago some vague doubts were engendered as to the infallibility of Peter's chief undertaking—the reformation of Russia. Men said that the edifice of this reformation was built without a foundation, since it was begun from above and not from below, that it consisted of mere outward forms, and while not inoculating genuine Europeanism in Russia it disfigured our nationality and clipped the wings of the national genius. We shall deal with these objections lower down, no matter how superficial and empty they essentially are; just now I merely want to say that at the time of their appearance in print they won favour with many and attracted general attention. Some people thought them to be their own opinions which had hitherto been rather nebulous to them; others, while disagreeing with them, took them to be not the unmeaning phrases and bombast they were, but an independent and, moreover, *new* opinion, while others even deigned to impugn them in vigorous, albeit veiled, terms. Thus doubt, instead of cooling affection for Peter, merely stimulated the general interest in him as a great historical phenomenon, and made everybody think, speak and write more about him. Time, however, very soon settled the point and proved the groundlessness of doubt: only men living behind the times would now seriously think of disparaging Peter the Great for having undertaken his reformation from above instead of from below, from the grandees instead of from the muzhiks, for having attached too great importance to forms—clothes, shaving of beards, etc., for having built St. Petersburg and so on. Doubt, we

see, has done no harm but merely good, for having arisen, it has destroyed its own self and given rise to another doubt which, in turn, will pass and give way, if not to truth, to a third doubt, which will finally bring us to the truth. The question of Peter has now resolved itself to an obvious contradiction: many people, regarding the reforms carried out by Peter as both indispensable and great and revering the memory of the reformer, at the same time unwittingly nullify the greatness of his undertaking by denying Europeanism, and endeavouring not only to defend and vindicate the so-called historical development and nationality which Peter did away with, but even holding them up to and exalting them before Europeanism. Strange as it may seem, this contradiction is a step forward and above the former affirmative doubts, though it is a direct consequent of them: it were better to be patently self-contradictory and thus involuntarily as it were admit the power of truth, than to reject and close one's eyes to the factual authenticity of contradictory evidences merely for the sake of cherished and one-sided conviction.

The contradiction we speak of is vitally important: in its reconcilement lies the true conception of Peter the Great. This fact alone points to the rationality of this contradiction. The solution of the problem lies in demonstrating and proving: 1) that though nationality is intimately associated with historical development and the social forms of the nation these two things are not one and the same thing; 2) that both Peter the Great's reforms and the Europeanism he introduced in no way changed, nor could they change, our nationality, but only reanimated it with the spirit of a new and richer life and provided it with a boundless sphere for manifestation and activity.

Two words are current in the Russian language which have a synonymous meaning: one is the native Russian *narodnost*,[2] the other is a Latin word which we have derived from the French—*nationality*. But we are firmly convinced that there can be no two words in any language so identical in meaning, so perfectly synonymous, that one could be wholly substituted for the other. Still less likely is it that a foreign word should survive in a language which possesses a word of its own expressing the same idea: if not a big difference, there is always at least a shade of difference in their signification. So with the words *narodnost* and *nationality* they may

be synonymous in meaning, but they are certainly not identical, and the difference between them is far greater than nuance. "*Narodnost*" bears the same relation to "nationality" as the species or lower conception to the genus or higher, more general conception. When we speak of *the people* we have in mind the lower strata in the polity, while *nation* betokens the conglomerate body of all social estates and conditions. There may be yet no nation in the *people*, but the nation has a people. The songs of Kirsha Danilov possess *narodnost;* the poetry of Pushkin is national: the former are within reach of the highest (most educated) classes of society as well, but the latter is within reach *only* of the highest (most educated) classes of society and is beyond the intelligence of the people in the close and strict sense of the word. The educated grandee of our days understands the speech and affairs and way of life of his bearded ancestor of pre-Petrine days; but if his ancestor arose from his grave he would not understand anything in the life of his shaven descendent. Every educated man today, no matter how remote he stands in form and even essence from the life of the people, well understands the muzhik without lowering himself to his level, but the muzhik can understand him only by rising to his level or by the other descending to his apprehension. Yet no foreigner, unless he was born and bred in Russia, will understand the Russian muzhik even though he knew the language well enough to make himself a name in Russian literature. Consequently there is something *in common* between our past and our present, between the grandee in his time-honoured cloak and flowing beard and the grandee in frock coat and with shaven chin, between the muzhik, townsman and bearded merchant and the *barin* (the educated European gentleman). But this common trait is not *narodnost*, but *nationality*. The latter easily understands the former (for, being the higher form it incorporates it), but in order to make itself understood to *narodnost* nationality must bend down to it. The utter supremacy of *narodnost* necessarily presupposes within the polity a condition of natural immediacy, a condition of patriarchy. when the difference between the social estates consists not so much in form as in shades of form, but certainly not in essence. Such was the condition of Russia prior to Peter the Great. Read Koshikhin, and you will see that the wedding of the last village muzhik was the same as the first boyar: the difference was merely a matter of

abundance of viands, costliness of clothing, in short, the importance and sum of expenditure. The same knout hung over both the muzhik and the boyar, for whom it was a misfortune, but not dishonour. The serf easily understood his master, the boyar, without the slightest strain on his intelligence; the boyar understood his serf without need of coming down to his intellection. The same corn brandy cheered the hearts of both: the only difference was that one drank an inferior grade and the other a pure grade of liquor. One and the same mead tickled the palate of the one and the other: the only difference was that one drank it from a wooden tankard or iron scoop, the other from a gold or silver goblet. And suddenly by the will of Peter everything underwent a swift and sweeping change: as little as did the common Russian man understand the new words in vogue: *victoire, rang, armée, general en chêf, admiral, Hofmarschal* and so on—so little did he understand the language and ways of his sovereign, and lord, or for that matter of any army officer with his *honneur,* his *menuet,* his *breeches* and other new-fangled ideas. The higher still understood the lower, but the lower was no longer capable of understanding the higher. The people was divorced from the gentility and soldiery. There was no longer a people in the politic sense, there was a nation. The foreign word became indispensable and unconsciously came into common use, receiving the right of citizenship in the vocabulary of the Russian language.

The essence of every nationality consists in its *substance.* Substance is the intransient and eternal element in the spirit of a people, which, changeless itself, survives all change and passes integral and unscathed through all the phases of historical evolution. It is the seed which contains every potentiality of future development. Looking at an acorn we know not that a huge centennial oak will positively grow out of it, but that a huge oak, and not an apple tree, may grow out of it if it is planted and not prematurely cut down and if it does not perish from other adventitious circumstances that might impede its free growth. And we know that because the acorn contains the substance of the oak, that is, the potentiality of its thick trunk, broad leaves and other tokens peculiar to its form. In looking at an infant we know that he may in time become not only a youth overflowing with virility and spirituality, but a decrepit, hoary old man, and not merely an adult, but a

man of genius. For the infant, in the innermost depths of its organism, already contains its substance, that is, the potentiality of whatever it may be in the future, what nature has destined it to become in time. Almost anyone can be a good soldier or a good officer; but only he can be a great general within whose substance at birth lay the potentiality of being a great general. The substance contains the reason why a man may be a great poet and not even an indifferent mathematician, why a man is capable of inventing steam engines and is unable to cook himself a dish of porridge or mend a hole in his clothes. Every nation has its substance, as does every man, and the substance of a nation contains its whole history and its distinction from other nations. The substance of the Romans was quite different from the substance of the Greeks; hence the Romans were pre-eminently a nation of civic law, an utterly practical and not a contemplative nation, whereas the Greeks were pre-eminently an actively contemplative and artistic nation. Just as there are substances of genius in individuals, so do some nations come into being with great substances, their relation to other nations being as geniuses to ordinary men.

Narodnost, as we have shown above, presupposes something static, permanently established, not moving forward; it represents only what is actually present in the people in its given state. Nationality, on the contrary, contains not only what was and is, but what will be or can be. Nationality, in its evolution, draws together the extreme opposites which, to all intents and purposes, could not be foreseen or foretold. *Narodnost* is the first moment of nationality, its initial manifestation. But it does not by any means ensue that where there is *narodnost* there was no nationality: on the contrary, society is always a *nation*, though it still be a *people*, but a nation in potentiality and not in actuality, just as an infant is an adult in potentiality and not in reality: for nationality and the substance of a people are one and the same thing, and every substance, though still undefined, bears within itself its potentiality.

Russia, then, before Peter the Great was only a people and became a nation as a result of the *motion* given to it by the reformer.

From nothing, nothing is made, and a great man does not create of his own, but merely gives actual being to what existed in potentiality before him. That all Peter's efforts were aimed against ancient Russian usage is as clear as daylight, but the idea

that he endeavoured to destroy our substantial spirit, our nationality, is more than ungrounded: it is simply absurd! True, there are nations with paltry substances as there are nations with great substances, and while the second are unchangeable and impervious to the will of a single man, no matter how puissant he be, the first are liable to be destroyed even by accidents, even by themselves and not only by the will of genius. But then these will never be amenable to the influence of genius; the best that can be done with a beetroot is to make sugar loaf; an eternal monument can only be made out of marble, granite and bronze. Had the Russian nation not contained in its spirit the seed of rich life the reforms of Peter would have done it to death and rendered it impotent instead of reanimating and strengthening it with new life and new vigour. It goes without saying that a nation with a paltry spirit could not have brought forth such a giant as Peter: only in such a nation could there appear such a tsar, and only such a tsar could reform such a nation. Even had we had no other great man than Peter, we would still be entitled to look upon ourselves with pride and respect, to be unashamed of our past and to gaze boldly and hopefully into our future....

Why one nation has one kind of substance and another nation another is almost as impossible to explain as if we were dealing with an individual. If we accept the hypothesis that nations were formed out of families, the first cause of their substance might be predicated as blood and race. External circumstances, historical evolution, likewise influence the substance of a nation, though they, in turn, are also dependent upon it. But there is no cause which could be pointed to with such certitude as climate and the geographical situation occupied by the nation. All southern peoples present a strong contrast to the northern; the former have a livelier, lighter, clearer mind, they are more impressionable and impulsive; the latters' mind is slower but sounder, emotion calmer but deeper, and their passions, harder to excite, act more heavily. The dominant feature of southern peoples is impulse, of northern—thought and meditation; in the former there is greater flux, in the latter greater activity. Latterly the north has far outstripped the south in the successes of art, science and civilization. There is a great distinction between highland people and lowland people, between maritime or insular peoples and continental peoples. And

this distinction is intrinsic and not extrinsic; it is conspicuous in the very spirit and not in forms alone. Let us take Russia in this respect. Her cradle was not Kiev, but Novgorod, whence she proceeded by way of Vladimir to Moscow. Her infant eyes were opened to a grim sky, her cradle songs were the riotous blizzards, and the cruel frosts steeled her body to robust health and strength. When riding in winter on a dashing troika, with the snow crunching beneath the runners of your sledge, the frosty sky studded with myriads of stars, and your yearning gaze lost amid the snowy vastness of the plain shimmering in silver beneath the light of a lonely vagabond moon with here and there a clump of rime-embroidered trees, how readily your understanding responds to the drawn-out, melancholy song of your coachman, and how the monotonous, *heartbreaking*, as Pushkin expresses it, tinkle of the horse's bell harmonizes with it! Sadness is the general undercurrent of our poesy, both folk and artistic. The Russian in the old days did not know how to crack a merry joke: his jests were either vapid or sarcastic, and our best folk songs have a sad burden, a drawn-out and mournful tune. Nowhere does Pushkin thrill so irresistibly the Russian soul as in those of his verses which are tinctured with sadness, and nowhere is he so national as in the sad tones of his poetry. This is what the poet himself says about melancholy as the chief element of Russian poesy:

> Both literal and figurative: our family,
> From coachman to the poet laureate,
> Sings all disconsolate. A mournful wail,
> The Russian song. Familiar fate:
> Beginning with a toast, we never fail
> To end in dirge. With woe we satiate
> The harmonies of Muse as well as maids,
> And yet we love their dreary, doleful lays.

But this melancholy is not the malady of a feeble soul, not the flaccidity of an impotent spirit, nay, it is a potent, infinite melancholy, the sadness of a great and noble nature. The Russian basks in sadness; but he does not drop beneath its burden, and no one else possesses the faculty of such swift passages from poignant, heart-rending sadness to wild tempestuous gaiety! In this respect, too, Pushkin's poetry is a great fact: one cannot marvel enough at its swift transitions in *Eugene Onegin* from the deep sadness which

springs from the infinitude of the spirit, to blithe and vigorous merriment which springs from a healthy and robust spirit.

And so we have found the common trait that binds our folk poesy with our artistic, national poesy. Consequently, the generic, substantial principle in Russia was not suppressed by the reformation of Peter, but only received through it its supreme development and supreme form. Indeed, has the space of Russia narrowed and not widened since the days of Peter; are not our steppes just as spacious and boundless, and the snows covering them just as white, and does not the moping moon shed its silvery beams around as of old.... What are the good qualities of the Russian that distinguish him from alien races as well as from the other Slavonic tribes, even those that stand with him under the same sceptre? Vigour, daring, mother wit, sagacity, ingenuity,—he would skin a flint, for necessity is the mother of invention—valour, temerity, adventurousness—the ocean is but knee-deep both in grief and joy! Can Europeanism efface these cardinal, *substantial* properties of the Russian people? Is not the educated Russian still as *prodigal* both in his joys and in his griefs, and the blood brother of him, who with his hand to his ear was wont to sing, rending the skies with his mighty voice:

> Be it high, then high to very heaven;
> Be it deep, then deeper than the sea.
> Wide-flung our spaces o'er the face of earth,
> Deep-sunk the whirlpools of the Dnieper stream.

It is absurd to suppose that Europeanism is a sort of level, smoothing and dressing everything down to the same colour! The Englishman, Frenchman, German, Dutchman, Swiss!—they are all Europeans, they all have a good deal in common, but their national distinctions are irreconcilable and will never be obliterated: one would have to erase their history first, alter the nature of their countries, regenerate their very blood.

Nationality cannot be dealt with extensively in a whole book, leave alone a magazine article, especially the nationality of a people which has recently begun to live and is utterly immersed in its present.[3]

Nationality is the aggregate of all the spiritual powers of a people: the fruit of a people's nationality is its history. Hence we

will not undertake to fully and satisfactorily express the precise meaning of Russian nationality—enough that we have hinted at it. But we can unequivocally say that nationality does not consist in rustic bast-sandals, in *armyaks*,[4] in sarafans, in home-brew, in beards, in dirty and smoky huts, in illiteracy and ignorance, in corrupt courts or mental sloth. These are not tokens even of *narodnost*, rather are they an excrescence on its body, a resultant of vitiated blood and acrid fluids. And all this prevailed in Russia before Peter the Great, and all this, as the twelve-headed hydra, our divine Hercules grappled with and irresistibly vanquished with the club of his mighty genius.

To speak the truth (especially the kind that everyone understands and feels) and give offense are not always the same thing. Let the stupid man and the drunkard fear the truth, but there is no harm in the wise man admitting that he has blundered in his day, and the sober that he has been cheered by wine on occasion. National pride is a lofty and noble sentiment, an earnest of true excellence; but national conceit and susceptibility is a purely Chinese sentiment. The negation or debasement of the substance of a nation, of nationality in the true sense, is an insult to *a nation;* but attacks (even though exaggerated) against the shortcomings and faults of *narodnost* are not a crime, but a good service and true patriotism. What I love with all my heart and soul and all my being I cannot be indifferent to, and the more strongly than in anything else do I love the good in it and (by the same token) hate the bad.

Some men are in the habit of pointing to the English, who have a penchant for barbarous and ridiculous national farce and are still addicted to the crude and ignorant survivals of ancient tradition from the woolsack of Parliament to the right of selling their wives on the market. These gentlemen, *i.e., the kvass patriots*,[5] like to fall back upon such references as a reproach to the indifference with which we, Russians, part company with the traditions of our *long-skirted* antiquity, and the readiness with which we accept and adopt everything new. As for me, I must confess that I see in this a good trait of our nationality, a pledge of our future greatness, and certainly not degradation but superiority to the English, who are in every other respect, by the way, a great nation, and only in this matter cannot and should not serve as a pattern

to us; indeed, they could do worse than imitate us. Yes, it is a great trait of the Russian nation: it shows that we have the capacity and desire to renounce all that is bad; as for the good, which forms the basis and essence of our national spirit—that is eternal and intransient, and we could not renounce it if we wanted to. But we, above all others, are able and entitled to be unashamed of our national faults and vices and talk about them loudly. National vices are of two kinds: one proceeds from the substantial spirit, *e.g.*, the political cupidity and egoism of the English; the religious fanaticism and zealotry of the Spaniards; the vindictive character, prone to guile and cunning, of the Italians; the other is the outcome of unfortunate historical development and diverse extraneous and adventitious circumstances, such as the political nihility of the Italian peoples. Hence some of the national vices may be designated *substantial*, others *incidental*. We in no wise think that our nationality is the peak of perfection: there is nothing perfect under the sun; every merit conditions a certain demerit. Every individuality is a restriction by the mere fact of its being an individuality; and every nation is an individuality similar to personality. It suffices us that our national faults cannot degrade us before the noblest nations of mankind. As to the incidental vices, the louder we speak about them the more respect we will be showing to our dignity: the more vigorously we persecute them the more shall we promote success in truth and weal. Inherent vice—the disease with which a nation is born—is a disease the abjuration of which may sometimes cost the nation's life; incidental vice is an excrescence which, severed, though not without pain, by the skilful hand of the operator, takes nothing away from the body and only relieves it of ugliness and suffering. The deficiencies of our nationality proceeded not from the spirit and blood of the nation, but from unfavourable historical development. The barbarian Teutonic tribes which swept down like a flood on Europe were fortunate in that they encountered the classical genius of Greece and Rome, those noble soils from which had sprung the broad-leafed majestic tree of Europeanism. Effete, decrepit Rome, in passing on to them the true faith, in the course of time likewise passed on to them its civil law; in introducing them to Virgil, Horace and Tacitus it also acquainted them with Homer, and the tragics, and Plutarch and Aristotle. Breaking up into a multitude of tribes they seemed to be huddled

on a space that was insufficient for their populous numbers and incessantly, as it were, knocked against each other, as steel against flint, to generate from themselves the spark of sublime life. The life of Russia, on the contrary, began isolatedly, in a wilderness, estranged from the common growth of mankind. The primordial tribes which eventually made up the mass of her population occupied similar valley countries resembling the monotonous steppes, possessed no marked distinctions and were unable to influence one another in the progress of the civil state. Bohemia and Poland could have introduced Russia to intercourse with Europe and themselves have been useful to her as characteristic tribes; but they were for ever separated from Russia by a hostile divergence of religions. Consequently Russia was cut off from the West at the very beginning of her existence, and Byzantium, as regards civic education, had nothing to offer her other than the custom of blackening the teeth and whiting the face, and gouging the eyes of enemies and malefactors. The principalities were at mutual enmity, but this enmity lacked a rational basis and hence yielded no important results. Is it surprising then that the history of the appanage feuds is so senseless and tedious, that not even Karamzin's eloquent narrative could give it any interest?... Then came the Tatar irruption which glued the scattered limbs of Russia with her own blood. This constituted the great boon of the two-centuried Tatar yoke; but how great was the mischief it caused Russia, how many were the incidental vices it *ingrafted.* Seclusion of women, slavery in notions and sentiments, the knout, the habit of burying money in the ground and going about in tatters for fear of showing one's self a rich man, corruption in the affairs of justice, Asiatism in ways of life, mental sloth, ignorance, despising of self—in a word, everything that Peter the Great had been eradicating, everything in Russia that was directly opposed to Europeanism—all this was not our native characteristics, but *ingrafted* upon us by the Tatars. Russians' very intolerance of foreigners generally was a consequence of the Tatar yoke and not at all of religious fanaticism: the Tatar made every one who was not a Russian repugnant to the Russian mind—and the word *bosurman*[6] came to be extended from the Tatars to the Germans. That the principal faults of our *narodnost* are incidental and not our own inherent faults is the best proof that we have the full possibility of casting them off and are already

beginning to cast them off. Look at the sore of our *narodnost*—corrupt practices. . . . Of course, it is a sad spectacle to witness an ill-constituted community annihilating and suppressing even in its most noble members their personal, human valour by compelling them either to be upstarts offensive to all society or, with profit to themselves, without violation of conscience, legitimately, as it were, if not formally, to wield the scales of justice and pilfer the state treasures entrusted to their care and custody. In China this is called "holding a profitable post," and there every mandarin has no qualms about declaring in society that he "serves profitably," and as a basic dogma of morality ordains his son to be above all a good husband and father, to take care not to bring his family to the parish and not to degrade his rank and title, while to all young men he gives earnest counsel—

> Ask what your fathers did,
> You'd profit by your elders' story.[7]

As for ourselves we have no cause yet to despair over this vice. In a rotten society there are no upstarts, there are no opposition and contradiction to the general depravity: in China all are bribetakers, and the man who took it into his head to mutiny against corruption and bear it out by unimpeachable personal conduct would be considered a fool, but fortunately for the mandarins, the moralists, they have no such fools there—they are all *clever* and *charitable* men. With us, on the contrary, thanks to Peter's reforms, an opposition to the common evil was not slow in evincing itself.

Our literature, to its honour let it be said, was first to inaugurate this noble, beneficent opposition. The Muse of Sumarokov declared a relentless war on government clerks and branded peculation and bribery with the stigma of shame. We would remark, in passing, that Sumarokov's literary trend in this respect was, so to say, more *vital* than the purely-rhetorical trend of Lomonosov—which is the reason why the talentless Sumarokov was more the favourite, and the gifted Lomonosov merely more esteemed among the public of their day. Kapnist's *Slander* was a strong blow to *slander*. Nakhimov gained wide repute in the literature of his day by his ceaseless inspiration against iniquity. Though Fon-Vizin's wit was chiefly pointed against ignorance, litigiousness too came in for its share

of hard knocks. In our day Gogol's *Inspector General* has been the veritable scourge of this evil which, with the progress of education and the salutary efforts of the government, is already slinking into its hole and only from this retreat does it dare to stealthily show its ill-favoured and obscene visage. Speaking of literature's service to the holy cause of persecuting corruption with the scourge of satire, one cannot but mention Griboyedov: though his immortal comedy is not aimed directly at this hundred-headed hydra, he has placed the burning stigma on their brazen foreheads with verses like the following:

> Each time one must present to post or decoration,
> Well, how can one neglect the man that's a relation![8]

And the noble efforts of literature have not been in vain: society responded to them. It is a remarkable fact that even mediocre works of this drift and tenor were always received by the public with special delight where they might have caused offense. Finally, men have begun to appear who, no longer fearing to be dubbed as *turbulent* and *dangerous* or blushing at the epithets of fools, proud men, upstarts and dreamers, are voicing aloud that they would rather starve to death than grow rich by thievery—and men do not die from hunger, and if they do grow rich it is by honest means. And though such freethinkers do not appear in thousands their numbers are growing from day to day. Before the days of Peter the Great they did not exist either in reality or in the fancy of the most ardent minds. Consequently, our society is moving forward, and, without losing its nationality, is simply shedding its uncouth *narodnost*. And the time is very near when not a trace will remain of *that kind* of *narodnost*. The things we can cast off and renounce are not the things of the blood or spirit: they are simply a bad habit acquired in bad society and through bad education. Only those evils make for the ignominy of a nation which are indestructible and incorrigible.

Generally speaking all the flaws and ills of our society were due to ignorance and unenlightenment: hence the light of knowledge and instruction dissipates them like the mist beneath the rising sun. The vices of the Chinese and the Persians are bound up with their spirit; education would merely make them more refined, more crafty and wanton, but not nobler. Education acts

beneficially only on the nation which bears the grain of life within it. We have already produced a most striking fact as irrefutable evidence that Russian society contains the healthy and fecund grain of life. We shall add to this that much may be expected of a nation that gave the battles of Poltava and Borodino after Narva, that shook the Turkish empire and, as its great poet said, "overthrew into the abyss the idols that hung over kingdoms and redeemed the freedom, honour and peace of Europe with its own blood. . . ." No sooner had it awakened to life than it proclaimed its awakening to Europe with the thunder of victories; no sooner had it joined Europe than it solved Europe's great problem.

We have expressed our earnest opinion on a delicate question with utter sincerity and the candour of a free conviction, and are prepared to answer any objections made with the same sincerity and candour. We not only do not waive dispute, but invite it for the sake of clarifying a truth so near to the heart of every Russian. Our conviction is far removed both from dead cosmopolitanism and *kvass* patriotism, and such a conviction may be boldly expressed in a country where licentiousness of thought and not freedom of thought is persecuted. We can now pass on directly to the reasons which made Peter's reform essential and cardinal without fear of being misunderstood or misinterpreted.

In the previous article we spoke of Europe's distinction from Asia; we now wish to show Russia's relation to Europe and Asia before Peter the Great. Geographically Russia stands midway between these two parts of the world. Many people draw therefrom the inference that she stands midway morally too. Such an idea does not strike us as being quite fair: the geographical mean is not always the moral mean, and the moral mean is not always expedient. Say what you will, but it is difficult to imagine a mean between light and dark, education and ignorance, between humanity and barbarism; still harder is it to find such a mean expedient and fall into raptures over it. Grey may be a good colour in the productions of nature, art and the crafts; but in the human spirit grey is the colour of renunciation and moral degradation. "He who is not with me is against me"—there is no medium. Owing to the Tatar yoke Russia had nothing in common with Europe except religion; but she differed greatly from Asia. Dwelling under a misty sky amid a rugged climate she did not represent the luxury, the poesy of

sensuous, indolent and voluptuous life the spell of which in Asia captures too the European imagination. Her passions were heavy and not keen, they clouded instead of exciting, slumbered and awakened rarely. Diversity of passions in Russia was unknown, for the foundations of society were monotonous and interests narrow. The Asiatic knows delight; he worships beauty in a way, and in his own way loves luxury and the comforts of life. The Russians had nothing of this before the times of Peter the Great. Their idea of beauty was corpulence, "plumpness" of body, milk-white skin and rosy cheeks—*blood and milk*, as our old folks used to say and our common people still say. Indeed, to look at what the bearded tradesmen of our day call beauty, to look at the white-painted and rouged cheeks and blackened teeth of their enchantresses one would not get too high an idea of the aesthetical taste of our forebears. And what difference is there between the Asiatic satrap or the pasha who, abusing his power over the pashalic entrusted to his jurisdiction, wallows in the lazy and luxurious delights of sensuality in his harem, that earthly paradise promised him in heaven by Mahomet, surrounded by ravishing odalisques, those earthly houris and peris, amid the incessant murmur of fountains and the exquisite vapours of the perfumes of Arabia—what difference, say we, is there between him and the ancient Russian boyar who too was sent down to a province for *subsistence*, who devoured copious and insipid dinners, drank still more copiously and slept after dinner like a log; on Saturdays rioted in the pleasures of the bathhouse, steaming himself with the birch-whisk in the hellish heat, drinking, if he felt out of sorts, a stiff dose of brandy and pepper while lying on the bath bench, and then rolling himself in the snow; for whom the greatest pleasure after eat and drink and the bath was falcon sport, a tussle with the bear or settling accounts with his serfs!... The East has a conception of inspiration and creativeness: there great store is placed on the art of "stringing pearls on the thread of description" and "strewing pearls on velvet," meaning to write in verse and prose. In holy Russia the people in ancient times had never heard of such a peculiar occupation, and if they had, would have called it "baying the moon." What a prosaic conception of poetry! Another important distinction of the Russian world from the Asiatic is the absence of mysticism and religious contemplation. Our Slavonic paganism was so frail and

insignificant that it has left no trace of itself. Grand Prince Vladimir could render it extinct by a single word, and the people allowed themselves to be baptized without fanatical resistance. True, some voices did cry out: "swim out, God!"—but that was not due to pagan religious sentiment, but to respect for the silver beard and golden whiskers of Peroun. Generally, Russia was Asia, but in a different character, one of the reasons for which was Christianity, formally proclaimed by Vladimir the Saint as the state religion. Hence, though our princes did gouge each other's eyes, it was due more to the influence of Byzantian customs than to Asiatism. The Russian muzhik is still a semi-Asiatic, but in his own way: he loves pleasure, but conceives it to be exclusively in the flowing bowl, in eating and lying on the sleeping shelf of his stove. When the harvest has been a good one and he has bread in plenty he is happy and contented: thoughts of the past and the future do not disturb him! for men in their natural state, apart from satisfying their hunger and similar wants, are incapable of thinking. The merchant comes to hire him for carrier work at the fair, but our humble servant the muzhik asks an exorbitant price, is even disinclined to speak to him and stays proudly on his stove. In time of hunger he hires himself out for a mere song, as long as he does not have to eat at home and feed his horse on domestic fodder. The question of his condition and the means of improving and securing it for the future by availing himself of favourable circumstances, a fair crop, etc., never entered his round-cropped head. He ploughs as his fathers and grandfathers did before him, without adding a stick to his wooden plough.* His hut resembles a pigsty, and in the winter he amiably shares it with his calves, lambs, sucking pigs and hens. And that is not always through lack of means (the German with the same means which the Russian free muzhik possesses would live like a gentleman), but through natural abidance in the bosom of Mother-Nature and the weighty reason: "so lived our fathers and grandfathers, and they were no more stupid than we—they could eat no worse than us." The queer fellow sincerely believes that to be able to eat bread is a great wisdom!... On justice, too, he has his own, perfectly Asiatic ideas: "That's

* The Maloruss extends his veneration of ancient custom still further by flatly refusing to pollute with manure the soil that yields him the *Lord's gift, i.e.,* corn. There is Asia for you!

what he's a *'ministrator* for to take bribes," our muzhik says of the government clerk, and unties the purse strings with good grace, so long as he gets his business done. He does not like paying fines and stands in mortal fear of them; jaws, teeth and spinal skin are not worth it—they will heal, but money cannot be recovered. "Education is light and ignorance darkness," says our muzhik, but is nothing loath to leave it to the clerk to do the learning for him. Indeed, not only from the muzhiks will you hear the cherished saying: "our fathers lived no worse than us though they were untaught,"—you will hear the old clerk of our days say that, indignant because the conveyancing acts have deprived him of the possibility of making a livelihood by issuing all sorts of certificates, and because the "Code of Laws" enables any literate man, though he be entirely without rank, to familiarize himself with the laws; this, too, is repeated by the old country squire, whom the new times have caught unawares in remote fields with a riding crop in his hand, and who does not relish the idea of tilling the land on the new theories or of sending his children to the capital for their education.

Returning to Russia's past, shattered by the iron will of the tsar-prodigy, we see before us a sad, heart-rending spectacle. The life of those days depicted by Koshikhin involuntarily wrings the heart, which beats all the more high, all the more gladly and elatedly at the thought of the messenger of God who redeemed the burden and humiliation of Russia's dark years with the bloody sweat of his kingly brow. Impotence in strength, poverty in immense riches, senselessness in inborn intelligence, hebetude in native sapience, humiliation and degradation of human dignity in customs and living conditions, in the administration of justice and executions, a humiliation of the human dignity, moreover, under the Christian religion—such is what first strikes the eye at a view of the social and family life of Russia prior to Peter the Great. The national spirit was always great and mighty: that is borne out by the rapid centralization of Muscovy, the Mamai Rout, the overthrow of the Tatar yoke, the conquest of the dark Kazan kingdom, and the regeneration of Russia, like the phoenix arising from its own ashes, during the painful interregnum, when, as the rising sun which dispels the phantoms of night and the gloom of coming dawn, the throne of Russia, by the unanimous election of the na-

tion, was ascended by the blessed dynasty of the Romanovs who gave to Russia Peter the Great and a whole series of great and glorious rulers who exalted and showered boons upon the nation which God had entrusted to their care. This is also borne out by the profusion of such characters and minds famed in statecraft and generalship as Alexander Nevsky, Ivan Kalita, Simeon the Proud, Dmitri Donskoy, Ivan III, Ivan Grozny, Andrei Kurbsky, Vorotinsky, Shein, Boris Godunov, Basmanov, Skopin-Shuisky, Prince Dmitri Pozharsky, Minin, the prelates Alexius, Philip, Hermogen, cellarer Avraami Palitsin. This too is borne out by the productions of folk poetry, so amazingly rich in fantasy, virile in expression and infinite in emotion, now wildly gay and sweeping, now sad and melancholy, but always robust and powerful, pent up in street and square, demanding the latitude of primeval forests, the broad expanse of Mother-Volga and the spacious fields.... But such is the destiny even of a great nation, if an inimical fate or unfavourable historical development deprives it of the necessary sphere and does not supply the vast force of its spirit with the content befitting it: when put to the test, where nations of inferior spirit succumb, it awakens like a lion surrounded by hunters, shakes its mane threateningly and strikes terror into the hearts of its foes with its awful roar; but the storm over, it sinks once more into a doze without deriving from the shock any useful results for its civilization. In fact, all great revulsions and trials of fate merely revealed the great character of the Russian nation but did not in any way develop its politic powers and gave no impetus to its civilization; whereas the fateful year of 1812 which burst like a storm cloud over Russia, strained all her forces, and far from weakening her made her still stronger and was the direct cause of her new and higher prosperity, for it opened up new sources of national wealth, increased industry, commerce and education. This is the difference between one and the same nation in its immediate, natural and patriarchal state and in the rational progress of its historical evolution! In the former state even a great event in the nation's life would seem to have sprung up without cause and come to an end without results, hence its history is devoid of any common rational interest; in the latter state any kind of event has a rational cause and effect and is a step forwards—and its history is replete with dramatic interest, movement, diversity, it is poet-

ically interesting, philosophically instructive and politically important. But the nation was the same and Peter did not recreate it (no one but God could perform such a feat), but merely led it out of the crooked trodden paths onto the high road of a universal-historical life. Sheremetev, Menshikov, Repnin, Dolgoruky, Apraksin, Shafirov, Golitsyn (Mikhail), Golovin, Golovkin—all these men, endowed with such brilliant talents, "these fledglings of the Petrine nest," to use an expression of Pushkin's, were native Russians and were born during the reign of Alexei Mikhailovich—the Koshikhin days of Russia. Thus, Peter renounced and destroyed in the nation not what was innate and running in the blood, but what was excrescent and ingrafted, and so opened new ways in the spirit of the people hitherto closed to the reception of new ideas and new deeds. To those who accused him of trampling upon and destroying the national spirit Peter could say with full justice: "think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill...."

The readers could obtain a true picture of social and family life in Russia from passages quoted in our previous article from Koshikhin's book published by an enlightened government. They could see that in pre-Petrine Russia there was no trade, no industry, no police, no civil security, no diversity of wants and demands, no military organization, for this was all poor and insignificant, since it was not law but custom. And morals?—What a sad spectacle! How much there was that was Asiatic, barbaric, Tataric! How many rites degrading to human dignity there were, *e.g.*, in marriage, and not only practised by the common people, but by the highest personages in the realm! How much was there that was vulgar and coarse in feasting! Compare those heavy repasts, those incredible beverages, those gross kissings, those frequent knockings of the forehead on the floor, those grovellings on the ground, those Chinese ceremonies—compare them with the tournaments of the Middle Ages, the European fêtes of the seventeenth century.... Remember what our long-bearded knights and chevaliers were like! Think of our gay ladies lapping up vodka! Men married they knew not whom! Deluded, they beat and tormented their wives in order to raise them by brute force to angelic status—and if that did not work, poisoned them with philters; they ate Homerically, drank almost in tubfuls, kept their wives out of sight, and only when flushed after

having eaten several score peppery dishes and drunk several buckets of wine and mead would they call them out for a kiss.... All this is as *moral* as it is aesthetic.... But, for all that, this has not the slightest bearing on a nation's degradation either morally or philosophically: for it was all the result of isolated historical growth and Tatar influence. No sooner did Peter open his nation's door to the light of the world than the darkness of ignorance was gradually dispersed—the nation did not degenerate, did not yield its native soil to another tribe, but it became something it had not been before.... Yes, gentlemen, defenders of ancient custom, say what you will, but the horse statue to Peter the Great on St. Isaac's Square is not enough: altars should be put up to him in all the squares and streets of the great kingdom of Russia!...

If we glance at the boyars from the standpoint of their political and state significance we have the same spectacle which may deceive us for a moment by its appearance and its name, but which is, in fact, quite another thing. Refer once more to Koshikhin, and you will involuntarily exclaim: "So that is the so-called aristocracy which our unmitigated admirers of antiquity dreamt of seeing in the Asiatic boyars of ancient Russia!" The truth is that some of these gentlemen, who are generally dissatisfied with the reforms of Peter the Great, bring against him as one of their chief accusations that he debased and destroyed the aristocracy and thus discarded for good and all the equipoise between legality and arbitrariness. They base this ingenious accusation on the empty, formal statement, devoid of right, might, thought or any particular sense: "the tsar has directed, the *boyars have decreed.*" On the contrary, Peter the Great established with us something in the nature of an aristocracy (it were better called a *grandeeship*) and compelled it by force to make a stand against himself, for which purpose he sometimes deliberately waived justice. Thus, on one occasion he asked the admiralty chiefs to appoint him vice-admiral, that post having just become vacant: he was refused, it being pointed out that there were candidates of senior service more eligible for the post. What did Peter do? He said: "If they had been so servile as to give preference to me out of flattery over my worthy compeer, I would indeed have made them bitterly rue it." Generally speaking, what is the value of that impotent, formal expression, based not on law or right but on mere custom "the boyards have decreed," what value

has it in comparison with Prince Yakov Dolgoruky's contradiction of Peter the Great?... Yes, Peter the Great founded and created our peerage, which under Catherine the Great blossomed forth into such a rich flower of distinction, power, riches, education, enlightenment and, we would add, talent and intrinsic excellence. Only Asiatic souls can reproach Peter for having imparted to the peerage a bureaucratic character, and made it accessible to men of lowly origin but lofty spirit, men of ability and talent. If our peerage was ever capable of becoming a pure bureaucracy Peter was in no way to blame for it: apparently that was the inevitable way of things; apparently it could not be otherwise; apparently the peerage lacked the substantial force which would have enabled it to pass immutable through all the changes in Russia's civil structure and life. What is aristocracy? It is the historically developed privileged class which, standing at the head of the realm, acts as medium between the people and the supreme authority, and which, by its life and activity promotes ideal conceptions of personal honour, nobility, the inviolability of its rights, passes down from family to family the highest culture and ideal elegance in the forms of life. Such was the aristocracy in Europe until the end of the last century, and such today is the aristocracy in England. Though kings in the Middle Ages could abuse their power over the great vassal lords, they could deprive them only of life but not of honour, they could behead them but not have them beaten with cudgels, whipped or scourged. And the king could take a vassal's life only by regular legal procedure and on the sentence (albeit not always impartial) of the court. The idea of honour, which is the soul and blood of true aristocracy, originated in Europe from the fact that all aristocrats were at first ruling personages, and chivalry still more ennobled and humanized their conceptions of honour. Our boyars, too, were at first ruling personages; when they ceased to be sovereigns they immediately became honourable servitors: the Tatar yoke which broke up the feudal system meant the same thing to our fancied feudal lords as chivalry did to the feudal lords in the West. An unprofitable analogy!... And therefore our boyar considered it no disgrace to be illiterate and without learning or education: this, according to the ideas of the time, was more fitting in a serf than in a lord. By the same token he regarded as a disgrace not the rod, nor the cudgels, nor the whip, nor knout, nor

dungeon tortures, nor jail—but a "place" at the royal table below a boyar of equal lineage but unequal status as regards the repute of his ancestors, or of higher service distinction but of lower descent. And by the same token our boyars, as Koshikhin puts it, "wrangled" with each other but did not throw down the chivalrous gauntlet.

The defenders of patriarchal against civilized ways refer with special triumph to the staunch loyalty and absolute obedience of the people to the supreme authority in the days of old Russia. The historical facts, however, too glaringly belie this conviction and too clearly prove the old axiom that "extremes always meet." Sedition, the Streltzi mutinies which started in Peter the Great's childhood, the repeated attempts on his life even during his monarchy, prove how unstable are the natural relationships between an uneducated people and beneficent authority, and how more enduring are these relations when they are permeated with a rational consciousness of rights and duties. During the popular rebellion occasioned by the decline in the money market as a result of the copper coinage, many men, in the words of Koshikhin, buttonholed Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich while "one man from the crowd struck hands on it with the tsar": that is more than sansculottic impudence, it is sheer, disgusting bestiality in notions and feelings.

The defenders of our patriarchal antiquity usually claim that conditions in Europe, too, during the times of barbarism were no better than with us. But that was the time of Europe's barbarism, whereas we in the eighteenth century (before the reign of Catherine the Great) had the same conditions that prevailed in Europe in the fourth and fifth centuries—tortures, bigotry, superstition (but not the knout which was bequeathed us by the Tatars). But what was more important was that Europe had the evolution of life, the movement of ideas; there, alongside with the poison grew the antidote—and a fallacious or inadequate determination of society was promptly followed by another negating determination more in keeping with the needs of the time. Hence one is involuntarily reconciled to all the horrors that reigned in Europe in those days, reconciled on account of their noble source, their salutary results. Russia, however, was fettered with the chains of immobility, her spirit was smothered beneath a thick ice crust and could find no outlet.

Some people believe that Russia could have been brought in line with Europe without violent reforms, without being divorced, albeit temporarily, from her *narodnost,* by her own development and her own genius. This opinion possesses all the appearance of truth, and is therefore brilliant and seductive, but hollow within like a big, fine, but rotten nut: it is refuted by experience itself, by the facts of history.

Never had Russia come so close to, face to face with Europe as during the epoch of the interregnum. Pseudo-Dmitri with his seductive Marina Mniszek and his Poles represented merely a descent of *German* customs on the Russians, and the principal cause of his downfall, apart from his temerity, was that he did not go to sleep on the bunk after dinner, but dealt with public affairs, ate veal and did not go to the bath on Saturdays. The Swede De la Gardie was a friend of the young Russian hero Skopin-Shuisky; but after the latter's death *was compelled* to become the Russians' *enemy.* But there is a still more striking fact: Novgorod. It is a splendid Russian expression: "the free brotherhood of Novgorod," and it is strange that many learned men believe in sober sincerity that Novgorod was a republic and a vital member of the Hanseatic League. True, the Novgorodians were friends of the "Germans" and had constant dealings with them; but German ideas never affected them. This was no republic, but a "free brotherhood"; it had no civic liberties, but an insolent denizenship of serfs who had somehow broken loose from their masters,—and the subjugation of Novgorod by Ivan III and Ivan Grozny was an affair justified by morality as well as by politics. There has never been a more preposterous and extravagant republic since the creation of the world. It sprang up like the insolence of a slave who sees his master sickening with the ague and losing his strength; it disappeared like the insolence of the slave when he saw his master recuperating. Both Ivans realized this: they did not make the conquest of Novgorod but subdued it as they would their rebellious patrimony. The pacification cost them no special effort: the conquest of Kazan was a thousand times more difficult for Grozny. No! there was a wall separating Russia from Europe: that wall could be thrown down only by a Samson, and that Samson appeared in Rūs in the person of Peter. Our history followed a different trend to that of Europe, and our humanization was to

have been accomplished in quite another way. Uncivilized nations become cultivated by unreserved imitation of the civilized. Europe itself proves that: Italy called the rest of Europe barbarians, and these barbarians copied her in every way, even in her vices. Could Russia start from the beginning when she viewed the end? Was she to begin, for example, the military art at the point where it had started in Europe in the days of feudalism, when she was being shot at out of cannon and mortars, and her unordered hosts could be struck by serried ranks, armed with bayonets and turning on the command of a single man? A ridiculous idea! If Russia was to learn the military art of Europe of the seventeenth century she had to study mathematics, fortification, the artillery and engineering arts and navigation, and she could not, consequently, take up geometry before she had thoroughly mastered arithmetic and algebra, the study of which would have had to make complete and equal progress among all estates of the nation. Uniformity of soldiers' clothes is not a whim but a necessity. Russian costume was not suited for soldiers' uniforms; consequently the European uniform had to be adopted; and how cou'd that be done with the soldiers alone, unless the repugnance to foreign clothes was overcome in the whole nation? And what sort of separate nation within a nation would the soldiery have presented if all the rest of menfolk went about in beards, long and flowing *balakhons* and huge ugly boots? To clothe the soldiers, mills were needed (and, thanks to patriarchal crudities there weren't any); was one to wait for the free and natural development of industry? Soldiers must have officers (is that not so, Messieurs Old Believers and Anti-Europeans?), and the officers had to be from a higher stratum of society than those from which the soldiers were recruited, and their uniforms had to be of finer cloth than those of the soldiers: was that cloth then to be purchased from foreigners with Russian money. or was the country to bide its time until (in perhaps 50 years) the soldiers' cloth mills were brought to perfection and evolved into fine-cloth mills? It is preposterous! No, everything had to be begun in Russia at a leap, with preference for the superior over the inferior: soldiers' cloth mills over the coarse peasant-cloth mills, the academy over the county schools, ships over rowboats. It was not enough to found a county school—it had to be given teachers, who could be best trained by the academy; textbooks

had to be prepared, and that too could only be done by the academy. Whatever you may say about the poverty of our literature and the paucity of our book trade, we do have books that enjoy a ready sale, and bookdealers who have made an annual turnover of a quarter of a million rubles on periodical publications alone! How is that? Because our great Empress, our Little Mother Catherine II, was solicitous about creating a literature and a reading public, compelled her court to read, and from them the appetite passed on through the higher nobility to the lower and thence to officialdom, and now it is beginning to pass to the merchantry.

Yes, with us everything had to be started from the top downwards, for at the time when we felt the need of budging from the spot on which we had dozed for centuries, we already found ourselves on a height which others had taken by storm. Of course, it was not the people who saw itself on this height (it would then have had no reason to climb), but the government, and that in the person of one man—its tsar. Peter had no time to waste: for now it was no longer a matter of securing Russia's future greatness, but of saving her in the present. Peter appeared in good time: had he been a quarter of a century late it would have been a question of *save yourself who can*! ... Providence knows when it has to send a man down on earth. Remember the condition of the European states in regard to social, industrial, administrative and military power, and the condition of Russia in all those respects! We are spoiled by our power, deafened by the thunder of our victories, accustomed to see the serried masses of our troops, and forget that all this has a history of merely 132 years (counting from the victory at Lesnaya—the first great victory won by Russian regular troops over the Swedes). We all seem to think that this has been so from time immemorial, and not since Peter the Great. We have already forgotten that Russia came to have a dangerous neighbour under Peter the Great in the person of Charles XII, who needed men and money and was capable of making use of both, following the Russian proverb: "You must not look a gift horse in the mouth." Love of country, power of the national spirit and wealth of material resources are truly potent instruments. But resurrect the heroes of Thermopylae, Marathon, Plataea, the warriors of Lacedaemon, the phalanxes of the Macedonians, the cohorts of Rome, form them into a single army, make Miltiades,

Themistocles, Cimon, Aristides, Pericles, Fabius, Camillus, Scipio, Marius captains of detachments and give them as commanders Alexander of Macedonia and Julius Caesar: this fearful army of giants would not stand up to five regiments of modern soldiery under the command, not of Napoleon, but of any one of his generals. There is strength in numbers, runs the proverb, but there is greater strength in mind armed with science, art and life's age-old progress, we would add. No, without its Peter Russia had no possibility of establishing contact with Europe, for she lacked the vital germ of evolution, and if it had not been for Peter she would long have served as the original of the pictures painted by Koshikhin and Zhelyabuzhsky. True, Russia would have probably linked herself with Europe and adopted its civilization without the reforms of Peter, but in the same fashion as India did with England. We repeat: Peter had no time to waste. Like the alert helmsman he presaged the dread storm in the halcyon calm and bade his crew spare neither effort, nor health nor life in making ready for the impact of the waves and stormy winds—and all stood by, albeit with reluctance, and the storm broke, but the ship was in good trim and rode out its violent fury—yet some men lacking foresight raised a murmur against the helmsman for having troubled them in vain. He could not sow and wait calmly until the scattered seed would germinate, sprout and ripen: he cast the seed forth with one hand and wished to reap its fruit at once with the other, in violation of the customary laws of nature and probability—and nature yielded before him her eternal laws, and probability turned into magic. The new Joshua, he stopped the sun midst the sky, he wrested from the sea its ancient domains, he raised a beautiful city out of the swamp. He understood that half-measures would not avail and were merely a hindrance: he understood that sweeping changes in things that have been the work of centuries could not be accomplished by halves, that one had to do more than could possibly be done or do nothing at all, and he understood that he was strong enough to cope with the former. On the eve of the battle of Lesnaya he placed Cossacks and Kalmucks behind his troops with strict injunctions to slay without mercy whosoever attempted to flee the battlefield, even though it be himself.* He acted in

* Golikov, V. III.

precisely the same way in his war against ignorance: having arrayed his whole nation against it, he barred every avenue of retreat and flight. Be useful to the state, learn—or die: such was the motto inscribed in blood on the banner of his struggle with barbarism. The old had to give way without demur to the new, everything, including dress and hair styles and the beard, and customs, morals, houses, streets and service. People say it is the deed that counts, not the beard; but what was to be done, gentlemen, if the beard interfered with the deed? Up with it, roots and all, if it did not want to come down of itself!

One cannot gather anything from particulars, and everything should be treated in relation to the general. The manner of life, costume and even the changing fashions of the Europeans are intimately bound up with their science, education, administration, pre-war strength and laws. We have people today who wear beards and read books and have a self-acquired education of a sort: but go into their homes, look into their family relationships, their attitude to people of their own world, and you will be pained and grieved if you are a gentleman and place any store on inner and outer beauty in the forms of life. But the beard today is merely a symbol of respect for ancient traditions, for the customs of class; some men hesitate about discarding it, as they would over eating oysters for the first time: they laugh at their own fears, but cannot overcome them. This, at least, is tolerable, and more ridiculous than pernicious. But in Peter's day popular ignorance attributed a kind of religious value to the beard. It stuck out between the book and the eyes and interfered with reading. A razor was regarded as an immoral instrument of outlandish, infidel ungodliness. In the witty phrase of Marlinsky the Russian held on to his beard with both hands as though it had grown into his heart. The banner is not the same thing as the regiment; but if the banner has been lost in battle the regiment is considered nonexistent—hence the great honour of seizing an enemy's banner. The beard was the banner of ignorance, and Peter realized that it had to be tackled first.

Some people impute to Peter the Great's reforms the mischievous effect of having placed the nation in a singular position by divorcing it from its native sphere and throwing it off its ground of innate horse sense without having inoculated real Europeanism.

Despite the fallacy of this view, it possesses a foundation and is at least worthy of being refuted. Indeed, while the reformation released, as it were, the spiritual powers of such talented men as Sheremetev, Menshikov and others, it made sort of posers and scrapers out of the majority. Naturally, the old boyars, endowed with inborn intelligence and strong character, who refused to take an example from a man like Romodanovsky and to relinquish their staidly-cut costume and discard stern and ancient custom, looked with profound contempt on those new-fledged and home-bred Europeans who, through lack of practice, got their legs entangled in their sword, dropped their cocked hat from under their arm, trod on the ladies' toes when coming up to kiss their hand, needlessly, parrot-fashion, employed foreign words, substituted for courtesy rude and impudent gallantry and, as sometimes happened, put their clothes on the wrong way. Even today, though in another shape, vestiges of this sham, distorted Europeanism still survive: these forms sans ideas, that courtesy sans respect to self and others, that urbanity sans aesthetics, that foppery and *lionhood* sans elegance: notorious Ivan Alexandrovich Khlestakov, made famous by Gogol, is a type of that kind of *Europeans* of our days. Our Gallomaniacs, Anglomaniacs, lions, wild asses, *petit-maîtres*, agriculturists, comfortists could easily step into Gogol's comedy, some to chat with Anna Andreyevna about life in the capital and the rubbing of shoulders with ambassadors and ministers, some to debate on France and Turkey's political relations with Russia with the Postmaster Shpekin and the Judge Lyapkin-Tyapkin. It was a consequence of Peter's reformation that the great intellect of Lomonosov is so jejune and rhetorical in poetry, and that our literature up to Pushkin, with the exception of Krylov, is servilely imitative, colourless and of no interest to foreigners. Yes, that is all true, but it would be as absurd to blame Peter for it as it would be to blame the physician who, in order to cure a sick man of the fever, first weakens and utterly debilitates him by bloodletting and plagues him when convalescent by a strict diet. The point is not whether Peter made us half-Europeans and half-Russians, consequently neither Europeans nor Russians: the point is are we always to remain in this characterless condition? If not, if we are destined to become European Russians and Russian Europeans, we should not reproach Peter, but rather wonder how

he could have accomplished such a gigantic, such an unprecedented task! And so the crux of the matter consists in the words "shall we"—and we can answer firmly and explicitly that we not only *shall be*, but are already *becoming* European Russians and Russian Europeans, that we have been becoming so since the reign of Catherine II, and are making progress therein day by day. We are today the pupils and no longer the zealots of Europeanism, we no longer wish to be either Frenchmen, or Englishmen or Germans, we want to be Russians in the European spirit. This consciousness is permeating all spheres of our activity and made itself strikingly manifest in our literature with the advent of Pushkin, that great, independent and sheerly national talent. The fact that the final great act—the utter permeation of our *narodnost* by Europeanism—has still not been accomplished and will not be accomplished for a long time, merely goes to prove that Peter has carried out in thirty years a task that is giving work to whole centuries. That is why he is a giant among giants, a genius among geniuses, a king among kings. Napoleon himself had a rival in antiquity—Julius Caesar: our Peter has neither rivals nor models since the beginning of the world; he is akin and equal to no one but himself. And this great task was accomplished by the unqualified adoption of forms and words: the form is not always the idea, but often leads to it; the word is not always the deed, but often leads to it. Our literature began with the form without the idea, originated not out of the national spirit, but out of sheer imitation, yet we should not despise our imitative literature: without it we would not have had Pushkin. From literature we can make a premise to everything else. Peter the Great's soldiers did not understand why they were being trained in military drill and crammed with the articles; they just senselessly obeyed their paternal commanders—and well!—the result of this senseless obedience and aping of the foreign military was the taking of Azov, the victories at Lesnaya and Poltava, the conquest of Sweden's Baltic provinces. Our first representatives of polite society shocked European society by their Tatarism, but there soon appeared people who could be considered its adornment and who amazed the Parisians by their refinement and good breeding.

The building of St. Petersburg is also placed by many to the discredit of its great founder. It is said: on the margin of a vast

realm, on swamps, in a terrible climate, with the sacrifice of many workmen's lives, many were forced against their wishes to build their homes there and so on and so forth; but the question is, was it necessary, and was it avoidable? Peter had to abandon Moscow—the beards hissed at him there; he had to secure a safe haven for Europeanism, make the visitor welcome in the bosom of the family, so that he may quietly and unobtrusively influence Russia and act as the lightning conductor for ignorance and bigotry. For such a haven he required an entirely new and traditionless soil, where his Russians would find themselves in an utterly new environment in which they could not help but recast their customs and habits of their own accord. He had to introduce them to foreigners, join them together by ties of service, commerce and fellowship, place them on a footing of permanent contact. For that purpose he needed the conquered ground, which would become the home both for foreigners who could not be enticed to Moscow in great numbers and for Russians who were only reluctant at the beginning to settle there, but upon seeing there the seat of government, were attracted to it as iron is to the magnet. And what place could be more suitable for the purpose than "the territory wrested from the Swedes"? And the great idea of creating a fleet and inaugurating foreign commerce not through the medium of foreigners, as at Archangel, but directly, by our own efforts, and not with the English alone, but with the entire world? What better place was there for that than the quadrivial estuary of the Neva? Suffice to bear in mind the importance which Kronstadt has for St. Petersburg to realize how great and impeccable were Peter the Great's reasons. Why could he not have removed the capital to the shores of the Black Sea or the Sea of Azov? Because, in addition to a fleet and overseas commerce, he needed the sea for the success of Europeanism by proximity to a European nation. The Sea of Azov or the Black Sea would have brought us into closer contact with the Tatars, Kalmucks, Circassians and Turks and not with the Europeans. The contiguity of Turkey is important for Odessa which supplies it with a huge quantity of wheat: but it would not have been important for St. Petersburg, since Odessa is only a port and trading city, while St. Petersburg is both these and the capital. And Peter's idea was justified by the facts: Moscow undoubtedly has its significance for Russia,

but St. Petersburg is the truly European capital of Russia, and Moscow will be no match for it until it is able to absorb it. St. Petersburg is, for Russia, the coach-stand of Europeanism, whence the latter spreads throughout Russia. Every commodity and every step towards civilization are effected through St. Petersburg. It is the door and window to Europe. The beard there is not an eyesore only on the izvozchik's sledge or droshky.

As to the sacrifices involved in the building of St. Petersburg, they are redeemed by necessity and result. Peter, by his deeds, wrote history and not a romance, he acted as a king and not the father of a family. The whole of his reform was an ordeal for the nation, a hard and harsh time. But when have great upheavals been effected peacefully and without distress to contemporaries? Could the glorious year of *1812* be called an easy one for Russia? Is that a reason why we should condemn it instead of being proud of it?... There are only two tranquil states in the world—China and Japan; but the best the former produces is tea, and the latter, I believe, lacquer: nothing else can be said of them. The aspen breaks and falls beneath the wind; the oak grows strong and sturdy in the storm.

> In times when Russia, a young empire,
> Stirred up by Peter's impelling will,
> Was anvilled to manhood by hammer and fire,
> Was put to the test of fight and defeat
> When unwarned assailed by the insolent Swede....
> The lessons were hard, but undaunted she came
> By the perilous road to life and to fame.
> Thus steel when hammered yet harder grows,
> While glass and stone are crushed by the blows.

Yes, it was not easy for the people to leave its sleeping berth on the stove and go forth to such labour and struggle. It was not its fault that it had grown up untutored, and having reached the adult stage felt that it was not equal to the task of sitting down to the fescue. But the worst of its position was that it could not understand the sense, purpose or advantage of the changes which the iron, implacable will of the tsar-prodigy was forcing upon it. We believe it fitting here to quote, or, more truly, to adorn our

article with an eloquent passage on Peter the Great by a Russian scholar.*

"What then did the Russian people lack? *Reformation*! It was lacking in the seventeenth century! There appeared a tsar with ardent thought in his eyes, with daring on his brow and with the thunderous voice of authority! He cast a dreadful eye upon the royal city, gazed sternly into the distant past and removed royalty therefrom. What was it that he did not like in the heirloom of his forebears? What was there in the creations of his fathers that roused Peter's ire? But that is the mystery of a great deep soul, the secret of genius! We beheld only the exterior of the spirit that passed like a thundercloud over the Russian land. We saw how he sympathized with Ivan Grozny, how he revered Cardinal Richelieu, how he disliked the Byzantine court, its luxury and indolence, its pharisees and hypocrites. What a forbidding commingling of the elements in the soul of a mortal born to command and to rule! And to this flaming principle of his moral life was added a profound awareness of his own powers. A messenger from heaven, an omnipotent mortal, emphatically born for reformations! In whatever century he had been born, among whatever nation he had been reared, he would ever and everywhere have been a reformer. Such was his nature. Had he been contemporaneous with Jason, his would have been the fate of the divine Hercules. He would have been too heavy for the light Greek armada. But Providence knew where to bring forth into the world that extraordinary mortal. Only a Russian ship could withstand such a terrible passenger! Only a Russian sea could carry on its wave such a valiant navigator! Only Russia could not burst from this spirit that strained her in order to balance her strength with his own gigantic power! Wonderful apparition! Never since the creation of the world has there been such a king! His rigour of mind and will are said to have been the result of a deficient education; but, good God. what science could have confined that adamant soul, what education could have softened those indestructible nerves of mind, those iron sinews of will? If nature had to yield to him, what could science have made him? What German could be his tutor, what French-

* F. L. Moroshkin, professor at the Moscow University, from address *On the Code of Laws and Its Subsequent Development*, delivered on the 10th of June 1839 at the graduation ceremony.

man his teacher? Both nature and science receded when that great spirit sped Russian life across the high seas of world history! Peter the Great did not believe in the frailties of human nature; only on his deathbed did he realize that he, too, was mortal: *'From me it can be perceived what a poor creature man is,'* he uttered in his agony! Such was Peter the Great! He had to accomplish a reformation. And what a reformation! From the body's extremities to the innermost recesses of the human mind! He shaves beards with the razor and hacks ignorance with the axe. Thousands of Streltzi heads fall in the Preobrazhenskoye field. Not even the religious procession of the royal city could temper his justice! (pp. 60-61).... The regenerator throughout his life carried the secret conviction that not by mere birth had he ascended the throne but that a higher power had ordained him to rule over the peoples! He felt that the spirit, not the blood, should precede him. He renounced his son and wished to leave behind the *worthier.* But the great man failed to recognize our weaknesses! He did not understand that we were mere flesh and blood. He was great and strong, and we were born *puny* and *weak* and required the common regulations of mankind! Peter the Great did not like our ancient polity. The royal Boyar Duma had to give way to the Senate; the regional *Prikazi*[9] to the *Landrat* and *Landgericht.* Neither did he like our *tselovalniki,* our *dyaki* and *podyachiye.*[10] He would have wished to put in their place captive Swedes, *secretaries,* and *schreibers.* He did not like Russia's past. But all these changes are as nothing compared to the reorganization of the State service. Having himself started as a soldier of the guard's regiment, he slowly climbed the ladder of subordination and made his subjects do likewise. And what about the old subsistence arrangement, the royal bread and salt? Peter the Great's servants ate it in the sweat of their brow. Never was his justice so relentless as when he dealt with drones, livers on the public expense and peculators. Having no respect for private property where the interests of the country were concerned he was inexorable to taxcollectors or commission agents for every kopek overcharged the public or overpaid the tradesman." (pp. 61-62.)

Yes, the people indeed had food for thought, reason to remember with emotion the good old days and poetize them in elegiacal addresses to the old and the new, something after the man-

ner of the tale, probably composed in that age, which begins with the following words: "Pray listen, good people, to the tidings hereof, lend thy fond ear to the simple speech that tells how the people of old lived in the days of yore. For that, dear friends, was an age of wisdom, aye, an age of wisdom, when all men lived the true Orthodox life, the old folks lived not in our foreign ways, but in their own ways, the Orthodox ways. And what a free and easy life was theirs. For they rose early with the break of dawn, washed themselves with water from the spring and the morning's dew, offered prayers unto all the saints and holy men, bowed to all their kin from east to west, came out onto the wood-carved porch and gathered faithful servants for deeds good and noble. The old men sat in judgment and the young they hearkened to them: the old men did the thinking, the young ones they ran their errands. The young married women presided over the home, the maids wreathed garlands for *Semik* Day,[11] the old women chatted and gossiped and told stories. They had great joys for great days, they had their sorrows in grievous affliction. *But what has been has gone and will return no more, and what will be will be, but no more as of old!*"

All the better that it will return no more! No matter how eloquent the speech, how sweet the song, you will not seduce us with this free and easy life. We shall prefer promenades, theatres, balls and masquerades to the wreathing of garlands for *Semik* Day. As for early rising, it is not a question of getting up earlier, but of getting up to a purpose: he who has nothing to do would do better to go on sleeping. We not only do not bow on all sides to our absent kin, but even when we meet them, if the kinship is merely that of blood and not of love and spirit. We too have young men who "run errands" for the old, but then we also have old men who "run errands" for the young: for the title of authority belongs with us to the worthiest, not to the oldest, and worth is measured by intellect, talent and merit and not by grey hairs. Suvorov had generals, much older than himself in years and superior in lineage, and not only young officers, who ran his errands. Yes, we cannot listen to these plaintive praises of the good old days without a smile of commiseration; but we understand that the unsophisticated people of the time was right in its *own way*. Then let us wish it from all our heart: "Fare thee well, blessed be thy memory!" It paid for our happiness and our greatness.

with pain and suffering patience. Over the graves of history's churchyard there should be no curses, no indelicate laughter, no malice or profanity, but love and sad reverential meditation....

But such is truth itself, such is the direct influence of genius that in the very height and during the most painful period of reform Peter had admirers not only among his own following but even among those who looked askance at his works. Apparently everybody, despite himself, acknowledged the need for radical reform. It could not, indeed, be otherwise: Peter had appeared in time. The need for reform had loomed large as early as in the reign of Alexei Mikhailovich, and the abolition of *mestnichestvo*[12] under Tsar Fyodor Alexeyevich had also been a sequence of that need. But only half-measures had been applied which yielded no important results. A thorough and radical reform was necessary—"from the body's extremities to the innermost recesses of the mind"; and for effecting such a reform one needed such a gigantean genius as Peter was. The Battle of Poltava could not but have had a strong moral effect on the nation: many of the most inveterate adherents of ancient usage could not help seeing in this battle the reform's vindication. The tsar's justice and righteousness, his accessibility to all and everyone, that readiness to forgive his personal enemies and evildoers at the first sign of their repentance, that readiness even to exalt them to a high position if, repenting, they showed themselves to possess ability, that divine abnegation of self for the benefit of eternal truth, that sublime self-annihilation in the idea of his nation and his country—all this won Peter the hearts and souls of his subjects long before he died. But when he died without leaving anyone after his own image, Russia stood aghast, as though thunderstruck. The best part of the nation that had made great and involuntary sacrifices to reform now began to tremble for the fate of that reform and feared the return of the old barbarism. Russia seemed to have a premonition of those dark days when she would drag herself along the ruts laid by Peter without making any progress; she seemed to have realized that her radiant sun had set for long, before it was to reappear on her horizon with Catherine the Great to sink no more. But what a blow was Peter's death to his favourites, to the men formed and modelled by his architectonic spirit, his creative genius! This is what *Neplyuev* wrote of the stunning effect which the news of

Peter's death produced on him: "The year 1725, in the month of February I received the lamentable tidings that the father of our country, Peter the Great, the first emperor, had parted this life. I wetted that paper with bitter tears wept both over my sovereign lord and veritable father of his subjects, as well as because of his many favours to myself; and, by God, I lie not when I say that I was distraught that whole day long and night—indeed, it were a sin had I not been so affected. This monarch has placed our native land in comparison with the best states, has taught us to realize our own gifts and capacity, in a word: whatever one sees in Russia owes its origin to him, and whatever will be done in the future will be drawn from the same spring; as to me, he was my sovereign and dearly beloved father. May God rest his soul that has toiled much for the weal of his country."*

An old soldier by the name of Kirillov possessed a little enamelled portrait of Peter, which he set among his icons, lit a candle before it and prayed to it. This was reported to the bishop of Nizhni Novgorod in whose house he lived. The bishop made an examination of the soldier's little room, and pointing to the portrait of Peter the Great, said to him: "Old man, is that the picture of Peter the Great standing among the icons?"—"Yes, Your Lordship, it is the image of our little father."—"Though he was a great and pious sovereign worthy of all our homage, but the Holy Church has not inscribed him in the catalogue of saints and you must not therefore place his person among the holy icons, light a candle before him and still less pray to him."—"Not pray to him?" the soldier interrupted in an indignant tone. "I must not, you say? You did not know him, but I did: he was our guardian angel; he protected and safeguarded us and all our country from the enemies, he bore all the hardships of the men on the march, ate with us the same gruel, treated us as an equal and a father; God himself glorified him with victories and did not allow death or hurt to touch him; and you say I must not pray to his image!" concluded the soldier in tears. Do what the bishop might to persuade him the veteran was obdurate, and only conceded to place no candle before Peter's picture, which was to remain among the icons.**

* Golikov: *Anecdotes about Peter the Great*, p. 508.
** *Ibid.*, pp. 532-535.

One can now understand the song which tradition requires the soldier to sing as he stands watch over the tomb of Peter the Great:

Ah, dear bright moon,
Why dost not shine as of old,
As thou didst of old,
Why hide in the clouds,
Why in the dark cloud hidest thy face. ..
...Open thee up, O mother earth,
Unclose thy lid dark coffin,
Unfold thy gold brocade,
Arise, awaken, O tsar of Rūs....

We would now pass to the personal character of Peter as sovereign, reformer and man. To do that we must review his whole life and grasp its most salient features. We shall embark upon that labour with reverence and awe in our next article, and will try to communicate to our readers the sublime sweet of contemplating such a colossal personality as was Peter's. The contemplation of every great man rouses us from the drowsiness of humdrum life, from the apathy of life's prose and cares, attunes the heart to exalted feelings and noble thoughts, strengthens the will to acts of goodness and proud contempt for the vacuity and insignificance of inanimate existence, and uplifts the spirit to the fountainhead of all life, to the source of eternal truth and eternal weal.... And who, if not our Peter, is eligible to the title of great and divine, and who throughout our history can be nearer both to our heart and our spirit?[13]

SELECTED ARTICLES, REVIEWS AND LETTERS 1841–1845

LETTERS—1841

TO V. P. BOTKIN. MARCH 1, 1841

(A fragment)

St. Petersburg, 1841, March 1[1]

I JUST received your letter, my dear Vasili Petrovich, and forced myself to answer it immediately. I have a beastly habit—to write a lot, in detail, clearly, and so on, by which I deprive you of the pleasure of receiving my letters more frequently, and myself of frequent intercourse with you, for to write a lot requires time and long preparation. The excerpt from *Hallische Jahrbücher* delighted me and even, as it were, revived and strengthened me for a moment—thanks very much for it, ever so many thanks.[2] I have long had the suspicion that Hegel's philosophy is only a moment, though a great one, and that its absolute results are not worth a—, that it were better to die than be reconciled to them. I intended writing this to you before I had received your present letter. Fools lie when they say that Hegel has reduced life to dead schemes; but it is true that he has turned the realities of life into ghosts clasping bony hands and dancing in the air above the cemetery. The subject for him is not an end in itself, but a means for the momentary expression of the universal, and this universal becomes with him the Moloch of the subject, for having flaunted himself therein (in the subject) he casts it off like a pair of old trousers. I have special reason to harbour a grudge against Hegel, for I feel that I have been loyal to him (in sensation) in tolerating Russian reality, in praising Zagoskin and similar abominations, and in hating Schiller. In regard to the latter I was more consistent than Hegel himself, though sillier than Menzel. All Hegel's reasonings about morality are utter nonsense, for there is no morality in the objective realm of thought as there is none

in objective religion (for instance, in Hindoo pantheism, where Brahma and Siva are equal gods, *i.e.*, where good and bad have equal status). You will laugh at me, I know, ye bald-pated!—but, never mind, I will stick to my view: the fate of a subject, an individual, a personality is more important than the fate of the world and the weal of the Chinese emperor (*viz.*, the Hegelian *Allgemeinheit*). I am told: develop all the treasure of your spirit for the free self-enjoyment of the spirit, weep to console yourself, grieve to be glad, aspire to perfection, climb the top rung of the ladder of evolution and if you stumble, down you go, damn you—good riddance. No thank you, Yegor Fedorovich,[3] with all due respect to your philosophical cap; let me inform you, with all respect for your philosophical philistinism, that if I did succeed in reaching the top of the evolution ladder, I would demand even there an account from you of all the victims of the conditions of life and history, of all the victims of accident, superstition, the Inquisition, Philip II, etc., etc.: otherwise I will throw myself headlong from the top rung. I will not have happiness if you gave it to me gratis unless I feel assured about every one of my blood brothers, the bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. Disharmony is said to be a condition of harmony: that may be very profitable and pleasant for melomaniacs, but certainly not for those whose fates are destined to express the idea of disharmony. However, to say everything there is to say on this subject one would never end. The extract from Echtermeyer delighted me as a sound rap on the philosophical cap of Hegel, as a fact which shows that the Germans, too, are getting the chance to become men and humans and to stop being Germans. But as a matter of fact it is not all consolation as far as I am concerned. I belong to the class of men who see the devil's tail in everything—that, I believe, is my latest world-outlook, the one I will die with. Though I suffer from it I am not ashamed of it. A man himself knows nothing—everything depends upon the spectacles which his disposition, the whim of his nature beyond the control of his will, places on his nose. A year ago my views were diametrically opposite to what they are today, and, really, I cannot say whether it is a fortunate or unfortunate thing that for me to think and feel, to understand and suffer are one and the same thing. That is where one must look out for fanaticism. Do you know that my present self pain-

fully detests my past self, and if I had the power and authority it would go ill with those who are today what I was a year ago. Try not to notice the devil's tail everywhere when you see yourself lying shrouded in a coffin with your hands tied behind your back. What does it matter to me that I am convinced that reason will triumph, that things will improve in the future, if fate has ordained me to be a witness to the triumph of chance, unreason and brute force? What is it to me that my children or yours will feel good if I am feeling bad and through no fault of my own? Would you have me withdraw into myself? No, better die, better be a living corpse! Convalescence! But what does it mean? Words, words, mere words! You write me that you have outloved your love and have lost the capacity of loving; Krasov writes the same; I feel the same; philistines, men of vulgar immediate reality, laugh at us and celebrate their victory.... Ah, woe, woe, woe! But of this later. I am afraid you will not comfort me and I will distress you.

A fine Prussian government in which we fancied to see the ideal of rational government! Scoundrels, tyrants of mankind like enough! A member of the triple alliance of executioners of liberty and reason. So that's Hegel! In that respect Menzel is wiser than Hegel, not to mention Heine! (By the way: Annenkov writes that eight volumes of Heine cost seven *chervontsi* in Hamburg.) The most rational government is that of the North American States, and after them of England and France.

As regards the Katkov affair, I believe that I see the reason now why we cannot agree: I have heard very little about it even from himself, and consequently do not possess the facts to judge.[4] As to Polevoy I agree with you; but he did once have the character and strength of mind! I have a high opinion of the man in the past. He performed a great service, he is an historical figure. Now about my article. You missed my point about "Katkov's style." It is precision, consisting in vivid style. I could support this by a quotation but I am too lazy. As for Kudryavtsev, I utterly agree with you about his style of language; nevertheless tranquility is not for me. What I want is something that shows me the state of a man's mind, when he is engulfed in the waves of rapture and floods the reader in them without giving him time to collect his wits. Do you understand? But that is missing, and that is why

I have so much of rhetoric (which you have quite rightly commented on and which I have long known myself). When you run into rhetorical passages in my article please take a pencil and make a note: here should be pathos, but owing to the author's paucity therein, O reader! be content with rhetoric water. However, the lack of unity and integrity in my articles is due *solely* to the fact that the second sheet is being written while the first one is already being proof-read. Now judge for yourself, Botkin: how the devil can a man manage it! Sometimes even a letter requires looking over, crossing out and rewriting to knock it into shape. You will find my article in No. 3 of the *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*—a veritable monstrosity! please don't scold—I know myself it's rotten. I feel that mine is not a logical, systematic head, and have undertaken a task that requires strict consequentialness, method and sound reasoning. Katkov left me his notebooks—and I have taken whole passages and inserted them in my article. The part on lyrical poetry is practically all his—word for word. The result is a clumsy patchwork. Never mind! If I will not supply a theory of poetry I will have killed the old ones, killed at one fell stroke all our rhetorics, poetics and aesthetics—and that is not to be sneezed at! And therefore I readily yield my honourable name to desecration. But what is most annoying, so much so that I slept badly one night, is the fact that that pig, that cad, the seminarist Nikitenko (alias Donkey-enko) struck out two of the best passages: one on the tragedy; I am writing it out for you. After I have been telling lies about *Romeo and Juliet* and concluded the yarn with the words: "O, woe, woe, woe!" this is what you would have read had it not been for the confounded Cad-enko: "We rage at Macbeth's crime and the demoniacal nature of his wife, but had we asked the former how he committed the heinous deed he would have probably answered: 'I don't know myself'; and had we asked the latter why she has been created so awfully inhuman, she would no doubt answer that she knew as much about it as her questioner and if she followed her nature it was because she had no other. . . . These are questions that are solved only beyond the grave, this is the kingdom of fate, the realm of tragedy! Richard II arouses in us a feeling of distaste by deeds that are degrading to a king. But when Bolingbroke usurps his crown, the king, unworthy so long as he reigned, becomes great when he has lost his kingdom. He

becomes conscious of the dignity of his majesty, of the hallowedness of his anointment, of the legitimacy of his rights—and wise speeches, filled with lofty thought, rush in stormy torrents from his lips, while action reveals a great soul and royal dignity. You no longer merely respect him, you revere him; you no longer merely pity him, you sympathize with him. Insignificant in good fortune, great in misfortune, he is a hero in your eyes. But in order to bring forth the powers of his spirit and become a hero he had to drain the cup of misery to the dregs and perish.... What a contradiction, and what a rich theme for tragedy, hence what an inexhaustible source of sublime enjoyment for you!..."

The second passage dealt with *Wit Works Woe*, where I had stated that Russian reality was outrageous and that Griboyedov's comedy was a slap on the face for it.

And here you have the reply to the letter from Kharkov dated 22nd of January (I am a punctual man). Well, you see: I can read into your heart from a distance of 700 and 1,500 versts: I was aware of the little dreams with which you went to Kharkov and of how you came back with your nose out of joint—hence there is nothing new for me in your letter in this respect. The deuce knows it—either we are spoiled or poetry lies about life. traduces reality ... but, sh! hush!... You know, I am more absurd than you are in my judgment of this town, which stands on the rivers Kharkov and Lopat (which flow into the Uda and the latter into the Donets—*Cf., Geographic Outline of the Russian Empire*, p. 109), since I have not even seen it and can yet say in what degree of northern latitude it stands and what *it contains of special interest* ... but, sh! hush! not a word!...[5] Anyway, we are both in the same boat, and shall twit each other about it when we meet. It is quite understandable though: it's terribly dull to live alone. To do something without feeling plagued I must sit at home for days on end; otherwise, when coming home of an evening and catching sight of my dark windows I feel myself weeping and gnashing my teeth inside of me.... A beastly affair human life is!...

TO V. P. BOTKIN. 27-28 JUNE, 1841

(A fragment)

St. Petersburg, 1841, June 27[1]

It is long, my dear Vasili, since I have written you and since I have received your letters. We understand each other over a distance of 700 versts as we would at two paces, and cannot therefore take exception to silence. I remember you once having written me that our friendship gives us what society could never give us: that is an utterly wrong idea, a crass fallacy! Alas, my friend, without society there is no friendship, no love, no spiritual interests, but merely the impulses towards them, impulses that are unsteady, powerless, baffling, painful and ineffectual. The whole of our life and our relations afford the best evidence of that bitter truth. Society lives on a given sum of given principles which are the earth, air, food and riches of each of its members, which are merely the concrete knowledge and concrete life of every one of its members. Humanity is the abstract soil for the growth of the individual soul, and we have all grown out of this abstract soil. we miserable Anacharsises of the new Scythia. That is why we yawn, lounge around, potter about, interested in everything without attaching ourselves to anything, devouring everything without becoming satiated. A strong, but, unfortunately, true comparison: the spiritual food we swallow without discrimination does not turn into flesh and blood, but into sheer unadulterated excrement. We love each other, love deeply and warmly—I am convinced of that with all the strength of my soul; but how has our friendship been and how is it being manifested? We were delighted and enraptured with each other, we hated each other, we marvelled at each other, we despised each other, we betrayed each other, we regarded with hatred and fury any one who did not give any of *our partisans* his due, and we vilified and maligned each other behind our backs before others, we quarrelled and made up, made up and quarrelled; during a long separation we wept and prayed at the mere thought of a meeting, melted and languished for love of each other, and met coldly, felt embarrassed by each other's presence and parted again without regret. Say what you will, but so it is. It is time we stopped deceiving ourselves, looked reality

squarely in the face without blinking and dissembling. I feel that I am right, for in this picture of our friendship I have not overshadowed its genuine, beautiful side.[2] Now, look at our love: what is it? For everybody it is joy, delight, the blossoming flower of life: for us it is labour, work, grievous sorrow. Everywhere there is a richness and luxuriance of fantasy, but in everything the poverty and penury of reality. Our learned professors are pedants, the dry rot of society; the half-literate merchant Polevoy gives an impetus to society, makes an epoch in its literature and life, and then suddenly without any apparent reason begins disgracefully to rot and stink.[3] I do not know whether I have the right to mention myself here, but people are speaking about me, many know me whom I do not know, I am, as you yourself said at our last meeting, *a fact of Russian life*. But just look what an ugly, what a hideous fact it is! I understand Goethe and Schiller better than those who know them by rote, though I do not know German; I write (sometimes fairly well) on humanity and do not know even what Kaidanov knows. Should I blame myself? Oh no, a thousand times no! It seems to me that if I was free to act on behalf of society for at least ten years—you could hang me after that for ought I care—I, too, would perhaps in three years make good my lost youth, would learn not only German but even Greek and Latin, would acquire a sound knowledge, would cultivate a love of labour, find strength of character. Yes, at times I deeply feel that it is the clear realization of my calling and not the voice of petty ambition which strives to justify its indolence, apathy, infirmity of purpose, impotence and insignificance of character. Take yourself. You have often said that you cannot write because it is not your penchant. Then why do you write, and write as few people can? No, you have all a man needs to write except the will and perseverance, which are lacking because the person you should write for is also lacking: you do not have the feeling of being in society, for there is no society. You will ask, why do I write, for I, too, do not feel myself to be living in society? You see: I have a large measure of ambition which sought an outlet for itself; I vaguely understood that I was no good for official service, nor for the career of a man of science and that I had only one road. Had I been provided for in life, as you are, and attached in addition to some outside business as you are, I would, like

you, make occasional raids on the magazines; but poverty developed in me the energy of quill-driving and sunk me up to the neck in the stinking mire of Russian letters. Give me a work-free annuity of 5,000 rubles and there would be a fact less in Russian life. And so, you see—the thing is easily explained. What I am driving at is this—we are orphans, badly brought up, we are men without a home country, and though good men, are nevertheless good for nothing and hence so rarely write to each other. And what is there to write about? About the elections? But we have only elections of the nobles, and this is a subject more disreputable than interesting. About the ministry? It is not in the least interested in us, nor we in it, and then Uvarov is presiding there with his orthodoxy, autocracy and nationality (*i.e., kutya,*[4] knout and obscenity); about the progress of industry, administration, public life, about literature, science? But we have them not. About ourselves?—but we have learned our sufferings by heart and have bored each other to death with them. And so, only one thing remains: to wish ourselves dead as soon as possible. That were best of all. Well, good-bye for the present. My eyes are heavy with sleep.

June 28

Good morning again, Botkin. Why, how your brother has changed—it is quite amazing. Where is that apathetic billiard-room expression, where those lacklustre sleepy-looking eyes? Do you know, his face delighted me—it has so much nobility, humanity, especially in the eyes which he seems to have stolen from you. His voice and bearing are sort of gentle and kind, like yours at good moments. Yes, this is a regeneration, a miracle of the spirit, which I have seen with my own eyes.[5]

On your advice I have bought Destunis' *Plutarch* and read it. That book has driven me mad. Good God, how much life is still latent in me that must be wasted in vain! Of all the heroes of antiquity three have won my love, admiration and enthusiasm—Timoleon and the Gracchuses. The life of Cato (of Utica and not the Elder brute) breathed on me the sombre grandeur of tragedy: what a noble personality. Pericles and Alcibiades have taken from me full and abundant tribute of wonder and delight. What about Caesar?—you will ask. Alas, my friend, I have now shut

myself up in a single idea which has utterly absorbed and devoured me. You know that I am not fated to get to the centre of truth from which one can obtain an equal view of all its circumambient points—no, somehow I always find myself on the fringe. So I am now: all immersed in the idea of civic virtue, in the pathos of truth and honour, apart from which I scarcely notice greatness anywhere else. Now you will understand why Timoleon, the Gracchuses and Cato *Uticensis* (not the red-headed brute *Sapiens*) have overshadowed Caesar and the Macedonian in my eyes. I have developed a sort of wild, frenzied, fanatical love for freedom and independence of human personality which are possible only in a society founded on truth and virtue. In taking up *Plutarch* I thought that the Greeks would screen the Romans from me—but it turned out otherwise. I was swept into a frenzy over Pericles and Alcibiades, but the austere magnitude of Timoleon and Phocion (those Greco-Romans) blotted out for me the graceful images of Athens' representatives. But in the Roman lives my soul floated in an ocean. I came to understand a good deal through *Plutarch* of what I had not understood before. A new humanity had sprung up on the soils of Greece and Rome. The Middle Ages, but for them, would have accomplished nothing. I also understood the French revolution and its Roman pomp at which I had previously laughed. I understood too Marat's sanguinary love of liberty, his sanguinary hatred of everything that wished to dissociate itself from the fraternity of mankind by at least an armorial carriage. How charming is the world of antiquity. Its life contains the germ of all greatness, nobility and virtue, for the foundation of its life was pride of personality, inviolability of personal dignity. Yes, the Greek and Latin languages must be the cornerstone of all education, the foundation of schools.

Strange: my life is sheer apathy, yawning, indolence and a stagnant mire, but at the bottom of that mire there blazes a flaming sea. I have always been afraid that I would gradually die with the passing of the years—but it turns out otherwise. I am disillusioned in everything, believe nothing, love nothing and no one, yet the interests of prosaic life absorb me less and less, and I become ever more and more a citizen of the universe. The wild craving for love ever more devours my entrails, the yearning grows ever more painful and insistent. That is mine, and

that alone is mine. But I am also keenly interested in what is not mine. Human personality has become my obsession which I fear may drive me mad. I am beginning to love mankind *à la* Marat: to make the least part of it happy I believe I could destroy the rest of it with fire and sword. What right has a man similar to me to place himself above humanity, seclude himself from it by an iron crown and purple robe which, as said the Tiberius Gracchus of our age, Schiller, bears traces of the blood of the first manslayer? What right has he to inspire me with degrading awe? Why must I take my hat off to him? I feel that if I were a king I would surely become a tyrant. Only a passionless, omniscient God could be king. Look at the best of them—what a bad lot they are, Alexander Filippovich,[6] for example, when their egoism is stirred—the life and happiness of a man is nothing to them. Hegel dreamed of a constitutional monarchy as the ideal state—what a paltry conception! No, there should not be any monarchs, for a monarch is never a brother; he will always keep aloof from them though it be by empty etiquette, and men will always bow to him if merely for the sake of form. Men should be brothers and should not offend one another by even a shade of external and formal superiority. What is to be said of these two nations of antiquity, born with such conceptions! What is to be said of the French, who have grasped without the aid of German philosophy what German philosophy has still failed to understand! The deuce, I must make the acquaintance of the Saint-Simonists. I look upon woman through their eyes. Woman is a victim, the slave of modern society....

TO V. P. BOTKIN. 8 SEPTEMBER, 1841

St. Petersburg, 1841, September 8[1]

It is long since I have written you or received any letters from you, my dear Vasili. The reasons are obvious: either I am not in the mood, or I have no time, or make up my mind to do it tomorrow, next week, today I am lazy, yesterday unwell, and so on and so forth. Consequently, all excuses are platitudes not worth repeating. But this is news, and not at all a platitude: where did you get the idea into your bald head that I have cooled

towards you. Botkin—out on you, cross yourself man! You are sick, my friend! and are having bad dreams. Don't believe those false phantoms of a disturbed imagination—drive them away from you before you fall a prey to them. Having the faculty of reading between your lines, I guessed something of the sort from your letter of the 18th July where, in thanking me for my letter, you say: the only unpleasant thing is that you have raked up our old squabbles which belong to the dark days of our life. You have misunderstood my reason for bringing up these old squabbles—you have taken it as a sort of reminder of your past. Botkin, there was a good deal of trash in it, in that past—I admit; but to forget it is impossible, for it is also closely associated in our minds with everything that was best in our lives and which will always remain a hallowed memory. Needless to say no one of us can boast or reproach himself for the larger measure of the trash; it was balanced on both sides, and we should not envy or be ashamed of one another. But that is not what I wrote about, not what I wanted to say: you have misunderstood me. I shall try now to clear this matter up once and for all, so that it should not worry you. You know my nature: it is always at extremes and never strikes the centre of an idea. I part with the old idea with difficulty and a pang, renounce it down to the ground, and take up the new one with all the fanaticism of a proselyte. And so, I am now at a new extreme, which is the idea of *socialism*, that has become for me the idea of ideas, the being of beings, the question of questions, the alpha and omega of belief and knowledge. It is the be all and end all. It is the question and its solution. It has (for me) engulfed history and religion and philosophy. And hence I now use it to explain my life, yours and everybody's whom I have met on the path of life. The point is: we made friends, quarrelled, made up, quarrelled again and made up again, were at loggerheads, loved one another madly, lived and fell in love by theory, by the book, spontaneously and consciously. That, I believe, is the false aspect of our lives and our relations. But must we blame ourselves for this? We did blame ourselves, we swore and took vows, but it was no better, nor will it ever be. Our constant cherished (and rational) dream was to sublimate our whole life to realities, and, consequently, our mutual relations as well; and well! the dream was but a dream and such it will remain; we

were phantoms and will die phantoms, but it is not our fault and we have nothing to blame ourselves for. Reality springs from a soil, and the soil of all reality is society. The universal without the particular and the individual exists only in pure reason, and in vital, visible reality it is an onanistic lifeless dream. Man is a great word, a great thing, but only as a Frenchman, a German, an Englishman or a Russian. But are we Russians?... No, society regards us as peccant tumours on its body; and we regard society as a heap of fetid dung. Society is right, but we are still more so. Society lives by a given sum of given convictions in which all its members gather into focus like the rays of the sun in a burning glass, and understand one another without saying a word. That is why people in France, England and Germany who have never seen each other before, who are strangers to each other, are capable of recognizing their kinship, of embracing and weeping—some on the square at a moment of uprising against despotism in defence of human rights, others be it over the question of corn, and still others at the unveiling of a monument to Schiller. There is no activity without purpose, no purpose without interests, and without activity no life. The source of interests, purposes and activity is the substance of social life. Is that clear, is it logical, is it correct? We are men without a country - nay, worse —we are men whose country is a phantom, and no wonder that we are phantoms ourselves, that our friendship, our love, our aspirations, our activity is a phantom. Botkin, you loved and your love ended in smoke.[2] It was the story of my love, too.[3] Stankevich was of a finer fibre than either of us—yet his story is the same.[4] No, we are not ordained to love, to be husbands and fathers of families. There are men whose lives cannot make any showing in any form because they are utterly void of content: we, on the other hand, are men for whose vast content of life neither society nor the times have ready-made forms. I have met excellent men outside our circle who are more valid than we are; but nowhere have I met men with such an insatiable thirst for and huge demands on life, with such a faculty for self-renunciation to an idea as we. That is why we are such a lure and why everything in our proximity changes. Form without content is banality, often fairly plausible; content without form is ugliness, often striking for its tragic grandeur, as the mythology of the ancient Germanic world.

But this ugliness, however majestic it may be, is content without form, and consequently it is ephemeral and not real. Now take our friendly relations. You remember: I used to bore and pester you with my harangues about my love—and that love, mind you, was not a joke or simulation (even now I cannot think of it without a pang), it had a good deal in it that was beautiful and human; but should I blame myself or blame you for your being sometimes bored to death by my continuous harping on the same string? I will not say that I listened to your own harangues with boredom, but I confess that I *sometimes* listened to them unmoved: nevertheless I had respect for your feeling. Why is that? You see what it is, my dear: we realized directly that there was no life for us in life, and, since, by our natures, we could not live without life, we plunged headlong into books and began to live and love by the book, making of life and love an occupation, pursuit, labour and care. However, our natures have always been higher than our intelligence, and therefore it became tedious and trivial to be constantly hearing the same thing from each other and we got bored to death with one another. Boredom passed into annoyance, annoyance into animosity, animosity into discord. Discord was always rain for the dry ground of our relations and brought forth a new and stronger love. Indeed, after a quarrel we somehow became newer and fresher, as though we had stocked ourselves with new content, had become wiser, and discord, instead of causing a rupture, brought us still closer together. But the stock was soon drained, and we relapsed back again to the old, to our personal interests, hungering for *objective interests* as manna from the skies; but these interests did not exist, and we went on being phantoms and our life a beautiful content without a rationale. That is what I wanted to tell you, what you have not understood. I mentioned old times not by reason of chagrin or by way of complaint but as an *old* subject of the *new* intelligence. It was not a shadow of displeasure that I wished to cast over our former relations, but the conciliatory light of intelligence; not to accuse you or myself, but to exculpate. Seeking a way out we rushed avidly into the alluring sphere of German contemplation and thought we could create for ourselves a charming inner world bathed in light and warmth outside the surrounding reality. We did not understand that this intrinsic contemplative subjectiveness

constituted the objective interest of the German nationality, is for the Germans what sociality is for the French. Reality roused us and opened our eyes, but to what?... Better it had closed them for ever, so that the restless strivings of a life-craving heart were quenched with the sleep of nonentity....

> But the last, the spring of cold oblivion
> More sweetly doth the heart's fires quench....[5]

We love each other, Botkin; but our love is a flame that must feed itself without outside aid. Oh, but to pour on it the oil of external social interests! Yes, I often cool towards you, often and for long forget about your existence, but that is because I remember my own only through apathy, cold and hunger, through vexation and gnashing teeth. Now agree, however much we may love one another, we love ourselves still more: how can one demand of a man who does not love himself that he should love another?... But the first bright minute of love and yearning—and you are first with me then—I see your charming smile, hear your suave voice, your gentle feminine ways—and you relate to me the contents of *The Pioneers*, explain the Greek myths or talk about the trial of Bancal, and I can sit and listen to you forever, while my heart leaps out to you and tears of ecstasy tremble in my eyes.[6] Whether it is a new thought that flashes on the mind or a new sensation that plucks at the heartstrings—it is to you I would give it—and if you but knew how much thought and emotion remain unconfided simply because you are not with me to receive them from me in all their freshness.... I am not alone, that is true; I have the circle, consisting of the most noble of men whom I sincerely love and esteem and who, perhaps, love and esteem me still more, but I am alone because you are not with me....[7] Even when gripped by a sense of life's emptiness, lying down or walking about the room a prey to apathy, no sooner do I catch sight of the postman through the window than my heart begins to beat rapidly and I rush out—and if you only knew the deep mortification when it is not for me or not from you!... Today, when the others had gone, Kiryusha[8] with a sort of strange air gave me your portrait—I fairly beamed, brightened up, and—but enough: Kiryusha began to make fun of your unfounded suspicions; and you, O Moscow-hearted, could think I could per-

haps do without your portrait! ... But I am not angry with you: on the contrary, I confess the sin (O men, ye crocodile breed!) that I am pleased you ... but I am ashamed to finish the sentence—afraid to sound sentimental.... How many letters have I not had written to you—in my mind, and if they could have been sent you without picking up the pen, from which my fingers ache, were I able to write briefly—it is more than one ardent letter you would have received from me at Nizhni. Your portrait is a good one—your living self—your whole soul, your eyes, and the sadly-loving compressed lips—I was terribly tempted to kiss it, but I am shy (or have become shy) of too lively effusions and felt somehow embarrassed in the presence of Kiryusha.

Sociality, sociality—or death! That is my motto. What care I for the existence of the universal when individuality is suffering? What care I if genius on earth lives in heaven when the crowd is wallowing in the dirt? What care I if I conceive the idea, if the world of ideas is open to me in art, religion and history when I cannot share it with all those who should be my brothers in mankind, my neighbours in Christ, but who are strangers and enemies to me in their ignorance? What is it to me that there is delight for the elect when the majority does not even suspect its possibility? Away then delight if it is given to me alone out of a thousand! I will not have it if I cannot have it in common with my lesser brethren! My heart bleeds and shudders when I view the crowd and its representatives. Grief, poignant grief overcomes me at the sight of the barefooted little boys playing knucklebones in the street, of tattered beggars, of the drunken izvozchik, of the soldier returning from sentinel duty, of the official hurrying along with a portfolio under his arm, of the complacent officer and the haughty grandee. I all but cry when I give the soldier a farthing, I run from the beggar whom I have given a farthing as though I have committed an evil deed and would fain be deaf to the sounds of my own footsteps. And that is life: to sit in the street in rags with an idiotic expression of face collecting farthings in the daytime to be spent on booze in the evening—and men see it and no one cares about it! I don't know what is happening to me, but at times I can gaze for several minutes with unutterable anguish at a harlot in the street, and her vacuous smile, the seal of arrant depravity, lacerates my soul, especially if she be good-looking. Next door to

me lives a fairly well-to-do civil servant who has become so Europeanized that when his wife goes to the baths he hires a carriage for her; I recently learned that he smashed her teeth and lips, dragged her over the floor by her hair and kicked her for not having prepared good cream for the coffee; and she had borne him six children, and whenever I met her I always felt distressed at the sight of her pale worn face stamped with the sufferings of tyranny. On hearing this story I gnashed my teeth—to burn the scoundrel on a slow fire seemed to me too lenient a punishment, and I cursed my impotence at not being able to go and kill him like a dog. And that is society, existing on rational principles, a fact of reality! And how many such husbands, such families are there! How many beautiful feminine creatures there are thrown by the hands of fond parents to the rape of a brute through calculation or unintelligence! Has a *man* after that the right to bury himself in art, in knowledge! I am inflamed against all the substantial principles which bind the will of men to a creed! My God is negation! In history my heroes are the destroyers of the old—Luther, Voltaire, the Encyclopaedists, the Terrorists, Byron (*Cain*) and so on. Sense with me now stands higher than reason (in its immediacy, of course), and that is why I prefer the blasphemies of Voltaire to acknowledging the authority of religion, society or anything or anybody! I know that the Middle Ages were a great epoch, I understand the sanctity, the poesy, the grandeur of medieval religionism; but I prefer the eighteenth century—the epoch of religion's decline: in the Middle Ages heretics, freethinkers and witches were burnt at the stake; in the eighteenth century the guillotine chopped off the heads of aristocrats, priests and other enemies of God, Reason and Humanity. And there will come a time—I fervently believe it—when no one will be burnt, no one will be decapitated, when the criminal will plead for death as a mercy and salvation and death will be denied him, but life will serve as his punishment as death does now; when there will be no senseless forms and rites, no contracts and stipulations on feeling, no duty and obligation, and we shall not yield to will but to love alone; when there will be no husbands and wives, but lovers and mistresses, and when the mistress comes to the lover saying: "I love another," the lover will answer: "I cannot be happy without you, I shall suffer all my life; but go to him whom you love," and he will not accept her sacrifice,

should she through generosity wish to remain with him, but like God, will say to her: I want blessings, not sacrifices.... Woman will not be the slave of society and man, but, like man, will freely follow her inclinations without losing her good name, that monstrosity of conventional ideas. There will be neither rich nor poor, neither kings nor subjects, there will be brethren, there will be men, and, at the word of the apostle Paul, Christ will pass his power to the Father, and Father-Reason will hold sway once more, but this time in a new heaven and above a new world. Do not think that I am rationalizing: no, I do not adjure the past, do not adjure history—I see in them an essential and rational development of the idea; I want the golden age, not the former unintelligent golden age of the beast, but the one that has been prepared by society, laws, marriage, in a word by everything that was in its time essential but is now stupid and vulgar. Botkin, you do believe, don't you, that no matter how badly you acted towards me, I would never give you the slap in the face that Katkov gave Bakunin[9] (they afterwards made up again) and I believe that you, too, would not under any circumstances act that way towards me: what safeguard have we—surely not the police and the laws? No, we have no need for them in our relations—our safeguard is a rational intelligence, and education in sociality. What about human nature?—you will say. No, at least I know that 50 years or so ago with my nature, had I felt myself insulted by you, I would have been capable of murdering you in your sleep precisely because I love you more than anyone else. But in our days Othello, too, would not have killed Desdemona even had she confessed her infidelity. But why have we become humanized to such a degree when millions around us are leading a bestial existence? Again nature? Is that it? Consequently, the lower natures cannot become humanized? Nonsense—slander of the spirit! A vain man of society sacrifices his life for honour's sake, turns from a coward into a brave man at the duel, does not pay his debt to the artisan who has earned the money by his bloody sweat, but becoming a beggar he pays his card debt: what is his motive? Public opinion? What would public opinion make of him were it completely rational? And then education always makes us either higher or lower than our natures, and, moreover, moral improvement should involve the physical improvement of man. And that will be effected through *sociality*. And hence

there is no object more noble and lofty than to contribute towards its progress and development. But it is absurd to imagine that this could happen by itself, with the aid of time, without violent changes, without bloodshed. Men are so insensate that they must forcibly be led to happiness. And of what significance is the blood of thousands compared to the degradation and sufferings of the millions. Indeed: *fiat justitia, pereat mundus*! I am reading Thiers—how, you will learn from Khanenko. A new world has been unfolded to me. I have always thought that I understand the Revolution—nonsense, I am only beginning to understand it.[10] Men will not achieve anything better than that. A great nation, the French. Poland is perishing, she is being ravaged by fire and dismembered, but Europe is impassive and dumb, and only the crowds of the French rabble surge the streets around the arch-fiend Louis Philippe with cries of: *la Pologne, la Pologne*! A wonderful people!—*what's Hecuba to them?* Botkin, on your advice, I read the whole of *Plutarch*: do me a favour, please, devote a couple or so days to Béranger—a great, a world-wide poet, a French Schiller who is worth the German, the most Christian of poets, most beloved disciple of Christ! Reason and consciousness—these are what constitute the merit and delight of a man; for me to see a man revelling in shameful immediacy is tantamount to the devil looking on praying innocence. I destroy immediacy without reflexion or remorse wherever and however I can—and little care I if that man must perish in the alien sphere of reflexion—let him perish. I scolded you for Kulchitsky, for having left him in his warm faith in the muzhik with the little beard who sitting belching on a soft cloud surrounded by a multitude of seraphs and cherubim considers that his might is right, and his thunders and lightnings rational demonstrations. I had the pleasure, in the eyes of Kulchitsky, of spitting at his odious beard.

By the way—about Kulchitsky. Whether it was painful or not to see him at my place, I would consider it mean not to have invited him merely because it gave you pleasure and he himself attached importance to it, and it seems strange to me that you have made these circumstances the subject of query. Dash it, Botkin, I'd be scared after this to ask you for the loan of a ruble when I badly needed it, when I've had thousands from you. What sort of friendship is it that refuses to make sacrifices? Not only Kulchitsky, but if you had need to thrust on me even men of the kind whom you

yourself had no particular pleasure in meeting, I wouldn't say I'd be pleased, but still I'd put up with it: as for Kulchitsky there should not be any question over it. If I did not invite him the very first time it was because I already had two living with me—Prince Kozlovsky and Khanenko; but if he had not put up with Kiryusha's landlady I would certainly have invited him, and in such a manner that he could not refuse. He's a fine man—I have come to entertain a sincere affection for him. Of course, some hard words were interchanged, but it is his affair if he prefers to abide in hateful immediacy. He is not too deep or clever, but God grant us more men like him. He's humane—that is enough to love him. He loves and worships you, and my hand is always ready to give his a heartfelt shake. How engagingly he imitates you—so much so that he has copied all your gestures.

What a wonderful thing that story of Kudryavtsev's—what skill and artistry—yet I did not like the story. I am beginning to be afraid of myself—a sort of hostility is growing in me against objective creations of art. I will discuss this more fully another time. I have no time now. Give my regards to dear Pyotr Nikolayevich[11]—there's another man for whom my love is like a passion. In December I will be seeing both of you. When shall I see dear Koltsov? His affairs are in a bad way. Klyuchnikov's arrival gave me greater pleasure than I had anticipated.

I recommend to you the bearer of this message, Ivan Ivanovich Khanenko. A fine, noble, wonderful man, born for the idea but perishing in natural futility. It's all the more annoying that the rascal has a splendid command of German. Receive him as the brother of my heart and, better still, throw him in the way of German books which would acquaint him with the spirit of Hegel. He is a man of means and can afford to buy. Take him in hand and keep on rousing him until he wakes up. Following this letter you will get another by post. Good-bye, write for God's sake. Rzhevsky was at Pryamukhin—he says that Alexandra Alexandrovna is hale and hearty but that Tatiana Alexandrovna[12] is ailing —he suspects consumption. That upset me very much. Good-bye.

Your

V. Belinsky

THE IDEA OF ART[1]

ART is the *immediate* contemplation of truth, or a thinking in *images.*

This definition of art, in its expansion, contains the whole theory of art: its essence, its division into classes as well as the conditions and essence of each class.*

The first thing that would particularly strike our readers as strange in our definition of art is, beyond doubt, the fact that we call *art thinking,* thus joining together two completely opposite and irreconcilable notions.

Indeed, philosophy has always been at loggerheads with poetry, and in Greece itself, the true home of both poetry and philosophy, a philosopher condemned the poets to banishment from his ideal republic, albeit first having crowned their heads with laurels. Common view imputes to poets an impulsive, passionate nature by virtue of which they are carried away by the present instant, oblivious of the past and future, and sacrifice the useful to the agreeable; an insatiable, quenchless thirst for pleasure, which they always prefer to morality; a lightness, fickleness and inconstancy in tastes and aspirations, and finally a restless imagination that always lures them away from realities to the ideal, and makes them neglect the real happiness of the moment for the sake of a beautiful and irrealizable dream. Philosophers, on the contrary, are commonly ascribed a striving after wisdom as the highest blessing of life, obscure to the multitude and unattainable to ordinary men; at the same time their unalienable attributes are held to be: an indomi-

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* This definition appears for the first time in the Russian language, and it will not be met in any Russian works on aesthetics, poetics or the so-called theory of letters; hence, so that it may not appear as odd, bizarre and false to those who hear it for the first time, we must give a most detailed explanation of all the notions contained in this entirely novel definition of art, though much of it will have no bearing on art proper and may strike men familiar with science in its modern aspect as being unimportant, superfluous and unnecessarily detailed.

table strength of purpose, a steadfast striving towards a single and invariable goal, reasonableness in behaviour, moderation in desires, preference of the useful and the true over the agreeable and seductive, an ability to achieve valid and enduring benefits in life and to delight in finding their source within themselves, in the mysterious treasures of their deathless spirit and not in illusory externals and the kaleidoscopic variegation of the delusions of worldly life. And so the common view sees the poet as the pet child, the happy favourite of partial Mother Nature, the spoiled, mischievous, wayward, often even wicked child, none the less charming and endearing; in the philosopher it sees the austere guardian of eternal truth and wisdom, incarnate truth in words, and virtue in deeds. And therefore it meets the former with affection, and if, offended by his levity, sometimes gives expression to its indignation, it is invariably with smiling lips; the latter it meets with reverential awe behind which lies diffidence and coldness. In brief, simple, direct, empirical consciousness perceives between poetry and philosophy the same distinction as exists between ardent, impulsive, iridescent, light-winged fantasy and dry, cold, painstaking and querulous reason. But the same common view that has placed such a distinction of opposites as fire and water, heat and cold, between poetry and philosophy—that same common view or immediate sense perception has also indicated to them a similar striving towards a single aim—to the heavens. To poetry it attributes the divine power of exalting the human spirit to the heavens by lofty sensations produced by beautiful spiritual images of the universal life; philosophy it charges with creating the affinity of the human spirit with the heavens by means of the same lofty sensations, producing them however by the living perception of the laws of the universal life.

We have here deliberately adduced the simple, natural mind of the crowd: it is common to all and at the same time contains a profound truth, so that science fully confirms and justifies it. Indeed, the very essence of *art* and *thought* consists both in their hostile opposition and their intimate consanguinity with each other, as we shall see further.

Everything that has being, everything that we call matter and spirit, nature, life, humanity, history, the world, the universe, is all self-percipient *thought*. Everything that has being, all the infinite

variety of facts and phenomena of universal life are but forms and facts of thought; consequently there exists only thought, and nothing else exists but thought.

Thought is action and all action necessarily presupposes movement. Thinking is dialectical movement, or the evolution of thought from within itself. Movement or evolution is the life and essence of thought: without it there would be no movement, but a lifeless, stagnantly motionless abidance of the primal forces of inchoate life without determination, an exoteric picture of the chaotic condition of the soul, described with such dreadful fidelity by the poet:

> For all was blank, and bleak, and grey,
> It was not night—it was not day,
> It was not even the dungeon-light,
> So hateful to my heavy sight,
> But vacancy absorbing space,
> And fixedness—without a place;
> There were no stars—no earth—no time—
> No check—no change—no good—no crime—
> But silence, and a stirless breath
> Which neither was of life nor death;
> Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless![2]

The starting point of thought is the divine absolute idea; the movement of thought consists in the growth of this idea from within itself in accordance with the laws of higher (transcendental) logic or metaphysics; the evolution of thought from within itself is its passage through its own moments, as we shall demonstrate later on by example.

The evolution of the idea out of itself or from within itself is, in the language of philosophy, called *immanent*. The absence of all external auxiliary modes and impulses that experience might provide is a condition of immanent evolution; the vital essence of the idea itself contains the organic power of immanent evolution—as the vital grain contains within itself the potentiality of its growth into a plant—and the richer the vital essence contained within the grain the more potent will be the plant that grows from it, and vice versa: the acorn and the little nut grow into a mighty oak and great cedar towering to the skies, while the potato, which is probably fifty times larger than the acorn and a thousand times larger than

the cedar nut is a kitchen-garden speck barely rising a few inches above the ground.

Thinking necessarily postulates the existence of two opposite aspects of the spirit, as a phenomenon, which find therein their reconciliation, unity and identity: they are—the *subjective* spirit (the inner, the thinking subject) and *objective* spirit (external to the first, the thing perceived, the object of thought). This clearly shows that thinking, as an action, essentially presupposes two opposite things—the subject and the object—and is inconceivable without a reasoning creature—man. We may then legitimately be asked: how is it that the whole world and nature itself are nothing but thought?

The subject and object of thought are connatural, cognate and identical, so that the first movement of primogenial matter striving to become (*werden*) our planet, and the last rational word of intelligent man are merely one and the same being at different moments of its evolution. The sphere of the cognitive is the soil upon which consciousness arises and grows.

Nothing, apparently, is so opposite and hostile to each other as nature and spirit, yet nothing so cognate and connatural to each other as nature and spirit. Spirit is the cause and life of all being; but taken in itself it is only the potentiality of being and not its reality; to become reality it must first become what we call the world and become first of all nature.

Hence nature is the initial moment of the spirit striving from potentiality to become reality. But even its first step towards real being was not made suddenly, but was effected through a sequence of numerous moments, each of which marked a particular degree of creation. Before creations inhabiting the earth made their appearance, the earth itself was formed, and formed not suddenly but gradually, passing through innumerable transformations, undergoing innumerable upheavals, but in such a way that every upheaval was a stage towards its perfection.* It is the law of all evolution that every subsequent moment is higher than the preceding one. And so our planet is ready, and from it there spring millions of creatures forming the three kingdoms of nature. We see them in a

* New Holland even today represents a spectacle of a continent that has not yet reached its development.

state of anarchy and chaotic confusion: a bird sits on the top of the tree, a snake lies in wait for its prey at the root, an ox grazes nearby, and so on. The human will unites in a small space the most diverse phenomena of nature: the polar bear, dwellers of the Arctic, with the lion and tiger and dwellers of the torrid tropics; cultivates American plants in Europe—tobacco and potatoes, and in northern countries, with the aid of hothouses, rears the luscious fruits of the vernal south. But in this chaos and confused medley, in this infinite variety it is merely the wearied eye that loses itself and is swallowed up: man's mind, on the contrary, perceives a rigid consistency and immutable unity in these phenomena. By subducing from these infinitely diverse and infinitely multiple phenomena of nature their common traits the human mind rises to a perception of genera and species, and the shapeless chaos vanishes before it and gives way to perfect order; millions of accidental phenomena become transformed into individual necessary phenomena, each of which is an embodiment of the divine idea arrested forever in its flight! What strict sequence! No leaps anywhere, link is joined to link forming an endless chain in which every subsequent link is better than the preceding! The coral trees unite the mineral kingdom with the vegetable; the polyps—zoophytes—unite the vegetable kingdom by a living link with the animal kingdom, which begins with myriads of insects, these, as it were, flying flowers torn from their stems, and gradually passes to higher forms of organization terminating in that human failure the orangoutang! Everything has its time and place, and every subsequent phenomenon is, so to speak, the necessary result of the preceding one: what strict logical sequence, what inexorably correct reasoning! Then man appears, and the kingdom of nature comes to an end—there begins the kingdom of spirit, but of a spirit still enthralled by nature, though already struggling for freedom through victory over her. Half-man, half-beast, he is all covered with hair, his huge body bent forward, lower jaw protruding, legs almost calfless and with a divergent great toe; but he no longer relies upon mere strength, he commands dexterity and a reasoning faculty; he is no longer armed with a stick or club, but with something that resembles a stone axe fixed to a long handle. In Australia we see savages divided into tribes: they devour their own kind—and physiologists tell us that the reason for this shocking aberration is their constitution which requires nutriment

in the form of human flesh. The native of Africa is a lazy, beastlike, dull-witted creature doomed to perpetual slavery and working under the threat of punishment and dire torment. In America only the smaller tribes of the outlying islands were addicted to cannibalism, while on the mainland the two great monarchies of Peru and Mexico represented the highest level of civilization attainable by savages of a relatively higher organization. What regularity of sequence, what strict consecutiveness in these passages from the lower to the higher genus, from the lower to the higher organization, in this perpetual striving of the spirit to find itself as a self-conscious entity. Assuming a new form, and seemingly not satisfied with it, it does not destroy it but lets it remain forever chained to space as an incarnate moment of its evolution, and adopts a new form as an expression of the new moment of its evolution. The poor sons of America still remain the same as when they were discovered by the Europeans. Having overcome their terror of firearms as the voice of the wrathful gods and even learned the use of them themselves, they have nevertheless not become in the least humanized since those days, and we must look in Asia for the further evolution of humanity. Only here was creation consummated; nature here completed its full circle and yielded its place to a new, purely spiritual development—history. Here again we have the division of mankind into races—and the Caucasian tribe becomes the flower of humanity. From clans and tribes nations are formed, and from families—states, and each state is but a moment of the spirit developing in mankind, and even the time of each state's appearance corresponds to the moment of abstract or philosophical thought developing from itself. The same laws apply to mankind as apply to individuality: it, too, has its ages of infancy, youth and manhood. In its sacred cradle, Asia, this child of Nature, swaddled by her hand and foot, confesses the immediate creed of tradition, lives on religious myths until, in Greece, it frees itself from the tutelage of Nature, exalts dark religious beliefs from symbols to poetic images and illuminates them with the light of rational thought. The life of the Greeks was the flower of ancient life, the concretion of that life's elements, a rich feast which was followed by the decline of the ancient world. The period of infancy was over—youth had come, a period that was pre-eminently religious, chivalrous, romantic, replete with life, movement, deeds of chi-

valry and fabulous adventures. The discovery of America, the invention of gunpowder and the printing press were the external impulses for humanity's transition from youth to manhood, a period that is still continuing today. Each age proceeded from another, and one was the necessary result of the other.

Grown old with the effort
To fathom life's mysteries,
The centuries close
Their irrevocable histories.
And each as it passes,
Eternity questions,
Like father confessor:
"The fruits of thy living?"
To which each makes answer:
"Ask my successor"[3]

Every important event in the life of mankind occurs *in its time,* never before or after. Every great man performs the deeds of his time, solves contemporary problems, expresses in his activity the spirit of the times in which he was born and developed. In our times the Crusades, the Inquisition, or world supremacy by a sovereign priest are impossible; the personal security which every member of modern civil society enjoys today and the possibility of free development which it allows to each and all of its members were inconceivable in the Middle Ages, as were those great victories of the spirit over Nature, or, more exactly, that utter subjugation of Nature by the spirit as expressed in the steam engines which have practically conquered time and space. Organizations similar to those of Columbus, Charles V, Francis I, the Duke of Alba, Luther, etc., are possible in our time, too, as they were possible at all times; but had they appeared in our time they would operate quite differently and accomplish quite different things.

Thus, from the first awakening of the timeless forces and elements of life, from their first movement in matter through the whole ladder of nature's evolution to the crown of creation—man, from the first association of men in a community to the last historical fact of our time is a single chain of evolution without a single break in it, a single ladder from the earth to the heavens, where one cannot step on a higher rung without first treading the lower! Both in nature and history it is not blind chance that holds sway,

but a rigorous, inexorable inner necessity, by reason of which all phenomena are intimately related to each other, chaos is resolved into harmony, multiplicity into unity and which makes science possible. What is that inner necessity which gives meaning and significance to all phenomena of being and that strict consecutiveness and graduality in which phenomena follow each other, originating, as it were, from each other? It is *thought, percipient mind.*

Nature is a sort of mode by which the spirit becomes reality and perceives and cognizes itself. Hence her crowning achievement is man, with whom her creative activity has terminated and stopped. Civil society is a mode for the development of the human individuality which is the essence of everything, in which there live nature and society and history, in which there recur all the processes of world life, *i.e.*, of nature and history. How does that happen? Through mind, by means of which man passes through himself everything that has being outside of him, including nature and history and, finally, his own individuality, as though it were an alien and external object.

In man the spirit has discovered itself, found its complete and immediate expression, perceived itself in him as the subject or individuality. Man is reason incarnate, a *thinking* creature—a title that distinguishes him from all other creatures and exalts him a king above all creation. Like everything that exists in nature he is thought by the bare reason of his immediate existence as a fact; but still more is he thought by virtue of the action of his reason which repeats as in a mirror all being, the whole world with all its phenomena, physical and mental. The centre and focal point of this thought is his *I* to which or by which he opposes and by which he reflects any object of thought, not excluding himself. Without yet having acquired any ideas he is born already a thinking creature, for his very nature reveals to him immediately the mysteries of Being—and all the primordial myths of infantile nations are not fancies, inventions and fiction but an immediate revelation of truth about God and the universe and their affinities, revelations whose imagery acted on the infantile mind not immediately, but by sensation originally conveyed through the imagination. Here is religion in its philosophical determination: an immediate perception of truth.

A strong tendency is observed in every infantile nation to express the range of its notions by sense perception, and beginning with a symbol, to reach poetic images. This is the second path, the second form of thought—Art, the philosophical definition of which is: the immediate contemplation of truth. We shall shortly revert to this, for it forms the principal subject of this book.

Finally the fully developed and matured man passes into the highest and last sphere of thought, that of pure thought, divorced from all immediacy, raising everything to pure conception and resting on itself.

Obviously all these are merely three different modes, three different forms of one and the same essence, which is Being. However that may be, these three modes of thought are not, so to say, what we have called thought prior to man, the world of nature and history. Indeed, it is and it is not one and the same thing, just as infant-man and adult-man are not one and the same creature, though the latter is nothing but the new and higher form of the former.

The readers will have remembered that in defining art we have used the term "immediate"; they may have probably also noticed that we have subsequently used this term fairly often. The significance of this word is so important, it serves the purpose of so many words and its frequent application is therefore so essential that we consider it our duty to make a slight digression for the purpose of explaining it.

The word "immediate" and its derivative "immediacy" have been taken from the German and belong to the terminology of modern philosophy. It signifies both Being and action proceeding from within itself without the intervention of any medium. Let us illustrate this. Supposing you know a man by his way of thinking, his mode of life and behaviour, and love and respect him for them —you know him not through immediacy, because he discloses himself to your understanding not immediately, but through the medium of his way of thinking, his mode of life and behaviour. And thus you can convey him to the understanding of another man who has never seen him, and the latter may, from your words, entertain for him the same love and respect. We have here, however, not the whole man, but only the shadow which he casts, not the man himself, but only his description. When you hear of such a person from another's words, your mind conceives a more or less clear idea of

various good or bad qualities, but your imagination is empty—it does not mirror any living image which could speak for itself or confirm what has been told to you about it. What does this signify? It signifies this: just as a man's description can give no clear idea of his appearance, so does the representation, the abstraction of his good and bad qualities, however remarkable they may be, afford no live contemplation of the man's personality; he must speak for himself, independently of his good or bad qualities. There are persons who, good or bad, leave no lasting trace in our memory and quickly vanish from it. There are, on the contrary, others who, though apparently possessing no distinctive qualities, either good or bad, having once struck your imagination, remain therein permanently. That is singularly so in the case of women's faces, when very often one of striking beauty will yield its place in our imagination to a quite plain and seemingly commonplace face. The reason for these diverse impressions created by one or other personality undoubtedly lies in the personality itself, yet this reason is unpronounceable, as all mysteries are. Here's a man who speaks boldly and blithely on every subject, cleverly and adroitly lets you understand what virtues he possesses: according to him he lives only in the sublime and the beautiful, is ready to give up his life for the sake of truth; you listen to him, perceive that he has much intellect and do not deny him even feeling; his opinion of himself strikes you as plausible—yet he leaves you cold, he does not excite in you a spark of lively interest. What does that mean? Naturally, that you unconsciously sense a sort of contradiction between his words and himself. Your reason approves his words and uses them as facts to judge him by, whereas the *immediate* impression which he produces upon you provokes incredulity to his words and repels you from him. Now take another man: he is so free of all pretensions, so simple, so ordinary; his topics of conversation are the same as anyone else's—the weather, horses, champagne and oysters—yet, seeing him for the first time, as though by perversity of feeling, in defiance of reason you persuade yourself that this man is not what he appears to be, that he has access to the sublime and ideal spheres and deep mysteries of Being, and he boldly and directly, as if they were his own property, takes possession of your affection and esteem before you are aware of it. Here again we have the same reason—the strength and power of the immediate impression which

that man produces upon you. Everything that is latent in his nature is expressed in his very gestures, his movements, voice, face, the play of his features, in a word, in his *immediacy*. So sometimes the splendour of intellectual and aesthetic refinement and cultivation, even when combined with prepossessing appearance, fails to rouse in us towards a woman the thrilling musical emotion which the presence of a woman usually evokes, the reverence with which she enthralls us; whereas a simple girl, lacking education, but whose nature is deep and rich, can with a single quiet glance compel an audacious gaze to drop, as though it had been struck by a shaft of sunlight. For the same reason you are sometimes bored and wearied by the sharpest witticisms and cleverest jokes, finding nothing amusing in them except the pretension to be amusing, whereas you cannot without laughter listen to a single word or view a single gesture of another person, though there may be nothing at all amusing in them, so much so that were you to relate them to someone else in the belief of producing a distinct effect you would be surprised to discover that there is nothing at all in them and that all their attraction lies in that person's *immediacy*.

The same immediacy that constitutes such an important condition of every man's *personality* also appears in a man's *behaviour*. There are occasions when our nature acts, as it were, for us, without waiting for the medium of our mind or our consciousness, and we act instinctively, so to speak, where it would seem impossible to act without conscious consideration. Thus, for example, it happens that a person who has badly hurt himself or run the risk of hurting himself against an object which he has failed in his preoccupation or absent-mindedness to notice, will invariably and unconsciously bend down when passing that spot, even in the night. Such an action is entirely *immediate*. Still more striking and transcendent, however, are the immediate acts of the human spirit in which a man's higher life is manifested. However sacred and genuine a man's conviction may be, however noble and pure his intentions, to give vent to them or put them into execution, power of conviction and good intention are not sufficient: there must be an inspired impulse in which all the forces of man merge into one, in which his physical nature permeates his spiritual essence, which, in turn, illuminates his physical nature, rational action becomes an instinctive movement and, vice versa, thought becomes a fact, an act of rational and free human

volition—an immediate phenomenon. History affords an amazing example of this immediate manifestation of the potency of the human spirit triumphing even over the laws of nature: the son of Croesus was dumb from birth, but seeing an enemy soldier about to kill his father, ignorant of his identity, he suddenly found the use of his tongue and exclaimed: "Warrior, slay not the king!" Yet even this example, no matter how striking, does not represent the highest manifestation of immediate rationality: it can be perceived in all the infinity of its great signification only in those free and rational acts of man wherein are displayed his highest spiritual nature and striving towards the infinite. The whole history of mankind, on the one hand, is but an endless pageant of such immediately rational and rationally immediate acts in which the personal wish becomes fused with extraneous necessity, the will becomes instinct, and the impulse to action becomes action itself. The immediacy of action does not preclude either volition or consciousness—on the contrary, the more they have a part in it the more sublime, fruitful and valid it is; but volition and consciousness in themselves, as separate elements of the spirit, never pass into action and do not come to fruition in the highest spheres of reality, for here they are forces hostile to immediacy which embodies the living productive power. The beginning and evolution of nature, all the phenomena of history and art happened *immediately.*

Perhaps to many of our readers the word "immediate" may seem synonymous with "spontaneous," and "immediacy" with "spontaneity"—and they may, perhaps, impugn us for a vain desire to invent and bring into fashion new and unfamiliar words for old and familiar concepts long expressed in commonly-known words, and accuse us of a pedantic passion for needless explanations and digressions which cloud instead of clearing the subject. Should that happen, and should it be due not to the hasty conclusion of an unattentive and superficial reader, it would point to unsatisfactory treatment on our part rather than the fair judgment of the reader. There may be spontaneity in immediacy, but not always—and these two words are by no means identical or even synonymous. Nature, for example, came about immediately and at the same time *spontaneously;* historical phenomena, on the other hand, such as the origination of tongues and political communities, occurred immediately

but by no means *spontaneously;* similarly, the immediacy of phenomena is a basic law, an immutable condition in art, investing it in a sublime and mystic significance; but spontaneity is not an essential attribute of art—on the contrary, it is hostile to it and degrading. The word "immediate" incorporates a much more extensive, profound and sublime notion than the word "spontaneous"; we shall prove that clearly in the further development of the idea of art.

A condition of immediacy of every phenomenon is the élan of inspiration; the result of immediacy of every phenomenon is organization. Only that which is inspired can appear immediately, only that which appears immediately can be organic, and only the organic can be vital. Organism and mechanism, or nature and craft are two antagonistic worlds. One is free, constantly moving, changing, elusive in its play of colours and shades, loud and sonorous; the other is sunk in a stupour of lifeless immobility, slavishly regular and inanimately definite, with a false gloss, a spurious life, dumb and mute. The phenomena of the former world, vital and immediately engendered, are also called inspired or creative, while those of the latter world are mechanical things, the handiwork of man. This, of course, should not be interpreted literally, and the pictorial first cause should not be confused with the mediate: all statues and pictures are made by human hands, yet there are statues and pictures that are mechanical, not created but devised.

Obviously everything is called created or creative that cannot be produced by excogitation, calculation, judgment and the will of man, everything even that cannot be called invention but which appears immediately out of nonbeing into being either by the creative power of nature or by the creative power of the human spirit, and which, as opposed to invention, should be called *revelation.* Organization which constitutes an essential distinction between productions creative and productions mechanical is apparently the result of the process by which it originates. Let us draw a comparison between nature and craft in order to illustrate this argument. When the man who invented the clock was first struck by the idea of this machine the matter did not end there: leave alone that he had to think and excogitate a great deal before he could set about the execution of his idea—he had constantly to verify it by experience and seek in experience the fuller development of his

idea. In creating he destroyed, put together and took apart again, for he always discovered that there was something missing. The chief spiritual factor in his act of invention was *excogitation, calculation, the estimation of probabilities.* Carefully and gropingly he went step by step, using his head and counting on his fingers. Hence his invention could not be at once perfect, and ages of progress in the exact sciences were required before it could reach perfection. When craft wants to copy nature the power of the latter and the impotence of the former are still more strikingly in evidence. A man wishes to make a flower—a rose. For that purpose he takes the natural flower, studies it long and carefully in its minutest details—every petal, every fold, every hue and shade of colour and the general form, and after much excogitation and calculation cuts out and sews together his flower from tissues dyed to imitate the colours of nature. And, indeed, how great his art is: at ten paces you will not distinguish his artificial rose from the natural one; but come up closer and you will see a cold and motionless corpse beside a beautiful and living creation of nature—and your sense will be offended by the lifeless counterfeit. You will grasp the lovely flower with a feeling and movement of joy, examine it and smell it. Its little leaves and petals are arranged so symmetrically, so proportionately that their regularity can only be apprehended by our mind and not verified by our instruments which are not precise enough for the purpose, and then every one of them is finished and painstakingly embellished with such infinite care and consummate perfection.... How exquisitely beautiful is that blossom, how many tiny veins and shades of colour, what tender brilliant dust.... O, King Solomon himself in his glory never had raiment so magnificent! ... And, finally, what a delicious aroma! ... But while we have been gazing at this rose extraneously, admiring its form, colour and smell, the artificial blossom may still be comparable to it, at least as a parody of it, proving in a way the strength and power of the human mind. But is that all there is to the rose? O, no! This is only the external form, an expression of the inner; these marvellous colours have come from within the plant, that delicious fragrance is its balsamic breath.... Look into the inside of that flower, and all comparison with the artificial rose will destroy itself as an absurdity offensive to common sense. There, within the green little

stem on which the exquisite flower so daintily grows, you will find an entire new world; an independent laboratory of life, there through the most subtle of wondrously perfect vessels flows the fluid of life, the invisible ether of the spirit.... Yet nature has spent on that wonderful blossom less time, simpler and cheaper materials and no labour, excogitation or calculation whatever: a tiny seed dropped to earth, and the earth gave forth the plant which clothed itself in leaves and adorned itself in blossoms for the nuptial feast of spring.... Its very seed had contained the root and the stem and the lovely little leaves and gorgeous scented flower and all the architecture of the plant with all its forms and proportions! But what has nature done here? In what way has she performed her part in the creation of this flower? We repeat: it cost her nothing. Calmly, without any effort, she now repeats the phenomena which she had begotten once and for ever. But there was a moment when she laboured tremendously, struggling and straining all her powers.... When the almighty "Let there be" awakened timeless chaos, nothingness turned into Being, potentiality into reality, idea into phenomenon—then the disembodied divine idea, which had existed before time, became our planet out of nothingness—and long did that planet revolve, now in an ocean of water, now in an ocean of flame—and the towering ridges of mountains where the sea floor used to be, subterranean torrents of water and fire, fathomless seas, islands and lakes, fire-breathing volcanoes now witness the awful upheavals it had passed through before it became what it is today, reveal its great labours which are still unfinished, judging by a whole vast continent which has not completely taken form even today.* Yes, this was a great labour; nature begot endless chains of phenomena—each of them was a powerful, momentary and sudden leap from the dark void of nothingness into the light of life. Majestic and beautiful is the edifice of the universe! How symmetrical is that blue dome of the heavens in which, with such changeless regularity and harmony the sun rises and sets, and the moon and myriad stars appear and disappear! Yet these circles and spheres owe not their existence to the compass, they were not sketched on the sheet of preliminary plan, and no calculations of a mathe-

* New Holland.

matician determined beforehand these infinite relations between infinite quantities, bodies and spaces. There is no end to the universe, incalculable are the heavenly bodies, and they are all divided into worlds subordinated one to another, and each of them is a part of the whole, comprising as it were a living organic body, related to and dependent on all the others—and all this space without bounds, all this quantity without measurement, all this multiplicity without number, constituting a single whole, was born from within itself, containing within itself its own laws and its eternal and immutable numbers and lines and the whole scheme of its totality. The universe is divine thought that existed in eternity before time as a rational potentiality and suddenly became apparent reality through embodiment in form. In the completeness of its existence we perceive two apparently opposite but actually cognate and identical aspects: spirit and matter. The spirit is divine thought, the source of life; matter is the form without which thought could not manifest itself. Obviously both these elements need each other: without thought all form is dead, without form thought is merely that which may be, but is not. In phenomenon they constitute a single inseparable entity, pervading each other and disappearing in each other. The process of their merging into one (concretion) is a mystery, in which life, as it were, has hidden from itself, not wishing to make itself a witness of its greatest act, its solemn sacrament. We know necessity, but only sense or contemplate the mystery of this process. It is the necessary condition of vitality of phenomena and its result is *organization*, the result of which is *particularity*, *individuality*, and *personality*.

All the phenomena of nature are but the particular and special manifestations of the *universal*. The universal is the idea. What is the idea? According to the philosophical definition idea is a concrete concept whereof the form is not anything external to itself but the form of its development, of its own essence. But in our endeavour to eschew a philosophic exposition of our subject we shall attempt to convey the meaning to our readers with as little abstraction and in as figurative a manner as possible. In the second part of Goethe's *Faust* there is a passage which can give us a foretaste of the meaning of "idea" which is near to the truth. Faust, having promised the emperor to evoke before him

Paris and Helen, invokes the aid of Mephistopheles, who reluctantly communicates to him the only means by which he can fulfill his promise. "In solitude, where reigns nor space nor time," Mephistopheles tells him, "are goddesses enthroned from early prime; 'tis hard to speak of beings so sublime—the *mothers* are they." "The mothers?" exclaims Faust in amazement—"Mothers, mothers," he repeats—"Strange it sounds I trow...." "Goddesses," Mephistopheles continues, "to men unknown, and by us named unwillingly, I own. Art ready for the great emprize? No locks are there, no bolts thy way to bar, by solitudes shalt thou be whirl'd afar: such void and solitude canst realize?" Faust assures him of his readiness, and Mephistopheles goes on: "And hast thou swam to ocean's utmost verge, and there the shoreless *infinité* beheld, there hadst thou seen surge rolling upon surge, though dread of coming down thy soul had quell'd, thou hadst seen something—dolphins thou hadst seen, cleaving the silent sea's pellucid green, and flying cloud hadst seen, sun, moon, and star; naught, in the everlasting void afar wilt see, nor hear thy footfall sound, nor for thy tread find solid ground!" Faust is unshaken in his resolve. "In this thy *naught*," he says, "the *All* I hope to find" (*In deinem Nichts hoff ich das All zu finden*). Whereupon Mephistopheles gives Faust the key, saying: "The key will scent the very place you need; follow, thee to the *mothers* it will lead." The word "mothers" makes Faust shudder again. "Mothers!" he exclaims. "Like a blow it strikes mine ear! What is this word, it troubles me to hear?" "So narrow-minded," replies Mephistopheles, "seared by each new word!" He instructs Faust what he has to do on his wonderful journey, and Faust, feeling a surge of new strength in his breast from the touch of the magical key, stamps his foot and sinks into the bottomless void. "Whether he will return, I'm fain to see," says Mephistopheles to himself. But Faust returned and returned in triumph: he brought with him from the fathomless void the tripod which was necessary in order to evoke beauty in the shape of Paris and Helen to the world of reality.*

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* The entire passage dealing with *Faust* has been borrowed from Rötscher's article *Philosophical Criticism of Works of Art* translated by Mr. Katkov. *Cf.*, *Moskovsky Nablyudatel*, 1838, part XVIII, pp. 187-188.

Yes, it is a strange word "mothers," and one cannot utter it without a secret shudder; it is like those mystic words which cause the moon to pale and the dead to stir in their graves!... Still greater courage does it require to descend into the infinite void and reach the "mothers"! But he who does not flinch, retreat or succumb beneath the dread ordeal, will return with the magical tripod by the aid of which one can evoke the shades of the long since dead and clothe the disembodied thought in the splendour of the flesh.... These "mothers" are the primal, timeless ideas which, embodied in form, have become the worlds and phenomena of life. Life terrifies no one: but, like a beautiful woman with ardent glance, rosy cheeks and tempting lips, it draws us on with an irresistible and alluring power—losing consciousness, with eyes closed we throw ourselves into its embrace—and we cannot drink in enough the loveliness of it.... But within us lives hidden a worm that poisons the fullness of our delight, and that worm is the thirst for knowledge. No sooner does it stir than the entrancing image begins to fade from our view; the worm grows, becomes a snake sucking the blood from our heart, and the vision of beauty disappears entirely, and in order to bring it back we must avert our gaze from forms and colours and turn it to skeletons devoid of life and beauty. But soon we must relinquish even that and plunge into the infinite void where there is no life, no images, no sounds or colours, no space or time, where the eye has nothing to rest on, the foot no solid ground, where mothers of all being are enthroned—those disembodied ideas which are *nothing* from which *all* has originated; which have existed since eternity, before the world, and from which time has taken motion and worlds have started on their everlasting journey....

Thus, ideas are the mothers of life, its substantial force and essence, the inexhaustible reservoir from which the waves of life flow incessantly. The idea is in essence a universal, for it belongs to no known time, to no known space; in passing into phenomena it becomes particular, individual, personal. The whole ladder of creation is but a passage of the universal into the particular. From the universal world matter has come our planet and, having received its singular and particular form has, in turn, become a universal substantial matter incessantly striving to pass into

myriads of creatures. Amorphous masses of metals and stones, possessing no definite form, nevertheless represent particular phenomena having their own organization, albeit of a lower and external kind. Some of them even organize themselves into definite and regular form of prisms, as though growing out of some sort of soil consisting of the same substance and serving them as a formless basis. The organization of plants is of a higher order, and they generally represent a higher particularity which has not yet however achieved individuality. In each of them the root and stem and branch and leaf are equally essential, but the number of their leaves is indeterminate and if shaken off they do not affect the particularity of the tree; as to the branches, though they are....

A VIEW OF THE PRINCIPAL ASPECTS OF RUSSIAN LITERATURE IN 1843

(ARTICLE ONE)[1]

WE SAY "a view of Russian literature," "the state of Russian literature" and other similar phrases where the term Russian literature is constantly used in the singular. This is a habit which it is time we gave proper attention to and dropped. We have *several* literatures; by compounding them under the term "Russian Literature" and clothing this term in various epithets we often commit the fault of ascribing the properties of one literature to another which would gladly do without them, for it definitely rejects the distinction.... Let us try to explain this.

We have a sordid, *ha'penny* literature which lurks in the holes and corners of rag fairs, breathes the rotten air of dank and gloomy cellars and subsists on the slender tribute of ragged ignorance. From the first day of its existence it has clung to the same ideas, the same notions, the same views, *i.e.*, it has no ideas, no notions and no views. Its representatives are benighted, barely literate men, possessing, however, a thorough knowledge of their public, and therefore remarkably presumptuous: they nourish its inquisitive mind on the most miscellaneous fare and not infrequently share with it things your pundits had never dreamt of. One remarkable trait of this ha'penny literature, *inter alia*, is the astonishing firmness with which it struts the once-trodden path, and the patriarchal, naively effusive candour with which it treats its public. In vain do the magazines unsheath the sword of their wit against the ha'penny literature, in vain do they appeal to it with threats, exhortations and imprecations; it does not read the magazine reviews, or, if it does, with a silent and proud contempt manifestly proving that its inveterate crusted ignorance is beyond hopes of salvation through the *scourge of criticism*! ... Long hav-

ing lost even that modicum of scrupulousness which prompts "sundry others" to conceal their not quite commendable actions beneath the garb of aspiring to the common weal, of love of enlightenment and of so-called goodwill, it goes straight and boldly to its goal, approaches with an air of nonchalant impudence the person whom it knows to have a "weak spot for literature," draws some farthings out of his pocket, thrusts in instead its dirty wares and stalks away with a hearty guffaw, making no effort even to conceal from the buyer that it has grandly cheated him. Then it walks into the "establishment," deposits the proceeds and sets about gathering materials for new wares.

We have another literature—a blood sister of the former, but more fastidious, shrewd, and prudent. It too does not care for art or science, it hardly understands what they are all about and will never understand until some one pays it heavily enough. It pursues the same goal as the former—money, but on a much grander scale: where ha'penny literature is satisfied with farthings and pennies it is out for thousands. It is not content with the modest tribute which a public, dressed in rustic homespun and tanned sheepskin coats, lays with fervour "on the altar of enlightenment"; it is acquainted with the refined comforts of life and wishes by all means to ride its own carriage, to sit on stylish chairs, drink champagne and play *preference* for big stakes. And so it fastens itself on the public that is richer and more open-handed, and an odd, motley public it is, sometimes very clever, sometimes guileless, but always extremely gullible, good-natured and indulgent. And woe to it, poor, credulous public! *Commercial* literature enmeshes it very thoroughly and, in all fairness let it be said, does so very often with great skill. With what consummate adroitness does it, this commercial literature, pose as a disinterested well-wisher, sensitive to the successes of our native literature, whose failings it so keenly takes to heart! How well does it show off the manifest tokens of its goodwill and conscientiousness! How expertly, not infrequently with cynical crudity, does it, when occasion calls, don the mask of severe, almost prudish, propriety!... But it is especially inexhaustible in pandering to the public, in indulging the latter's uncultivated and uncertain taste, in its readiness to humour it in whatever way it can, so long as it be pleased and foots the bill! Today a novel, tomorrow a story, the

next day an ecstatic drama, next week a volume-full of critique, next month a dozen-tomed history! It matters not that the novel will be a bad one, that the ecstatic drama will send the hardiest spectators to sleep, that the critique will, with its opinionated views, its shallowness and vulgar argument, rouse laughter; it matters not that the history will be a patchwork of borrowed scraps and puerilities that will shiver the bones of its needlessly disturbed heroes; it matters not—so long as the money is obtained! For money commercial literature is prepared to do anything. It will fall on its knees before a nonentity and throw dirt at first-rate talent that threatens the sale of its wretched wares; it will invent cock-and-bull stories; it will kiss in print the hand of the man who assumes towards it the ruinous role of "benefactor" and will, in all earnest, and before the face of the whole public, call him the prime mover of literature, though he may not have written a line in his life and have had as much desire to move literature as a fly would have to draw a carriage;[2] it, this commercial literature, in its blind selfishness, will assail the inviolability of great and glorious names which mankind takes pride in, merely for the sake of pandering to the ignorant mob who cannot but be pleased at the humiliation of those whose superiority has hitherto been a thorn in its side; it will don the cap and bells, and with lolling tongue and painted clownish face will tumble before the public, perform a squatting dance and shriek in a wild voice—give it but money! ... And who knows what else it may not undertake in order to achieve the end that undividedly governs its actions! And how entertaining, how droll and yet disgusting are its constant wranglings, bred by petty, mean envy, which cannot see an extra ruble going into the pocket of a competitor without crying out: "Robbery, ruination!" and so on. The wrangling which constantly goes on among the representatives of commercial literature cannot be called literary, nor does it have the slightest bearing on literature. And such, to some extent, is the result of commercial literature's imprudent wrangling, that no one has caused it such palpable mischief as it has caused itself: its representatives have, in ceaseless, brief, but very vehement quarrels, expressed in print so many home truths about each other that they needs must appear in the eyes of the public by no means so clean and disinterested as they would have

made us believe in their works. The proverb rightly says: "Every man has a fool in his sleeve"—and that is a great boon to literature, for otherwise God only knows when the influence of the commercial authors on the Russian public, whose trust is played upon with such profit, will begin to wear off. Today that influence, thanks to commercial literature's own indiscretion, is tending to decline....

We have another literature, less reprehensible in its aims, but nevertheless extremely abject—a literature that looks at things through the eyes of the good old days, that preaches old ideas in connection with new facts, and with a vehemence that is all the more deplorable for being often sincere, curses with bell, book and candle everything that is new and best. Its representatives are the literary greybeards overtaken by moral decease before bodily death has set in, but not those

Sons of another generation

worthy of respect and sympathy, "sons" who, generously accepting the legitimacy and inevitability of time's victory over them, humbly withdraw from the field—

And on the crossroads of the living
Like a tombstone do they stand,
Amidst the abodes of men—

interfering not in other men's business, nor thrusting upon the new generation convictions and creeds which were good in their day and have remained so for men of their day as vivid memories of life's prime, but which can no longer satisfy the new generation which is moving forwards by the inevitable law of steady progress. The representatives and guiding spirits of the *greybeard* literature are those narrow-minded, motionlessly suspended natures which are incapable of rising even to noble and generous discernment, or such of the representatives of commercial literature who have for some reason or other found it advantageous to join the ranks of the defenders of the good old days. Greybeard literature regards every useful innovation, every progressive step in science as a personal affront, an event spelling utter doom to "native literature." Every bold thought directly or indirectly expressed, every new opinion running counter to its narrow little

conceptions meets in greybeard literature with stubborn resistance and often malevolent interpretation. God forbid anyone say that after Zhukovsky, Pushkin and Lermontov it is impossible at present *wholeheartedly* to admire the poetry of Derzhavin; that Karamzin rendered the Russian language, Russian history and Russian society a great service entitling him to a place of honour in the history of Russian literature, but that he did not belong to the foremost geniuses whose works will always be read with undiminished avidity and undiminished enjoyment. God forbid! ... Greybeard literature will raise a hue and cry; it will treat your opinion as if it were a crime, analysing it point by point in antediluvian verse or scrivener's prose, and rush it to the press in the hope ... but, fortunately, such hopes are not realized! ... But this is not even a tenth of the occupations to which greybeard literature devotes its golden hours of leisure; its occupations are fairly diverse: some of its representatives repose in beatific sleep on heaps of waste paper, trying to persuade themselves and others that they are engaged in working up some sort of data; they rouse themselves now and then to inform the public that they have not yet said "all there is to be said" and go to sleep again; others, of a more active disposition, write volumes in defence of the so-called patriarchal life, which, according to greybeard literature, consists in the unfailing practice of taking a nap after dinner, going to the baths on Saturday and paunch-cramming at flesh-time; and, thirdly, there are the most extravagant and immoderate of its representatives who, apart from the ideas about a decaying and perverted West held in common by the whole of greybeard literature, maintain that Russian literature does not only not lag behind other literatures, but has even progressed beyond the pale of possible perfection, so much so that it might well turn back a little—begin to speak muzhik-fashion, declare Pushkin to be a talentless writer, and the compiler of illustrated primers a first-class novelist, philosopher and poet.... It is dreadful to think that there are heads in our days reasoning in this fashion, but that there are such heads there is, alas! not the slightest doubt: this is a fact only too fresh and familiar to anyone who glances into the pages of Russian magazines and books! ... Generally speaking, greybeard literature is conspicuous for its quaint views and jejune, totally uncalled-for activities so out of keeping with the spirit of

the times. It is merely an obstacle to proper literary development and progress which is conceded to be in evidence in present-day Russian literature. While men with convictions and beliefs that are in harmony with the present state of education are toiling in the sweat of their brow for posterity, the Old Believers still regard literature merely as *a means of beguiling the long autumn evenings*, and, in consequence of such a view, artlessly attempt to entertain us with incredible adventures of incredible heroes....

All the more lamentable is the realization that it is not the Old Believers of literature alone, refusing to recognize the legitimate and inevitable victory of time, who regard literature in such a light. Many of the writers who have only recently commenced their literary career and are regarded as more or less gifted, have not yet understood and do not try to understand the obligations which are today imposed by the title of a true man of letters, and, instead of co-operating to the best of their ability in the common cause, are sowing the sand by singing to the moon, the maid, and champagne and relating with ingenuous complacence and without the slightest trace of irony, stories of fiction, often very entertaining, but devoid of all idea.

Lastly, we have a literature, one that is just arising, that can barely count more than a dozen true representatives, but that is more fertile and vital than all the others we have mentioned above. With generous self-sacrifice, for the sake of a beneficent goal alien to ulterior motive, inspired by the sublime principles of Russia's Great Regenerator, it has chosen the hard and thorny path leading to the attainment of eternal and hallowed truth, the realization on earth of the ideal—and slowly, but firmly and independently it treads its path, imperceptibly contributing to the progress of public enlightenment.... Responding to the voice of general and authentic Russian science, evincing a noble sympathy with everything that is lofty and sublime, it deals with the most vital problems of life, destroys the old inveterate prejudices and raises its voice in indignation against the deplorable aspects of contemporary morals and manners, laying bare in all its stark and grim reality "all that is constantly before the gaze, but which unseeing eyes heed not, all the frightful, appalling morass of trivialities in which our life is steeped, all the depth of cold, disintegrated

everyday characters with which our earth teems."* This literature does not ascribe to us virtues which we do not possess, does not conceal from us our faults, but tries if possible to disclose and reveal them, because, in its opinion, true patriotism consists not in the assigning to one's country of qualities which she, in her swift passage to perfection, has not had the time to assimilate, but in noble and disinterested efforts aimed at drawing nearer the time when she shall have actually achieved conceivable perfection. But then what censure and reproaches are heaped on this selfless literature for alleged lack of patriotism by the self-opinioned pedants who deliberately or indeliberately misjudge it, and who, in order to find an excuse for their own inaction, affirm that everything has been done, that we have nothing to perfect ourselves in, that we need merely fold our hands and enjoy the fruits of our labours! . . .

Such are the elements comprising Russian literature today. Its position is not brilliant, but neither does it give cause for a despairing view of its future. The past year, like several of its predecessors, was not rich in remarkable works, but it contained several salient facts which prove beyond cavil and doubt that the infant period of Russian literature's existence, the period of jejune romanticism, had passed beyond recall, and it will attain the age of maturity and manhood. And however assiduous, however artful may be the efforts of literature's Old Believers, of the commercial penmen and the literary "plantlice" in general to lead Russian literature astray from the path upon which it has so recently entered, to force upon it the old profligate sins which would throw it back, Russian literature is moving forwards despite all. The voice of its few genuine representatives, strong in truth and unanimity, drowns the clamour of the numerous motley crowd which is actuated by personal interests. One can no longer build literary fame on two or three more or less happy verses, brilliant without and empty within; today we shall not shed tears over and rush to buy *Abbadona, Emma* or *Delirious Delights*,[3] we shall not rank among capital works such writings in which there is neither true sense of reality nor sound and mature thoughts, but merely an unearthly maiden, such stuff as dreams are made of, love breath-

* *Dead Souls* by Gogol.

ing sighs and sentimentalities, and puerile impulses towards a confused ideal; today we no longer acknowledge the vulgar moralist who traduces the manners of our day because they are unfamiliar to him, who misrepresents our reality and lectures us with wisdom culled from primers, as a satirical-moral writer worthy of attention and praises; neither shall we call another moralist,[4] who has not uttered in his lifetime a single sensible thought of his own, "a philosopher who has plumbed the depths of his soul"—and should any critic, in a fervour of feigned or genuine delight, fall on his knees before the creator of a mediocrity in the fantastic style, we shall only think that he is not quite well and shall remain unmoved spectators of his reckless ardour. In criticism itself we are no longer content with turgid grandiloquence; we look for ideas and verdicts based on the laws of the science of the beautiful, the philosophy of art.... Yes, we are growing up, we are becoming adults—thank God!...

ARTICLES
ON THE WORKS
OF ALEXANDER PUSHKIN

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ST. PETERSBURG. ELEVEN VOLUMES.
MDCCCXXXVII—MDCCCXLI

ARTICLE EIGHT[1]

EUGENE ONEGIN

WE CONFESS: it is not without a certain diffidence that we embark upon the critical examination of such a poem as *Eugene Onegin*. Indeed, that diffidence is justified by numerous reasons. *Onegin* is Pushkin's sincerest work, the darling of his fantasy, and few works can be cited in which the individuality of the poet is mirrored so fully, brightly and clearly as that of Pushkin in *Onegin*. Here we have his whole life, his soul, his love; here we have his emotions, conceptions and ideals. To appraise such a work means appraising the poet in the whole range of his creative activity. Apart from the aesthetic merits of *Onegin*, this poem possesses great historical and social significance for us Russians. From this point of view even that which the critics could justifiably point out in *Onegin* as being faulty and obsolete is filled with deep significance and great interest. Our embarrassment is due not merely to the realization of our own inadequacy to deal with such a work, but also to the necessity of discerning at one and the same time and in many passages both its merits and its failings. The greater part of our public have not yet risen above the abstract and one-sided criticism which admits in works of art only absolute faults or absolute merits and has failed to grasp the fact that the conditional and relative constitute a form of the absolute. Hence some critics were amiably convinced that we do not esteem Derzhavin, since, in recognizing his great talent, we failed to discover among his works a single one that could really be called artistic and that could adequately meet the demands of present-day aesthetic tastes. But as regards *Onegin* our view may

strike many as being still more contradictory since *Onegin*, in point of form, is a highly aristic production, but in point of matter, its very shortcomings are its greatest merits. The whole tenor of our article on *Onegin* will be a development of this idea, however unusual it may strike many of our readers at first glance.

We first of all see in *Onegin* a poetical picture of Russian society, taken during one of the most interesting moments of its development. From this angle, *Eugene Onegin* is a *historical* poem in the full sense of the word, though it does not contain a single historical personage. The historical merit of the poem is all the greater that it was the first and brilliant attempt of its kind to be undertaken in Russia. Pushkin here is not simply and only a poet, but a representative of a newly-awakened social consciousness: that is immeasurable merit! Russian poetry before Pushkin was merely an intelligent and adept tyro of the European muse—hence all the works of Russian poetry prior to Pushkin somehow more resembled sketches and copies rather than the free productions of original inspiration. Krylov himself, whose talent is as strong and vivid as it is nationally Russian, hesitated long before he could sum up courage to reject the unenviable honour of being something of a translator, something of an imitator of La Fontaine. Derzhavin's poetry reveals vivid gleams of Russian speech and the Russian mind, but they are no more than gleams drowned in the water of rhetorically assimilated foreign forms and concepts. Ozerov wrote a Russian tragedy, even a historical tragedy—*Dmitri Donskoy*, but all that is "Russian" and "historical" in it are the names: in all else it is as much Russian and historical as it is French or Tatar. Zhukovsky wrote two "Russian" ballads, *Ludmila* and *Svetlana;* but the former is an adaptation from the German (a none too brilliant original), while the latter, though distinguished for its really poetical scenes of Russian Christmas customs and Russian winter landscapes, is permeated throughout with German sentimentality and German phantasm. The muse of Batyushkov, wandering eternally beneath alien skies, has not plucked a single flower on Russian soil. All these facts sufficed to prove that there was no poetry, nor could there be any poetry in Russian life, and that the Russian poets had to gallop on Pegasus to seek inspiration in foreign lands, even in the East and not only in the West. With the advent of Pushkin Russian

poetry, from the timid tyro, became a talented and experienced master. Naturally, this did not occur suddenly, for nothing is done suddenly. In his poems *Ruslan and Ludmila* and *The Robber Brothers* Pushkin, like his predecessors, was no more than a pupil,—not, like them, in poetry alone, but also in his efforts at poetical presentation of Russian reality. It is to this pupilage we owe the fact that there is so little of Russia and so much of Italy in his *Ruslan and Ludmila* and that his *Robber Brothers* so much resembles a vociferous melodrama. Pushkin has a Russian ballad, *The Bridegroom*, written in 1825, in which there appeared the first chapter of *Onegin*. This ballad, both in form and matter, is permeated to the core with the Russian spirit, and a thousand times more truly than of *Ruslan and Ludmila* one can say of it:

A Russian savour here is floating!

Since this ballad attracted no attention at the time and is now almost forgotten, we shall quote the matchmaking scene therefrom:

Next day there came a sudden guest,
A *svákha** call her rather,
She praised Natasha's charms with zest,
And thus addressed her father:
"You have the pearl, and we—the gold.
A laddy handsome, honest, bold,
A paragon of morals,
Not keen on tricks or quarrels.
He's rich and wise, will never fawn
Upon one man or other,
Himself, like a *boyarin* born,
Lives without care or bother:
As wedding gifts his coffers hold
Fine sables, jewels, rings of gold,
And satins many-shaded,
And wondrous robes brocaded.
Last night he saw her by the gate,
While driving at his leisure,
So strike a bargain with the mate,
Then off to church, at pleasure."
Partaking of the family pie,

* A professional matchmaker.—*Trans.*

Thus hints the *svákha*, vague and sly,
Meantime the restless maiden
Sits mute, with terror laden.
"So let it be," the father said:—
"A marriage true and homely.
Go forth, Natasha, to be wed,
Your virgin room is lonely.
A maid should not be lone for ay,
Nor should she naught but sing and play,
'Tis time at some near hour
To build her babes a bower."

And so this ballad runs on from start to finish! All Russian folk songs taken together reveal no more Russian nationality than is contained in this single ballad! But it is not in works of this kind that we should look for standards of poetical production pervaded by the national spirit—and it is conceivable why the public paid no particular attention to this delightful ballad. The world portrayed therein with such vividness and fidelity is too accessible to any talent if only on account of its too obvious specificness. Moreover, it is so confined, shallow and unsophisticated that true talent will not draw on it for long if it does not want its productions to be one-sided, monotonous, dull and, ultimately, vulgar, despite all their merits. That is why a man with talent usually essays one, at most, two attempts at this kind of thing: for him it is a casual venture undertaken more as a test of strength in the given field than out of any special regard for that field. Lermontov's *The Song of Tsar Ivan Vasilyevich, His Young Bodyguard, and the Bold Merchant Kalashnikov* while not outmatching Pushkin's *Bridegroom* in point of form, is more than its match in point of content. This is a poem which throws into the shade all the heroic Russian folk poems collected by Kirsha Danilov. Yet Lermontov's *Song* was nothing more than an essay of talent, a trial of the pen, and, obviously, Lermontov would not have written anything more in the same genre. In this song Lermontov took everything that Danilov's anthology had to offer him, and any new attempt of the kind would necessarily be a repetition, a twice-told tale. The emotions and passions of people of that world are so monotonous in their manifestation; the social relations of people of that world are so simple and unsophisticated, that it is all easily

drained to the dregs by a single work of powerful talent. Diversity of passions, an infinitude of subtle shades of emotion, innumerable and complex relations, social and private—there is the rich soil for the flowers of poetry, a soil that can be prepared only by a well-developed or developing civilization. Such works as *Jeanne* by George Sand are possible only in France, for there civilization, in the complexity of its elements, has placed all estates in close and electrically interrelated affinity to each other. Our poetry, on the contrary, is obliged to seek its materials almost exclusively in the class which, in its mode of life and customs, is most representative of progress and intellectual movement. And if nationality constitutes one of the highest merits of poetical works, we must undoubtedly look for real national works among such poetical compositions whose subject matter has been taken from the life of the estate created as a result of Peter the Great's reforms, the estate that adopted for itself the forms of cultivated life. Most of the public, however, still regard this matter in a different light. Say that *Ruslan and Ludmila* is a national, popular work, and everyone will agree that it really is. Still more readily will people agree if you call national every play in which the characters are peasant men and women, bearded merchants and townsfolk, or in which the personages intersperse their artless conversation with Russian proverbs and sayings, and, in addition, slip in between, seminary fashion, some rhetorical phrases on nationality and so on. The more clever and educated men readily (and quite justifiably) see Russian folk poetry in the fables of Krylov and would fain even see it (less justifiably) not only in Pushkin's fairy tales (*The Tsar Saltan, the Dead Queen and the Seven Knights*) but also (and most unjustifiably) in the fairy tales of Zhukovsky (*Tsar Berendei Longbeard* and *The Sleeping Queen*). But few men will agree with you and to many it will sound strange if you say that the first really national poem in verse was and is *Eugene Onegin* by Pushkin, and that it contains more nationality than any other national Russian work. Yet this is as axiomatic as that two and two make four. That it is not generally recognized as a national work is due to the oddly rooted opinion that a Russian man in a frock coat or a Russian woman in a corset are no longer Russians, and that the Russian spirit should be sought only among the *zipoons*,[2] bast sandals, corn brandy and sour cabbage.

In this respect many even among the so-called educated people unconsciously imitate the Russian common folk who call every foreigner out of Europe a *German.*[3] And there you have the source of some men's vain fears that we should all be Germanized! All the European peoples developed as a single nation, first under the aegis of Catholic unity, both spiritual (in the person of the Pope) and mundane (in the person of the chosen head of the Holy Roman empire), and subsequently under the influence of a uniform aspiration towards the ultimate fruits of civilization—nevertheless the same essential difference exists between the Frenchman, German, Englishman, Italian, Swede and Spaniard as between the Russians and the Indians. They are strings of one and the same instrument—the human spirit, but strings of varying volume, each with its own peculiar tone, and for that very reason they sound a full harmonic chord. If the nations of Western Europe who one and all originated from the great Teutonic tribe that had largely mingled with the Romanic tribes, who had one and all grown up on the soil of one and the same religion, under the influence of the same customs and the same social organization and had one and all eventually taken advantage of the rich heirloom of the ancient classical world—if, we say, all the nations of Western Europe, comprising a single family, nevertheless sharply differ from each other, is it natural to expect that the Russian nation, which had sprung up on another soil, was born under another sky, and had a history unlike that of any other Western European nation,—is it to be expected that the Russian nation, in adopting the costume and customs of Europe, should lose its national originality and become as like as two peas to any of the European nations, who differ so sharply among themselves in physical and moral aspect? ... Utter nonsense! Nothing more absurd could be thought of! The prime reason of a tribe's or nation's peculiarity is the soil and climate of the country which it occupies; yet are there many countries on the globe resembling each other geologically and climatologically? In order that the press of European ideas and customs divest Russians of their nationality one needs must first transform the steppe plateau of the Russian continent into mountainous country, contract its vast expanses to at least one-tenth of their present size (except Siberia). And much more would have to be done that cannot be done, things that only the Mani-

lovs[4] could conceive in hours of idle fancy. Further: poor is that nationality which trembles for its independence at each contact with other nationalities! Our pseudo-patriots do not see, in the simplicity of their mind and heart, that in their constant fears for Russian nationality they are grossly insulting it. But when did Russian troops become ever-victorious if not when Peter the Great accoutred them in European dress and inculcated the military discipline that went with that dress? It is somehow natural to see a throng of peasants, poorly armed and still more poorly disciplined, whom war has torn from their huts and ploughs, running in disorder from the battlefield, and just as natural is it to see regiments of soldiers even during military reverses dying bravely on the field of battle or retreating in grim orderly ranks. Some enthusiastic Slavophiles say: "Look at the German—he is everywhere a German, be it in Russia, or France or India; the Frenchman, too, is always a Frenchman wherever fate may have cast him; whereas the Russian in England is an Englishman, in France a Frenchman, in Germany a German." Indeed, there is undeniably something to say for this argument, which, however, speaks to the credit and not belittlement of the Russians. This knack of happy adaptation to any country or nation is by no means the exclusive quality of the educated estates in Russia, but of the whole Russian tribe, the whole of Northern Rūs. It is this quality that distinguishes the Russian from all the other Slav tribes, and it is perhaps to this that he owes his superiority over them. Our Russian soldiers are known to be astonishing inborn philosophers and politicians whom nothing will ever surprise, and who consider everything natural, no matter how great a contrast this *everything* may be to their own conceptions and habits. Not to dilate on this subject we refer, for brevity's sake, to Lermontov's remarks about the Russian's remarkable ability of adapting himself to the ways of the peoples among whom he happens to be living. "I do not know," says the author of *A Hero of Our Time*, "whether this mental quality is a virtue or a vice, but it does reveal a remarkable flexibility and that sober common sense which forgives evil wherever it feels it to be necessary, or impossible to eradicate." Reference here is made to the Caucasus and not to Europe, but the Russian is the same everywhere. The ungainly German and heavily-proud John Bull by their very ways and demeanour will

nowhere succeed in concealing their origin; and after the Frenchman only the Russian has the appearance of being just plain man without the stamp of his nationality imprinted on his forehead or passport. It by no means, however, ensues that because the Russian possesses the knack of taking after an Englishman in England and a Frenchman in France, he has for a minute ceased to be a Russian, or that he could for a minute become in earnest an Englishman or a Frenchman. Form and substance are not always the same thing. There is no objection to adopting good form, but to renounce one's substance is by no means as easy as exchanging the cloak for the frock coat. Among Russians there are many Gallomaniacs, Anglomaniacs, Germanomaniacs and sundry other "maniacs." Look at them, from whatever side you choose—they are for all the world typical Englishmen, Frenchmen or Germans. If it be an Anglomaniac, and if he be rich into the bargain, his horses too will be Anglicized, as well as his jockeys and grooms, as though fresh from London, and he will have a park laid out in the English manner, drink his ale regularly, have a weakness for roast beef and puddings and a craze for comfort, and spar as well as your English coachman. If he is a Gallomaniac, he will be dressed like a fashion plate, will speak French as well as any Parisian, regard the world with an air of nonchalant disdain, and, when occasion calls, condescend to be courteous and witty. If he is a Germanomaniac he above all loves art for art's sake, science for science's sake, is fond of the romantic, scorns the crowd, denies extrinsic happiness and prizes above all the contemplative delight of his inner world.... But send these gentlemen to live abroad—the Anglomaniacs in England, the Gallomaniacs in France and the Germanomaniacs in Germany—and watch whether the Englishmen, Frenchmen and Germans will hasten with such alacrity as you do to acknowledge them as their countrymen.... No, they will not become these peoples' compatriots, but rather a byword among them, an object of general and uncomplimentary interest and wonder. That, we repeat, is because the adoption of an alien form is quite a different thing from renouncing one's own substance. A Russian abroad can easily be taken for a native of the country in which he temporarily lives, because a man on the street, in the tavern, at a ball or in a carriage is judged by his appearance; in civil and family relations, however, and the ex-

clusive situations of life it is quite another matter: here *nolens volens* nationality tells, and a man stands out for what he is—a son of his own and stepson of an alien land. On that account it is much easier for a Russian to pass as an Englishman in Russia than in England. While there may be peculiar exceptions in the case of individuals, this can never be said of nations. Proof of this is to be found in those of the Slavonic tribes whose historical destinies were closely bound up with the destinies of Western Europe: Bohemia is hemmed in by the Teutonic tribe; the Germans were for centuries her masters; she developed together with them on the basis of Catholicism and anticipated them in the word and deed of religious renewal—yet, for all that, the Czechs have remained Slavs to this very day, and they are not only not Germans—they are not even quite Europeans....

The foregoing has been a necessary digression undertaken for the purpose of refuting the unfounded opinion that purely Russian nationality in literature must needs be looked for only in such works whose subject matter deals with the life of our own and uneducated classes. According to this peculiar opinion, which proclaims all that is best and educated in Russia to be "un-Russian"—according to this bast-sandal-homespun opinion, a coarse farce impersonating muzhiks and peasant women is regarded as a national Russian work, while *Wit Works Woe,* though Russian, is by no means national; a tawdry novel after the manner of *Merchant Bloods on the Spree* though a piece of bad writing is nevertheless a Russian national work, whereas *A Hero of Our Time,* though an excellent work and a Russian work is not national.... No, a thousand times no! It is high time we armed ourselves against this opinion with all the power of common sense, with all the strength of inexorable logic! We are far removed from those blessed days when the pseudoclassical trend of our literature suffered only people from the highest circles and educated society to figure in *belles lettres,* and if it sometimes did give the commonalty a place in poem, drama or eclogue it saw to it that they were washed, combed, pranked out and speaking in a tongue that was not their own. Yes, we are far removed from those pseudoclassical days; but it is also time that we kept a respectful distance between ourselves and this pseudoromantic trend which, pouncing on the word "nationality" and the license to represent in poems and plays not only honest men

of the lower orders but rogues and thieves as well, imagined that genuine nationality is latent only in rustic homespun and the smoke-ridden hut, and that the broken nose of the lackey put out of joint at a free fight is a truly Shakespearean touch—and chiefly that no signs of anything resembling nationality should be sought among educated people.[5] Moreover, it is time men realized that a Russian poet, on the contrary, can reveal himself as a genuinely national poet only by depicting in his works the life of educated society: for, in order to discover the national elements in a life half-muffled in forms that were originally alien to it the poet must needs be endowed with great talent and be national at heart. "Genuine nationality," says Gogol, "consists not in a description of the sarafan but in the very spirit of the people; a poet may be national even when he is describing an entirely alien world which, however, he regards through the eyes of his national element, the eyes of the whole nation, when he feels and speaks in a way which makes his countrymen believe that it is they themselves who are thus feeling and speaking."[6] To solve the mystery of the national psyche means to the poet a faculty of being equally true to life in depicting the lower, middle and higher orders. He who can grasp only the stark shades of the rude common life without being able to grasp the more subtle and intricate shades of educated life will never be a great poet and still less can he lay claim to the proud title of national poet. A great national poet is able to make both the gentleman and the peasant speak each in his own way. And if a work the subject matter of which is taken from the life of educated society does not merit the name of a national work, it is obviously worthless as a work of art, since it is untrue to the spirit of the reality it purports to portray. Hence works such as *Wit Works Woe* and *Dead Souls* as well as *A Hero of Our Time* are as essentially national as they are excellent poetical creations.

And the first artistic-national work of this kind was *Eugene Onegin*. This determination of the young poet to present the moral aspect of Russia's most Europeanized social estate is clear enough proof that he was and deeply felt himself to be a national poet. He understood that the day of the epic poem had long since passed, and that in order to portray modern society, in which the prose of life had so deeply invaded the poetry of life, a romance was

needed and not an epic poem. He took this life as he found it, without subducing merely its poetical moments; took it with all its frigidity, its prose and its banality. Such a bold design would have been less surprising had the romance been conceived in prose; but to write such a romance in verse at a time when there was not a single worth-while romance in the Russian language written in prose, was a feat of daring vindicated by its enormous success and is undeniable evidence of the poet's genius. True, there was a work in the Russian language, splendid for its time, a sort of story in verse: we have in mind Dmitriev's *The Modern Wife;* but it has nothing in common with *Onegin* by the mere fact that it might as easily be taken for a free translation or adaptation from the French as an original Russian work. If there is anything among Pushkin's works that can be said to possess something in common with Dmitriev's fine and clever tale it is, as we have already remarked in our last article, *Count Nulin;* but even here the similarity is not to be looked for in the poetical merits of both works. The form of the romaunt, such as *Onegin,* was created by Byron; at least, the style of narrative, the mixture of prose and poetry in depicting reality, digressions, the poet's soliloquizing, and, especially that too palpable intrusion of the poet's person in his own work—all that belongs to Byron. Of course, to adopt someone else's new form for your own matter is not quite the same thing as inventing it yourself; nevertheless, in comparing Pushkin's *Onegin* to Byron's *Don Juan, Childe Harold* and *Beppo,* all that they will be found to have in common are form and treatment. Not only the content but the spirit of Byron's poems preclude all possibility of any essential similarity being established between them and *Onegin.* Byron wrote about Europe for Europe; that subjective spirit, so deep and mighty, that personality so colossal, proud and unbending aspired not so much to depict contemporary mankind as to pronounce upon its past and present history. We repeat: we need not look for a shadow of resemblance.[7] Pushkin wrote about Russia for Russia—and the token of his great and original talent lies in the fact that Pushkin, true to his nature, a nature so diametrically opposite to that of Byron, and to his artistic instinct, was far from letting himself be tempted to create anything Byronic when writing his Russian romance. Had he done so the crowd would have extolled him to the skies; fame,

evanescent but great, would have been his reward for his spurious *tour de force*. But, we repeat, Pushkin the poet was too great for such a harlequinade, a performance so alluring to ordinary talents. He was not concerned in trying to take after Byron—he was concerned in trying to be himself, to do justice to the reality, untried and untouched before him, which flowed to his pen. That is why his *Onegin* is a supremely original and national-Russian creation. With that other great contemporary work of Griboyedov's—*Wit Works Woe*,* Pushkin's poetical romance laid the enduring foundation of a new Russian poetry, a new Russian literature. Until the appearance of these two works, as we have already observed, Russian poets still showed themselves to be poets when they sang of objects alien to Russian reality, and fell short of being poets when they attempted the themes of Russian life. The only exception is Derzhavin, whose poetry, as we have already pointed out, contains flashes of Russian reality, and Krylov, and lastly Fon-Vizin—the latter, we should say, was more a gifted copyist of Russian reality in his comedies than its creative reproducer. For all its fairly important defects, Griboyedov's comedy, being the work of a powerful talent and profound and independent mind, was the first Russian comedy that was free of imitation, false motives and unnatural colours, and in which the whole and its parts, the plot, characters, passions, action, opinions and language are all imbued with true Russian reality. As for the verses in which *Wit Works Woe* is written, Griboyedov has made it impossible for any Russian comedy in verse to appear for a long time. Great talent is needed to carry on with any measure of success what Griboyedov has started: only an Ajax and an Odysseus could contest the sword of Achilles. The same thing applies to *Onegin*, though many admirable, albeit far inferior efforts, owe their origin to its appearance, whereas *Wit Works Woe* still towers in our literature like the pillars of Hercules, beyond which no one has yet ventured. It is a fact without precedent: a play which the whole of literate Russia learned by heart from circulating manuscripts

* *Wit Works Woe* was *sketched* by Griboyedov during his sojourn in Tiflis, before 1823. On his return to Russia in 1823 Griboyedov made important changes in his comedy. The first large fragment was published in *Talia's* almanac in 1825. The first chapter of *Onegin* appeared in print in 1825, when Pushkin probably had several chapters of the poem finished.

more than ten years before its publication! Griboyedov's verses have become proverbs and adages; his comedy has become an inexhaustible source of applications to the events of everyday life, a veritable mine of epigraphs! Though no direct influence on the language and verse of Griboyedov's comedy can be traced to Krylov's fables, it cannot be entirely dismissed: so in the organic-historical development of literature do all elements link up with and cohere to each other! The fables of Khemnitzer and Dmitriev are related to the fables of Krylov as plain talent to the works of genius—yet Krylov owes a great deal to both Khemnitzer and Dmitriev. The same with Griboyedov: he did not learn from Krylov, did not imitate him: he merely made use of his achievements to go further along his own path. Had Russian literature not known its Krylov, the verse of Griboyedov would not have been so free, so light, so unconstrainedly original, in short, it would not have gone so amazingly far. But Griboyedov's feat does not end here: with Pushkin's *Onegin* his *Wit Works Woe* was the first model of poetical portrayal of Russian reality in the broad sense of the word. In this respect both these works laid the foundation for subsequent literature, formed the school from which Lermontov and Gogol took their rise. Without *Onegin* there would have been no *A Hero of Our Time,* just as without *Onegin* and *Wit Works Woe* Gogol would not have felt himself prepared for the so deep and faithful portrayal of Russian reality which he has given us. The false gloss given to Russian reality in works prior to *Onegin* and *Wit Works Woe* has not disappeared from Russian literature even today. To convince yourself of this you need only apply yourself to a view or perusal of the new plays which are being performed in the Russian theatres of both capitals. They are merely distorted French life styling itself Russian life; they are mutilated French characters under the garb of Russian names. Gogol exercised a strong influence on the Russian story, but, like *Wit Works Woe,* his comedies stand all by themselves. Seemingly, it is more difficult to render with fidelity one's own native environment, things that are constantly before our eyes, than to portray things exotic. That this is so is due to the fact that with us the form is always taken for the substance and a fashionable costume of Europeanism; in other words, *nationality* is confused with *commonalty,* in the belief that the man who does

not belong to the common people, namely the man who drinks champagne instead of vodka, and wears a frock coat instead of a homespun caftan, should be depicted either as a Frenchman, or a Spaniard, or an Englishman. Some of our men of letters, who have a capacity for more or less faithfully copying portraits, have not the capacity of seeing the faces of their sitters in their true light: no wonder their portraits bear no likeness whatever to their originals, and that, in reading their novels, tales and plays, one involuntarily asks himself:

> Whose portraits are their pens devising?
> Where do they hear these words surprising?
> And if they want us all to hear....
> Well, we refuse to give them ear.[8]

Talents of this order are poor thinkers; they make up in imagination what they lack in intelligence. They do not understand that the *secret of nationality* in every nation lies not in its dress and kitchen but in its way of seeing things, so to speak. To be able to render a faithful picture of any society one must first comprehend its substance, its particularity, and that cannot be accomplished other than by an actual learning and philosophical evaluation of the sum of rules on which society rests. Every people has two philosophies: one is the scholarly, bookish, solemn, holiday philosophy, the other the workaday, household, conventional philosophy. These two philosophies are often more or less closely related to each other; he who wishes to portray society must make the acquaintance of both of them, but the latter should be particularly well studied. Similarly, he who wishes to know a nation should first of all study it in its family and domestic life. One would hardly be inclined to attach much importance to such words as *avos* and *zhivet*,[9] yet they are very important, and unless that importance be appreciated one will sometimes fail to grasp certain novels, let alone write a novel himself. It is precisely a knowledge of this workaday philosophy that has made *Onegin* and *Wit Works Woe* the original and utterly Russian compositions they are.

The story of *Onegin* is too well known to need setting forth in detail. But to get to the idea that underlies it we shall run through it briefly. A young girl full of romance, brought up in the seclusion of the country falls in love with a young St. Petersburg lion—

using the language now in vogue—who, bored by society life, has come down to his country place to while away the tedious hours. Yielding to an impulse she writes him a letter filled with naive passion; he replies by word that he cannot love her and that he does not feel himself made for the bliss of family life. Onegin is then challenged to a duel over a trivial cause by the fiance of our infatuated heroine's sister whom he kills. Lensky's death separates Tatiana and Onegin for a long time. Disappointed in her youthful dreams the poor girl yields to the tears and pleadings of her old mother and marries a *general*—it mattered not to her whom she married so long as she could not help marrying somebody. Onegin meets Tatiana in St. Petersburg and hardly recognizes her: so changed is she, so little resemblance does the once simple country maid now bear to the grand Petersburg lady. Onegin is smitten with passion for Tatiana; he writes her a letter, and this time she answers him by word that although she loves him she cannot belong to him—through pride of virtue. Such is the plot of *Onegin*. Many have held and still hold that there is no plot, since the story has no denouement. Indeed, we have here no deaths (neither from consumption nor the dagger) and no weddings—that sanctioned consummation of all novels, stories and plays, especially Russian. And then how many incongruities! While Tatiana was a girl Onegin was left cold to her passionate confession; but when she became a woman he fell madly in love with her without being sure whether she loved him. Unnatural, quite unnatural! And what an unmoral character that man is: he coldly reads a homily to the infatuated girl instead of promptly falling in love with her himself, and then, obtaining in due form the parental blessings, leading the maid to the altar and becoming the happiest man in the world. And then again: Onegin kills poor Lensky for nothing at all—that young poet with golden hopes and rainbow dreams—and does not even shed a tear over him, or at least utter a pathetic speech containing a mention of bloody spectres and so on. Such, or very nearly such was and still is the opinion pronounced on *Onegin* by many "gentle readers"—at any rate we have had occasion to hear many such opinions that once used to exasperate us but now merely amuse. One great critic even said in print that *Onegin* lacked completeness, that it was simply poetical prattle on this and that and nothing at all.[10] The great critic based his

verdict on the fact, firstly, that there is neither wedding nor funeral at the end of the poem, and, secondly, on the poet's own showing:

> How many swiftly flitting days
> Have passed since *in a hazy vision*
> *I first saw* young Tatiana glide
> With her Onegin at her side—
> *Ere yet* the crystal with precision
> Had shown to my enchanted glance
> The vista of a free romance!

The great critic did not guess that the poet, by virtue of his creative instinct, could write a complete and finished work without planning it beforehand and stop precisely at the point where the story comes to its own wonderful conclusion and denouement—the scene of Onegin's desolation after his interview with Tatiana. But we shall speak of this in its proper place, as shall we also of the fact that there could be nothing more natural than Onegin's attitude towards Tatiana throughout the romance and that Onegin is certainly no monster or profligate, though he was certainly not a paragon of virtue. It was one of Pushkin's great merits that he disestablished the vogue of monsters of vice and heroes of virtue, depicting instead just ordinary people.

We began this article with the statement that *Onegin* is a poetically faithful picture of Russian society at a given epoch. This picture appeared opportunely, *i.e.*, precisely at a time when the subject that could serve as its model—society—made its appearance. Consequent upon Peter the Great's reforms Russia was to receive a newly-formed society standing entirely apart from the mass of the nation in its mode of life. A single exceptional situation, however, does not in itself produce a society: in order that it be formed special bases were required that would ensure its existence, and such an education as would give it an inner and not merely outer unity. Catherine II, *by granted charter*, defined in 1785 the privileges and duties of the nobility. This circumstance communicated an entirely new character to the peerage—the sole estate which under Catherine II attained its highest development and was an enlightened, educated estate. As a consequence of the moral impetus given by the charter of 1785 there arose, in the wake of the peerage, a class of the middle nobility. Under the

word *arose* we mean *formation.* In the reign of Alexander the Beneficent the importance of this, in every way best estate, steadily grew with the gradual spread of education to all corners of the vast provinces studded wi.h landlord estates. A society was thus formed for whom the noble delights of Being became a necessity, a symptom of inchoate spiritual life. This society was no longer content with the chase, luxury and feasts, not even with dancing and card-playing alone: it spoke and read French, and music and drawing was an indispensable item in the scheme of their children's education. Derzhavin, Fon-Vizin and Bogdanovich—poets who in their time were known only at court, became more or less known to this nascent society. But most important of all—its own literature cropped up, a literature that was lighter, livelier, more social and *mundane* than the heavy, scholarly, bookish literature. While Novikov, by the publication of books and magazines of all kinds, fostered a predilection for reading and a book trade and thereby created a reading mass—Karamzin, by his reform of the language, by the tenor, spirit and form of his works engendered literary taste and created a public. It was then that poetry passed as an element into the life of the new society. Fair maids and young men descended in a swarm on *Liza's Pond* to *shed a romantic tear* over the memory of the unhappy victim of passion and temptation. The verses of Dmitriev, marked by intellect, taste, wit and grace enjoyed as great a success and influence as the prose of Karamzin. The sentimentality and daydreaming which they begot, for all their ludicrous sides, were a great stride forward for young society. Ozerov's tragedies imparted still greater force and splendour to this trend. Krylov's fables were long being read by adults and learnt by heart by children. Soon there appeared a poet-youth who brought into this sentimental literature the romantic elements of deep feeling, imaginative vision and an eccentric striving in the realm of the miraculous and unknown, and who introduced and wedded the Russian muse to the muse of Germany and England. The influence of literature on society was of much greater consequence than we usually imagine: literature, in drawing people of different estates closer together in bonds of taste and aspirations towards a noble enjoyment of life, transformed the *estates* into *society.* Despite this, there is no doubt that the class of nobility was pre-eminently the representative of society

and pre-eminently the direct source of all society's education. Increased appropriations for public education and the inauguration of universities, gymnasia and schools gave a mighty impetus to the growth of society. The period between 1812 and 1815 was Russia's great epoch. We have in mind not merely the external splendour and effulgence with which Russia covered herself in this her great epoch, but the inner well-being in civil state and education which were an outcome of this epoch. It may be said without exaggeration that Russia has lived more and advanced farther since 1812 to this day than since the reign of Peter till 1812. On the one hand the year 1812, which shook the whole of Russia from end to end, roused her dormant forces and revealed to her hitherto unsuspected wells of strength; it welded, by a sense of common danger, all the diffused interests of private wills, blunted through desuetude, into a single huge mass, stirred up the national consciousness and national pride, and in this way fostered the birth of publicity as the precursor of public opinion; furthermore, the year 1812 inflicted a telling blow on petrified usage: it witnessed the disappearance of the non-serving nobles, who peacefully came into the world and peacefully went out of it in their country places, beyond whose sacred precincts they never ventured; the backwoods swiftly disappeared together with the staggered survivals of ancient usage. On the other hand, all of Russia, in the person of her victorious hosts, came face to face with Europe, over whom she passed by the ways of victories and celebrations. This all strongly contributed to the growth and strengthening of the nascent society. In the twenties of the current century Russian literature gravitated from imitativeness to originality: Pushkin appeared. He loved the estate which was practically the sole expression of Russian society's progress and to which he himself belonged—and in *Onegin* he decided to present to us the inner life of this estate, and with it, of society, such as it was in the epoch of his choice, *i.e.*, in the twenties of this century. And one cannot but marvel at the speed with which Russian society is moving forwards: we look upon *Onegin* as the romance of a time from which we are already remote. The ideals and aspirations of the time are so foreign to us, so removed from the ideals and aspirations of our own day.... *A Hero of Our Time* was a new *Onegin*: yet barely four years have elapsed, and Pechorin is no

longer a modern ideal. And this is what we meant by saying that the very shortcomings of *Onegin* constitute its greatest merits: these defects may be expressed in a single word—"obsolete"; but is the poet to blame that things in Russia move so swiftly? and is it not the poet's great merit that he was able with such fidelity to grasp the reality of the given moment in the life of society? If nothing in *Onegin* were to strike us now as being obsolete or backward of our times, it would be an obvious sign that the poem lacks truth, that it has depicted an imagined society and not a society that really existed: in that case, what kind of poem would it have been and would it have been worth talking about? ...

We have already touched on the plot of *Onegin:* let us now deal with the characters of its dramatis personae. Although the romance bears the name of its hero, it contains not one but two heroes: Onegin and Tatiana. They are both to be regarded as representatives of both sexes of the contemporary Russian society. Let us turn to the former. The poet did right in choosing his hero from the highest circle of society. Onegin is certainly not a grandee (if merely by the fact that the grandee days existed only in the age of Catherine II); Onegin is a man of society. We know, our literary men bear no love for the world of fashion and people of society, though they have a craze for portraying them. As far as we are concerned, we are not men of society and do not visit society; but we do not entertain any philistine prejudices against it. When high society is described by such writers as Pushkin, Griboyedov, Lermontov, Prince Odoyevsky, Count Sollogub, we like the literary portrayal of the fashionable world as we like the portrayal of any other world, fashionable or unfashionable, if it be executed with talent and knowledge. There is only one instance when we loath the fashionable world, and that is when it is depicted by writers who would appear to be more familiar with the manners and ways of confectioners' and civil servants' parlours than of aristocratic salons. Allow me to make another reservation: we do not for a moment confound society ways with aristocratism, though they most often go together. Be you a man of any origin, or of whatever convictions—society life will not spoil you, but only improve. It is said: life in high society is wasted on trifles, the most sacred feelings are sacrificed to worldly interests and the conventions. True, but then is life in the middle circle

of society spent only on what is great, and are feeling and reason not sacrificed to worldly interests and conventions? O, no, a thousand times no! The only difference between the middle and higher circles consists in the fact that the former is pettier, smugger, more conceited, gives itself greater airs, has more petty ambitions, is more starched and hypocritical. Society life is said to have many bad sides. True, but then does non-society life have only all good sides? Society is said to kill inspiration, and Shakespeare and Schiller are said not to have been society men. True, but neither were they merchants or burghers, they were simply men, just as Byron, the aristocrat and man of society, owes his inspiration primarily to the fact that he was simply a man. That is why we do not care to imitate some of our men of letters in their prejudices against the unseen bugbear of high society, and that is why we are very glad that Pushkin has chosen a society man as the hero of his romance. What is wrong with it? The higher circle of society was at that time in the zenith of its development; and the fact that he was a man of society did not prevent Onegin from making friends with Lensky, who in the eyes of society, cut the most odd and droll of figures. True, Onegin felt out of his element in the company of the Larins; but this was due more to education than to society ways. We do not deny it—the society of the Larins is very agreeable, especially in Pushkin's verse; but we, who are not society people at all, would have felt rather awkward in it, all the more so that we are utterly incapable of sustaining a sensible conversation about kennels, wines, haymaking and relatives. The higher circle of society at that time was so isolated from the other circles that people who did not belong to it spoke of it as people throughout Europe before Columbus spoke of the antipodes and Atlantides. Onegin, as a result, was set down as an unmoral man from the very first lines of the romance. This opinion of him has not entirely disappeared to this day. We remember how warmly many readers expressed their indignation at Onegin being glad of his uncle's illness and smarting under the necessity of posing as a sorrowing relation—

> You sigh, and think with furrowed brow—
> 'Why can't the devil take you now?'

Many deprecate it even now. This shows what an important work, in all respects, *Onegin* was for the Russian public, and how happy was Pushkin's choice of a society man for the hero of his romance. A feature of men of society is a lack of hypocrisy, as coarse and stupid as it is amiable and creditable. Should a poor civil servant suddenly find himself the heir of a rich old uncle who is about to die—with what tears, with what solicitous humility he will tend his uncle, though the dear old man may never in his life have wanted to know or see his nephew, and there was nothing in common between them. But do not think that this is calculated hypocrisy on the part of the nephew (calculated hypocrisy is the vice of all circles of society, high and low): no, what with the salutary shock to his entire nervous system caused by the early prospect of a legacy, our nephew was reduced to a state of genuine rapture and experienced a hot wave of love for his uncle, though it was the law, and not his uncle's pleasure, which gave him the right to the inheritance. Consequently, this hypocrisy is amiable, sincere and creditable. But should his uncle suddenly take it into his head to recover, what would happen to our nephew's kindred affection, and how false grief would suddenly be replaced by genuine grief, and the actor would become a real man! Now let us turn to *Onegin*. His uncle was a stranger to him in every way. Indeed, what could there be in common between Onegin, who already—

> In time-worn halls and those that just
> Had been refurnished, yawn he must,

and the respectable squire. in the seclusion of his village

> . . . where the old man berated
> His housekeeper for forty years,
> Killed flies, and snugly rusticated. . .

It will be said: he is his benefactor. Why his benefactor, when Onegin was the lawful heir to his estate? The benefactor in this case is not his uncle, but the law, the right of inheritance. Can you imagine the position of a man who is constrained to play the role of distressed, compassionate and affectionate relative at the deathbed of an utter stranger? It will be said: who obliged him to play such a base role? What do you mean, who? A feeling

of delicacy, humanity. If you are unable for any reason to avoid the necessity of entertaining a man whose company you find irksome and boring, are you not obliged to be polite and even affable, though in your heart of hearts you may send him to the devil? That Onegin's words betray a kind of mocking lightness is merely evidence of intellect and candour, for an absence of stiff and heavy solemnity in the expression of ordinary and everyday relations is a sign of intellect. In people of polite society it is not even intellect, but more often a mannerism, and a very clever mannerism at that. With people of the middle circles, on the contrary, the manner is one of showing off a profusion of diverse deep feelings on every important, *in their opinion*, occasion. Everyone knows that madame so-and-so had been leading her husband a cat-and-dog life, and that she is glad of his death, and she herself is only too well aware that everyone knows it and that she can deceive nobody; all the more loudly does she mourn and sigh, moan and sob, and all the more does she pester each and all with a description of the deceased's virtues, the happiness he gave her, and the misery into which his death had plunged her. Nay, more: the lady is prepared to repeat this a hundred times before a respectable-looking gentleman whom everyone knows to be her lover. And what then? Both the respectable-looking gentleman and all the relatives and friends of the poor inconsolable widow listen to her plaints with a sad and distressed air—and if some laugh up their sleeves, others are *deeply affected*. This—we repeat—is neither stupidity nor calculated hypocrisy: It is simply a principle of philistine, conventional morals. It never occurs to any of these people to ask themselves and others:

> But say, for this excitement where's the call?

The very question they would hold to be a sin; and if they dared to do it they would laugh at themselves. It does not dawn on them that if there is anything here to grieve about, it is the vulgar comedy of well-meant hypocrisy which all are so keenly and sincerely bent on playing.

Not to come back again to the same question we shall make a slight digression. As proof of the not merely aesthetic importance which Pushkin's *Onegin* had for the Russian public, and of

how its now old and even timid half-thoughts struck everyone then as new and daring thoughts, let us cite the following couplet:

H'm, h'm! dear reader, pray apprise me,
Are all your relatives quite well?
You might be pleased—if so, advise me—
To have your humble servant tell
What the word *relatives* embraces.
It means the people to whose faces
We show at all times due respect,
And whom we kiss as they expect,
And visit at the Christmas season,
Unless indeed we send a card,
In token of our warm regard,
Lest they should miss us beyond reason
All during the ensuing year.
And so God grant them health and cheer!

We remember that this innocent couplet was the cause of most of the public levelling a charge of unmorality not at Onegin, but at the poet himself. What is the reason for it, if not that good-natured and well-meant hypocrisy we have just mentioned? Brothers litigate with brothers over an estate, and often cherish such a venomous hatred of each other as is only possible among relatives and impossible among strangers. The right of kinship is frequently little more than a right of the poor relative to fawn on the rich one for the sake of a sop, and of the rich one to despise the tiresome beggar and dodge him; also, the right of the rich to envy each other's successes; and, generally speaking, the right of interfering in other men's business and offering unwanted and useless advice. Wherever you act as a man of character, conscious of your sense of human dignity, you will be insulting the principle of kinship. If you have taken it into your head to marry—ask advice; if you don't you are a dangerous dreamer and freethinker; if you do, a marriageable girl will be found for you; if you marry her and are unhappy ever afterwards—you will be told: "That's just it, my dear fellow, that's what comes of taking a leap in the dark; didn't I tell you...." If you marry of your own choice you will have a still greater peck of troubles. What other rights of kinship are there? There are plenty more! Take, for instance, that gentleman, who looks so much like Nozdrev[11]—had he been

a stranger you would not admit him even into your stables, fearing for the morality of your horses; but he is a relative, and you receive him in your drawing room and your study, and he is everywhere a disgrace to your name. Kinship provides an excellent occupation and diversion: suppose you are in trouble—here is a wonderful opportunity for your relatives to flock down on you. sigh and moan and wag their heads, chew the cud, offer advice and instruction, make reproaches, and then spread the news abroad, blaming and scolding you behind your back—for clearly, a man in trouble is always to blame, especially in the eyes of his relatives. This is no news to anybody, but the trouble is that everybody realizes it, but few admit it: the habit of good-natured and well-meant hypocrisy defeats reason. There are people who are capable of being mortally offended if a vast family of their relations comes down to the capital and does not put up at their place; and if they had stopped with them, they would be the first to grumble; but while murmuring, scolding and complaining on all hands, they will evince to the family's face every token of hearty welcome and make it promise to stop with them again and squeeze them out of their own house in the name of kinship. What does this mean? Not at all that kinship with such people exists as a *principle*, but simply that it exists with them as a *fact*: none of them admit it inwardly, as a matter of conviction, but they all admit it by force of habit, unconsciously and through hypocrisy.

Pushkin described kinship of this kind the way it exists with many people, the way it really is, consequently rightly and truthfully—for which he incurred people's ire and the charge of being unmoral; plainly then, if he had described kinship among certain people as it did not exist, *i.e.*, falsely and wrongly, he would have been lauded. This all signifies neither more nor less than that lies and falsehood alone are moral.... That is what good-natured and well-meant hypocrisy leads to! No, Pushkin acted morally in being the first to speak the truth, for it requires a noble courage to be the first to speak one's true mind. And how many such truths are uttered in *Onegin*! Many of them today are neither new nor even very deep; but had not Pushkin uttered them *twenty* years ago they would now be both new and deep. And it is therefore to Pushkin's great credit that he was the first to give utterance to these now outworn and undeep truths. He could have de-

livered himself of more positive and more deep truths, but his work would then have lacked veracity: it would have been a description but not a mirror of Russian life. Genius never anticipates his time, but always merely divines its to everybody else invisible substance and meaning.

Most of the public utterly denied a heart and soul in Onegin, whom they regarded as a cold, callous man and an egoist by nature. There can be no more mistaken and crooked view of a man. Nay more: many amiably believed and still believe that the poet himself wished to depict Onegin as a cold egoist. That amounts to having eyes and seeing nothing. Society life did not kill Onegin's feelings, but merely cooled them to barren passions and idle pleasures. Remember the stanzas in which the poet describes his acquaintance with Onegin:

The *beau monde's* burdensome conventions
I too had dropped, and found him then—
As bored as I with vain inventions—
The most congenial of men.
His way of dreaming, willy-nilly,
His sharp intelligence and chilly,
I liked, and his peculiar pose;
I was embittered, he morose.
We both had played with passion, early
We both had wearied of the game;
The hearts of both now spurned the fame
And had grown ashen-cold and surly;
And both, though young, could but await
Men's malice and the stroke of Fate.
One who has lived and thought, grows scornful,
Disdain sits silent in his eye;
One who has felt, is often mournful,
Disturbed by ghosts of days gone by:
He can no longer be enchanted,
No respite to his heart is granted—
Remembering the past, perforce
He is the victim of remorse.
All this lends charm to conversation,
And though the talk of my young friend
At first disturbed me, in the end
I listened not without elation,
To his sharp judgments, sullen wit,

And epigrams that scored a hit.
Of quiet summer nights, how often,
When with diaphanous pale light
O'er the Neva the sky would soften
And the smooth waters, mirror-bright
Would fail to show Diana gleaming,
We yielded to delicious dreaming,
Recalling in the soft sweet air
Many a distant love-affair—
The pleasures relished, triumphs thwarted;
Like prisoners released in sleep
To roam the forests, green and deep,
We were in reverie transported,
And carried to that region where
All life before us still lay fair.

The least these verses reveal to us is that Onegin was neither cold, nor dry, nor callous, that poesy lived in his soul, and that he was in fact not of the ordinary run of men. His way of dreaming, willy-nilly, the carefree and emotional contemplation of the beauties of nature and recollection of the loves and romances of bygone days—all this speaks more of feeling and poesy than of coldness and dryness. The fact is that Onegin was not addicted to day-dreaming, he felt more than he spoke, and did not bare his heart to everyone. An embittered mind is also the symptom of a higher nature, for a man with an embittered mind is usually displeased not only with other men, but with himself. Ordinary men are always pleased with themselves, and, if in luck, with everybody else. Life does not deceive the fools; on the contrary, it gives them everything, seeing they ask so little—food, drink, warmth and some toys to gladden the heart of vulgar and petty conceit. Disillusionment in life, men and self (if only it is genuine and simple, shorn of the phrases and foppery of *picturesque gloom*) is the attribute only of men who, demanding "much" are not satisfied with "nothing." The readers remember the description in Chapter VII of Onegin's study: we have the whole of Onegin in this picture. Especially striking is the banishment of books, except for two or three novels

Exhibiting the present age,
And modern man's true soul divulging:
A creature arid, cold and vain,

Careless of others' joy and pain,
In endless reverie indulging,
One whose embittered mind finds zest
In nothing, but can never rest.

It will be said: this is Onegin's portrait. Possibly; but it speaks still more in favour of Onegin's moral superiority that he recognized himself in a portrait which is the lifelike image of so many others, but whose likeness so few care to admit and for the most part "wink at Peter." Onegin did not self-lovingly admire this portrait, but suffered mutely from its astonishing likeness to children of the present age. It was not character, passions, or personal delusions that made Onegin look like this portrait, it was the age.

His friendship with Lensky, that young dreamer who captivated the heart of our public, is the loudest argument against Onegin's alleged insensibility. Onegin despised people.

Exceptions may be hard to find
But there's no rule that has not any:
He scorned most men (not everyone),
Esteemed emotion, feeling none.
He listened to young Lensky smiling:
The poet's ardent speech, the mind
So immature and so beguiling,
The fiery glance, he could but find
A novelty framed to divert him;
He thought: I must not disconcert him
By mocking glance or chilly word,
Such bliss is transient, if absurd;
Since time, without my interference,
Will cure the lad, for good or ill,
Let him believe in wonders still
And credit the world's fair appearance,
Youth's fever is its own excuse
For ravings that it may induce,
In deep reflection, hot discussion,
Their meeting passed; in turn they spoke
Of foreign history and Russian,
Of prejudice's ancient yoke,
Of good and evil, and of science,
Of destiny and its defiance,
Of that dread mystery, the grave;
Their judgment both men freely gave.

Things speak for themselves: Onegin's proud coldness and heartless hauteur are a result of the sheer incapacity of many readers to understand the character created with such fidelity by the poet. But we shall not stop at this and shall get to the bottom of the whole matter.

A danger to all lovely ladies,
Is he from Heaven or from Hades?
This strange and sorry character,
Angel or friend, as you prefer,
What is he? A mere imitation,
A Muscovite in Harold's cloak,
A wretched ghost, a foreign joke
But with a new interpretation,
A lexicon of snobbery
And fashion, or a parody?

. . . . . .

Has he grown tame at last, and mellow?
Or does he follow his old bent
And as of yore play the odd fellow?
Pray, whom now does he represent?
Would he be Melmoth or Childe Harold,
Or as a Quaker go appareled,
A bigot seem—a patriot—
A cosmopolitan—or what?
To a new pose will he be goaded,
Or in the end will he just be
A decent chap—like you or me?
I say: give up a style outmoded,
It's time he ceased to be a show...
"Ah, then you know him?" "*Yes, and no.*"
"Then why upbraid him thus severely?
Is it because we like to sit
Upon the judgment-seat, or merely
Because rash ardour and quick wit
Are found absurd or else offensive
By those whose parts are not extensive?
Is it because intelligence
Loves elbow-room and thrusts us hence?
Or is it stupidity malicious—
And trifles of importance to
Important folk, and is it true

That only mediocrity
Befits and pleases you and me?"
Blessed is he who could be merry
And young in youth; blessed is he
Who ripened, like good port or sherry,
As years went by, and readily
Grew worldly-wise as life grew chilly,
Gave up his dreams as wild and silly:
At twenty to the fashion bred,
At thirty profitably wed,
Quite free of all his debts at fifty,
Obtaining with himself to thank
First glory, and then wealth and rank,
All in good time, serene and thrifty—
Of whom 'twas said throughout his span:
X is an admirable man.
But oh, how deeply we must rue it,
That youth was given us in vain,
That we are hourly faithless to it,
And that it cheated us again;
That our bright pristine hopes grew battered,
Our freshest dreams grew sear, and scattered
Like leaves that in wet autumn stray,
Wind-tossed, and all too soon decay.
It's maddening to see before you
A row of dinners, dull and sure,
Find life a function to endure,
Go with the solemn folk who bore you,
For all their views and passions not,
At heart, giving a single jot.

These verses are the key to the mystery of Onegin's character. Onegin is neither Melmoth nor Childe Harold, neither demon, parody, modern craze, genius, nor great man, but simply "a decent chap—like you or me" and all the world. The poet rightly calls the habit of looking everywhere for geniuses and extraordinary men a shabby mode. We repeat: Onegin is a good chap, though an uncommon man. He is not fit to be a genius, and does not aim at being a great man, but idleness and life's triviality gall him; he does not even know what he wants, what he is after; but he does know, and only too well, that he does not want what smug mediocrity is so content and delighted with. And for this smug

mediocrity not only declared him to be "unmoral," but gainsaid him the passions of the heart, the ardour of the soul, and access to all that is good and beautiful. Remember how Onegin was educated, and agree that his nature must have possessed sterling qualities not to be utterly killed by such an education. As a brilliant youth he was infatuated by the world of fashion, like many others; he soon grew weary of it and gave it up, like so few others. In his soul there still lived a spark of hope that he would recover and find himself again in the sequestered peace of the countryside, on the bosom of Nature; but he too soon realized that change of place does not affect the essence of certain irresistible circumstances beyond the control of our will.

Two days he found it quite diverting:
The meadows' solitary look,
The shady thickets' cool, begirting
The purling of a gentle brook;
The third day interest abated
And he was not the least elated
By grove and stream and field and steep—
They only sent him off to sleep.
For though the country boasts no palace,
No card-game, poetry, or ball,
Its pleasures, like he city's pall,
He noted with accustomed malice,
A shadow, or a wife, pursues
As he was followed by the blues.

We have shown that Onegin was not a cold, dry, soulless man, but we have so far refrained from using the word *egoist,*—and since surfeit of feeling and craving for the beautiful do not exclude egoism, we shall now say that Onegin was a *suffering egoist.* There are two kinds of egoists. Egoists of the first order—people without any presumptuous or romantic claims; they cannot see how a man can love anyone except himself, and therefore make no effort to conceal their ardent love of their own person; if things are going bad with them they are thin, pale, malicious, mean, contemptible, traitors and slanderers; if they are on the sunny side of the hedge they are stout, fat, ruddy, cheerful, kind, will not share their luck with anybody, but gladly act the convivial host

to useful and utterly useless people alike. These are egoists by nature or through bad education. Egoists of the second order are almost never stout and ruddy; they are for the most part sickly people, always feeling bored. Casting about in quest of happiness and distraction they fail to find either since the delusions of youth have left them. These people often achieve a passion for acts of goodness and self-renunciation in the interests of their fellow-men; but their trouble is that they seek happiness and pleasure in goodness when they should be seeking in goodness merely goodness. If people like this live in a society which affords each and every of its members an opportunity of aspiring to the attainment of the ideal of truth and weal, one can say of them without hesitation that vanity and petty conceit have stifled their good instincts and made them egoists. But our Onegin belongs to neither of these two orders of egoists. He could be said to be an *egoist against his will*; we see in his egoism what the ancients called *Fatum*. Useful, salutary, beneficial activity! Why did not Onegin pursue it? Why did he not seek contentment in that? Why? Why? Because, my dear sirs, it is easier for futile men to ask than for sensible men to answer....

Alone among his new possessions,
At first Eugene began to dream
Of making certain grand concessions
And setting up a new regime;
For the corvée he substituted
Light quit-rent, and the slave well suited
Because there was not much to pay,
Blessed the new master every day.
Not so his calculating neighbour
Who thought our Eugene was a gull;
Another neighbour tapped his skull:
Why thus dispense with lawful labour?
The youth was called on every hand
A faddist and a firebrand.
The neighbours promptly called and twaddled
Of this and that, to his distress;
Hence oft he had his stallion saddled
At the back porch in readiness,
That he, when wheels were within hearing,
Might dash away as they were nearing.

The gentry all cried out in scorn,
This insult was not to be borne.
"Onegin is a boor, a mason,
He leaves the ladies' hands unkissed;
Drinks wine in tumblers," it was hissed;
"He never puts a civil face on,
Says, 'yes' and 'no', but never 'sir'."
In this opinion all concur.

Accomplishment is only possible in society, on the basis of social needs indicated by reality itself and not by theory; but what could Onegin have accomplished in the society of such excellent neighbours, in the company of such genial fellow-men? To lighten the burden of the peasant, of course, meant a lot to the peasant, but Onegin had not done much in this direction. There are men who, if they succeed in accomplishing anything worth-while, will self-complacently tell the whole world about it, thus keeping themselves agreeably occupied for a lifetime. Onegin did not belong to this type of men: what was great and important to others was no great shakes to him.

Chance threw Onegin and Lensky together; through Lensky Onegin was introduced to the Larins. Returning home from them after his first visit Onegin yawns; from his conversation with Lensky we learn that he took Tatiana to be his friend's fiancée, and on learning his mistake, expressed surprise at his choice, saying that if he were a poet himself he would have chosen Tatiana. A single careless glance or two sufficed for this apathetic disillusioned man to realize the difference between the two sisters, whereas it never entered the head of the ardent, rapturous Lensky that his beloved was not at all the ideal and poetic creature he imagined her to be, but simply a pretty, artless little girl for whose sake it was not worth risking his friend's life or his own in a duel. While Onegin was yawning—*through habit,* to use his own words, without a thought of the Larin family—his arrival had sown the seeds of a terrible drama in this family. The majority of the public were astonished that Onegin, on receiving Tatiana's letter, did not fall in love with her, and still more, that Onegin, who had so coldly spurned the chaste, naive love of the noble girl, afterwards fell passionately in love with the splendid lady of fashion. As a matter of fact there is cause for astonishment. We do not undertake to

solve the question, but we shall discuss it. Though admitting that this fact may be a psychological matter, we nevertheless do not find the fact itself in any way astonishing. Firstly, as to why he fell in love, or why he did not fall in love, or why he did not fall in love at the time, is a question we consider a bit too dictatorial. The heart has its own laws—that's true, but not the kind from which one could compile a complete and systematic code. Affinity of natures, moral sympathy and similarity of ideas may and even should play a big part in the love of rational creatures; but he who dismisses in love the element of sheer spontaneity, the instinctive, involuntary force of attraction, the whim of the heart, in justification of the somewhat trivial but expressive proverb that "love is blind"—he who dismisses this does not understand love. If the choice in love were made only by will and reason, love would cease to be feeling and passion. The element of spontaneity is in evidence in the most reasonable love, for only one person is chosen among several equally worthy persons, the choice being based on involuntary attraction of the heart. But there are also cases when people seemingly made for each other remain mutually indifferent and each shows a preference for some other person who is in no way their match. Onegin therefore was fully entitled, without fear of being arraigned before the criminal bench of criticism, to not love Tatiana-the-girl, and to love Tatiana-the-woman. In either case he acted neither morally nor unmorally. That is quite sufficient to exonerate him; but we would add something more to this. Onegin was too clever, subtle and experienced and he knew human nature too well not to realize from Tatiana's letter that this poor girl was endowed with a passionate heart, yearning for the fatal viands, that her soul was as chaste as an infant's and her passion childishly ingenuous, and that she in no way resembled the coquettes who had wearied him with their light or counterfeit affections. He was keenly moved by Tatiana's letter:

> But our Onegin's heart was stricken
> When Tanya's tender message came;
> Its girlish fire began to quicken
> A swarm of thoughts exempt from blame.
> Again her pale face looms before him,
> Her melancholy eyes adore him—
> *And as on these his fancy dwelt,*

Onegin a pure rapture felt.
Perchance he briefly knew the fever
That thrilled him in the days gone by,
And yet her trust he'd not belie,
He would not play the base deceiver.

In his letter to Tatiana (in Chapter VIII) he says that, perceiving in her a spark of tenderness, he did not want to believe it (that is, he forced himself not to believe it), did not give rein to fond habit and did not want to surrender his irksome liberty. But while he appreciated one side of Tatiana's love, he equally clearly saw the other side. In the first place, to allow himself to be allured by that childishly beautiful love and yield to it to the point of reciprocity was tantamount with Onegin to a decision to marry. But while he may still have had an interest in the poetry of passion, the poetry of matrimony, far from appealing to him, was repellent. The poet, who has expressed much of his own state of feelings in Onegin, says the following on this score, in speaking of Lensky:

He never thought of the vexation
That Hymen brings, the grief and pain,
And the cool yawns that come amain,
While we, with married life not smitten,
Are certain that it only means
A series of fatiguing scenes,
Such stuff as La Fontaine has written.

If not marriage, then a romantic love, if not something worse; but he had so well understood Tatiana that he could not even think of the latter contingency, without abasing himself. In both cases, however, this love did not appear to him in a seductive light. What! He who had burned himself out in passions, who had drained the cup of life and knowledge of men, whose fibres still quivered with dim incomprehensible strivings, he who could only be interested in and absorbed by something that would be impervious to his own irony—he to be infatuated by the childish love of a young girl-dreamer who looked upon life as he could no longer look upon it! ... And what promise could that love hold out to him in the future? What would he find afterwards in Tatiana? Either a wayward child who would cry because he could not, like she, look at life through childish eyes and play a childish game of love—

and that, you will agree, is very dull; or a creature so infatuated by his superiority that she would fall utterly under his sway without understanding him, and become a thing devoid of feelings, sense, will or character of her own. The latter is more conducive of peace, but still duller. And is this the poetry and rapture of love! ...

Parted from Tatiana by Lensky's death, Onegin lost the last link that had in a way still bound him to people.

> Onegin (I return to him),
> Having, to satisfy a whim,
> Dispatched his friend, and had his pleasure,
> And with no aim on which to fix,
> Having attained to twenty-six—
> Blasé, grown tired of empty leisure,
> Without affairs, or rank, or wife,
> Found nothing fit to fill his life.
> Thus he grew restless and decided
> That he must have a change of scene
> (A plaguey wish by which are guided
> The few who relish toil and teen).

He visited, among other places, the Caucasus, and gazed at the pale swarm of shadows thronging around the healing waters of Mashuk:

> Plunged deep in bitter meditation,
> Among the ailing crowds a guest,
> Onegin, lost in contemplation,
> Regards the spring with eyes distressed,
> And broods, with melancholy sighing:
> Why harm'd me not a bullet flying?
> Why am I not infirm and old
> As this tax farmer, I behold?
> Why am I not a paralytic
> Like an assessor, we may see
> In some provincial town? Ah me!
> Why am I not, at least, rheumatic?
> I'm young, I thrive with every breath;
> What to await? I'm bored to death!

What a life! There it is, the suffering, so much is written about in verse and prose, so many complain of, as though they really

knew it; there it is, suffering real and genuine, without the tragic buskins, without the stilts and drapery and declamation, suffering which frequently does not entail loss of sleep, appetite or health, but is all the more terrible for it! ... To sleep at night and yawn in the day, to watch the bustle of men eternally occupied with something or other: one with money, another with matrimony, a third with sickness, a fourth with want and the bloody sweat of toil—to see around you gayety and sorrow and tears and laughter, to see all this and feel a stranger to it all, like the Wandering Jew who, amid the turmoil of life's sea around him feels himself a stranger to life and dreams of death as a sweet release; this is a suffering not all can comprehend, but none the less poignant.... Youth, health, riches, combined with soul and intellect: what more, would it seem, could life and happiness want? So does the obtuse rabble think calling this suffering a fashionable craze. And the more natural and unaffected Onegin's suffering is, the less could it be understood and appreciated by most of the public. To have lived so much at twenty-six without having relished life, to be so tired and weary without having accomplished anything, to have arrived at absolute negation without having passed through any convictions—that is death! But Onegin was not fated to die without having tasted the cup of life: a deep strong passion was not long in awakening the aching slumber of his soul. On meeting Tatiana at a ball in St. Petersburg, Onegin barely recognized her, so greatly had she changed!

She is not hurried, is not chilly,
Nor full of idle chat and silly;
She lacks the look of snobbishness,
The cold pretensions to success,
The little tricks that are affected
By ladies in society....
Hers is a still simplicity.
She seems the image quite perfected
Of *comme il faut*—
She was no beauty: that were fiction
To utter, yet she'd not a trace,
From head to foot, in form or face,
Of what, in fashionable diction
And in high London circles, they
Term *vulgar*.

Tatiana's husband, who is amply done justice to by the poet's brief but comprehensive verse:

> The general, since such tributes flatter
> An escort much, puffed out his chest
> And raised his nose above the rest—

introduces Onegin to her as his relative and friend. Many readers, on first perusing this chapter, expected Tatiana to emit a loud "ah!" and swoon away, and then, on coming to, throw herself on Onegin's neck. But what a disappointment for them!

> The princess gazed
> At him.... And if she was amazed,
> And if the sudden sight dismayed her,
> And if her soul was deeply stirred,
> No look, no tremor, not a word
> In any small degree betrayed her:
> Her manner was what it had been
> Before, her bow was as serene.
> Not only did she fail to shiver,
> Turn pale or blush, as one distressed.
> Her eyebrows did not even quiver,
> Nor yet were her soft lips compressed
> Not all Onegin's observation
> Could show him an approximation
> To Tanya of the days that were;
> He wanted to converse with her
> And ... could not. Now she spoke, enquiring
> When he had come, and if, of late
> He'd had a glimpse of his estate;
> Then with a look that showed her tiring,
> Begged that her husband suffer her
> To leave.... Our Eugene could not stir.
> Can it be that Tatiana truly
> Whom at the start of our romance,
> Quite tête-a-tête he'd lectured duly
> (You will recall the circumstance)?
> How noble was the tone he'd taken;
> The spot itself was God-forsaken.
> Can this be she who long since wrote—
> He has it still—a touching note,
> A letter heartfelt, artless, candid:

That little girl . . . is it a dream?
That little girl he had not deem
It wrong to scorn when pride commanded—
Can it be she who only now
Showed him so cold and calm a brow?
. . . . . .
Is he bewitched? It's very droll.
By what is his cold torpid soul
Now stirred? Is it vexation moving
The man? Or vanity, forsooth?
Or love, the grave concern of youth?
. . . . . .
How changed Tatiana is! How truly
She knows her rôle! With none to thank—
Tutored by her own wit—she duly
Bears the proud burden of her rank!
Who, in this cool majestic woman,
The ballroom's ruler, scarcely human,
Would dare to seek that gentle girl?
And he had set her heart awhirl!
When nights were dark and she, forsaken
By Morpheus, her dark eyes would rest
Upon the moon, and her young breast
By virginal desires were shaken,
Then in a dream that naught could dim
She'd walk life's humble road with him.
To love all ages are submission;
To youthful hearts its tempests bring
The very boon they would petition,
As fields are blest by storms of spring:
The rain of passion is not cruel,
But bears refreshment and renewal,
There is a quickening at the root
That bodes full flowers and honeyed fruit.
But at the late and sterile season,
At the sad turning of the years,
The tread of passion augurs tears:
Thus autumn gusts deal death and treason,
And turn the meadow to a marsh
And leave the forests gaunt and harsh.

Though not belonging to the ultra-idealists we readily admit that the loftiest passions may sometimes contain an admixture of petty

feelings, and we are therefore inclined to think that *vexation* and *vanity* had a part in Onegin's passion. But we emphatically disagree with the poet's viewpoint which he so solemnly proclaimed and which found such a ready response in the crowd, seeing that it was a thing it could easily grasp:

> Oh, humans, like your first mamma,
> Ancestral Eve, you find delightful
> Not what you have, but what you see
> Afar: the serpent and the tree
> Seduce you, though the cost be frightful.
> Forbidden fruits alone entice—
> Without them there's no paradise.

We have a better opinion of the dignity of human nature, and are convinced that man is born for good and not for evil. for the rational and lawful enjoyment of the b'essings of life and not for evil-doing; that his strivings are righteous, his instincts noble. Evil is latent in society and not in man, since society, namely the forms of human development, have by no means yet reached perfection, and it is not surprising that one sees only all the wickedness in it. For a similar reason, that which was held to be culpable in the ancient world is considered lawful in the modern world and vice versa; that is the reason why every people in every age had its own ideas of morality, of the righteous and the iniquitous. Mankind is still far from that degree of perfection where all men, as creatures of a single genus endowed with a single rational mind, will come to an understanding in their ideas of the true and the false, of right and wrong, of lawful and wicked, just as they have come to an understanding that the world moves round the sun and not the sun round the earth, and have agreed upon a multitude of mathematical axioms. Until then wrong-doing will be only outwardly a crime, and inwardly, intrinsically it will be a non-admission of this or that law's rightness and rationality. There was a time when parents regarded their children as their slaves and believed that they had the right to coerce their most sacred feelings and inclinations. Now: it a girl, feeling an aversion to a respectable-looking gentleman whom she is forcibly being made to marry, and passionately loving a man she is forcibly torn away from, should follow the dictates of her heart and love the man of her choice and not the man with whose fortune or rank her fond parents are enam-

oured, is she to be looked upon as an offender? Nothing is so subordinate to the rigour of outer exigencies as the heart, and nothing demands such positive freedom as the heart. Even the very joy of love—what is it, if rendered accordant to outer exigencies, but the song of the nightingale or the lark in a golden cage. What is the joy of love admitting only the power and whim of the heart?—it is the jubilant song of the nightingale at sunset, amid the mysterious shades of the willows drooping over the river; the free song of the lark which, intoxicated with the sheer joy of living, now shoots like an arrow into the skies, now plunges headlong down, or stands poised with quivering wings as though bathing and dipping in the ethereal blue.... Birds love freedom; passion is the poetry and colour of life, but what are passions if the heart have no freedom?...

Onegin's letter to Tatiana is aflame with passion; gone are the irony, the conventional restraint and the conventional mask. Onegin knows that his conduct will very likely give cause for malicious glee; but passion in him has smothered the fear of looking ridiculous, the fear of giving a weapon into his enemy's hands. And his profound despair is understandable. By her outward mien one would think that Tatiana had resigned herself to her life. was a sincere worshipper of the idol of worldly vanities. If that were so Onegin's role would, of course, be a very ludicrous and pitiful one. But in society appearances convince nobody: there everyone is only too adept at the dignified art of being gay while the heart is racked with anguish. Onegin would be justified in taking it for granted that Tatiana, at bottom, had remained true to herself and that society had merely taught her the art of self-mastery and of taking a more serious view of life. A noble nature is not killed by polite society, despite the opinions of philistine philosophers; vulgar society provides equal opportunities with polite society for desolating heart and soul. The difference is merely a matter of form and not essence. And now in what light would Tatiana appear to Onegin,—Tatiana, no longer the romantic girl, confiding her cherished thoughts to the moon and stars and divining her dreams by Martin Zadeka's book, but a woman who knows the value of what she possesses, who will demand a lot, but will also give a lot. The aureole of fashion could not but exalt her in Onegin's eyes: In society, as everywhere else, there are people of two kinds—

those who addict themselves to forms and see life's meaning in their fulfillment—they are the rabble; and those who borrow from society a knowledge of people and life, a sense of realities and a faculty of fully mastering all that nature has conferred upon them. Tatiana belonged to the latter kind, and her importance as a lady of quality merely enhanced her importance as a woman. Moreover, to Onegin love without strife was shorn of sweetness, and Tatiana held out no promise of an easy conquest. And he threw himself into the strife without hopes of victory, without premeditation, with all the distraction of a sincere passion, such as breathes in every line of his letter:

No, to be with you constantly;
To follow you with deep devotion;
And with enamoured eyes to see
Each smile of yours, each glance, each motion;
To listen to you, late and soon;
To know you: spirit turned to spirit;
In torment at your feet to swoon—
Were bliss; and death? I should not fear it!

. . . . . .

If you but knew how agonizing
It is to parch with hot desire,
By mental effort tranquilizing
The blood that burns with frantic fire;
To long to clasp your knees, and, throbbing
With anguish, pour out at your feet
Appeal, complaint, confession, sobbing
The wretched story out, complete,—
And longing thus be forced to meet you
With a feigned chill in look and voice,
Converse at ease, seem to rejoice,
And with a cheerful eye to greet you! . . .

But this ardent passion made no impression on Tatiana. When, after several epistles, Onegin meets her, he sees no signs of perturbation, suffering or tear-stained face, nothing but the reflection of wrath. . . . Onegin shut himself up in his house all the winter and fell to reading:

What of it? Though his eyes were busy,
His mind was ever far away;

With whirling thoughts his soul grew dizzy,
And dreams and musings far from gay.
The page he read could scarcely bore him.
Because between the lines before him,
Another set of lines transpired
Of which Onegin never tired.
These were the secret fond traditions
Of intimacies of the past,
And rootless dreams that could not last,
Vague threads, predictions, and suspicions,
A fairy tale that lasts the night,
Or letters that a girl might write.
And as he reads, both thought and feeling
Are lulled to sleep, and readily
Imagination is unreeling
Its parti-coloured pageantry,
The first close picture is disclosing
A youth, who on the snow seems dozing;
As Eugene stares his heart is chilled
To hear a voice cry: "Well? He's killed!"
He sees forgotten foes, malicious
Detractors, cowardly and vile,
And cruel traitresses who smile,
And old companions, dull and vicious.
A country house he next may see—
She is at the window—always she! . . .

We shall not dilate now on the scene of Onegin's meeting with Tatiana and his declaration of love, for the principal role in this scene belongs to Tatiana, of whom we have a good deal yet to say, The romance ends with Tatiana's rebuff, and the reader takes his leave of Onegin at the bitterest moment of his life. . . . But what is this? Where is the romance? Where is the idea? And what sort of romance is it that has no end? We believe that there are romances the very idea of which consists precisely in the fact that they have no ending, because there are events in real life that have no denouement there is existence without aim, creatures difficult to define, baffling to everybody, even to themselves, in short, what the French call *les êtres manqués les existences avortées.* These creatures are often richly endowed with moral excellence and powers of the soul; they promise much, fulfill little, or nothing at all. This does not depend upon them, it is Fate, which is latent in the

reality that surrounds them like the air and from which it is beyond the strength of man to free himself. Another poet gave us another Onegin under the name of Pechorin:[12] Pushkin's Onegin gave himself up with a sort of self-abnegation to ennui; Lermontov's Pechorin grapples in mortal combat with life from which he wishes to wrest his dole; the ways are different, but the results are the same: both romances close without an ending, like the lives and activities of the men who wrote them....

What happened to Onegin afterwards? Was his passion reborn to a new pain, a pain more in conformity with human dignity? Or did it kill all the powers of his soul and turn his misery into lifeless, cold apathy? We do not know, and what need have we to know it when we know that the powers of this richly-endowed nature have remained without application, his life without meaning, and romance without culmination? It suffices that we know this not to want to know any more....

Onegin's is a real character in the sense that it has nothing dreamful and fantastic about it, that he could be happy or unhappy only in reality and through reality. In Lensky Pushkin has depicted a character which is the complete opposite of Onegin's, a character utterly abstract, utterly alien to reality. At that time it was an entirely novel phenomenon and men of that kind did actually begin to appear in Russian society.

Whose soul was shaped in Göttingen,
And who could wield the poet's pen.
From misty Germany, Vladimir
Had brought the fruits of learning's tree:
An ardent faith in liberty,
The spirit of an oddish dreamer,
Rapt eloquence in speech and song,
And curls as black as they were long.

. . . . . .

The theme from which he ne'er departed
Was love: he sang it late and soon,
Serene as maidens simple-hearted,
As infant slumbers, as the moon
In the unruffled heavens shining;
He sang of *parting* and *repining;*
The *mystic, wistful* hours of night;
Of distance, promising delight;

He sang the *rose, romantic flower;*
And lands remote, where on the breast
Of silence he had lain at rest
And let his tears unheeded shower;
He sang life's bloom and early blight:
His nineteenth year was scarce in sight!

Lensky was a romanticist both by nature and the spirit of the times. Needless to say, this was a creature who embraced all that was beautiful and sublime, a soul that was pure and noble. At the same time "his heart though fond was ignorant," he was for ever talking about life without ever having known it. Reality had no effect upon him: his joys and sorrows were the creatures of his imagination. He fell in love with Olga—what did it matter that she did not understand him, that, in marrying him, she would have become a second revised edition of her mamma, that she would as lief marry him, the poet and companion of her childish games, as the uhlan officer pleased with his dear self and his horse?—Lensky embellished her with virtues and perfections, ascribed to her thoughts and feelings which she had not and cared nothing for. Kind-hearted, gay and sweet, Olga was as charming a creature as all "misses" are until they become "mistresses," and to Lensky she was a fairy, a sylph, a romantic vision, without a hint of the future mistress. He wrote "A Tombstone Madrigal" to the old man Larin in whom, true to himself and without a trace of irony, he contrived to discover a poetic side. Onegin's simple desire to play a joke on him he took as treachery, seduction and mortal insult. The result was his own death, anticipated in mistily romantic verses. We certainly do not attempt to exculpate Onegin, who, as the poet says:

... should not have been so rash,
Not thus have sought to cut a dash,
Nor shown a fighter's predilection,
But, like a man of worth and sense,
Have acted with intelligence,

but the tyranny and despotism of society's and worldly prejudices, are such that they require heroes to combat them. The details of Onegin's duel with Lensky are a masterpiece of artistic description. The poet was enamoured of the ideal as depicted in Lensky, and lamented his death in some beautiful stanzas:

Friends, for the poet you are grieving:
Cut off before his hopes could bloom;
The world of glory thus bereaving,
He came, unripened unto the tomb!
Where is the burning agitation,
Where is the noble aspiration,
The thoughts of youth so high and grave,
The tender feelings and the brave?
Where are the storms of love and longing,
The thirst for knowledge, toil, and fame,
The dread of vice, the fear of shame,
And you, bright phantoms round him thronging,
You, figments of sweet reverie,
You, dreams of sacred poesy?

Mayhap he would have been reputed,
Or gloriously served the world;
Mayhap the lyre so early muted
Beneath his fingers would have hurled
A mighty music down the ages.
Perchance he would have earned the wages
By worldly approbation paid.
Or it may be his martyred shade
Bore to the grave so deeply forever
A holy secret, and a voice
To make the soul of man rejoice
Is lost to us, and he shall never
Be thrilled upon Elysian ways
To hear a people's hymn of praise.
Perchance a humble lot awaited
The poet, and he may, forsooth,
Like many others have been fated
To lose his ardour with his youth.
He might have altered and deserted
The Muse—to marriage been converted,
And worn in comfort, far from town,
Horns and a quilted dressing gown.
He might have learned that life was shabby
At bottom, and, too bored to think,
Have been content to eat and drink,
Had gout at forty, fat and flabby:
He might have gone to bed and died
While doctors hemmed and women cried.

We are convinced that the last-mentioned would indubiously have been Lensky's fate. He had a great deal of good in him, but the best in him was that he was young and that he died in time to save his reputation. His was not one of those natures for whom to live means to develop and go forward. He was, we repeat, a *romanticist*, and nothing more.

Had he remained alive Pushkin would have found no other use for him than to spread throughout a whole chapter what he had so fully said of him in a single stanza. Men like Lensky, for all their undeniable merits, have this weak point, that they either degenerate into utter philistines or perpetually remain true to original type, thereby becoming antiquated mystics and dreamers, who are as obnoxious as the ideal old maids, and are more the enemies of progress than ordinary men, vulgar without pretensions.[13] Forever wrapt up in self, considering themselves the centre of the universe, they look placidly upon what is going on in the world and asseverate that happiness lies within us, that our souls should aspire to the starry heights of dreams and we should not dwell on the futilities of this world, where reign hunger, and want, and.... The Lenskys have not died out yet; they have merely degenerated. They have nothing left of the charm and beauty that were Lensky's; they lack the virginal purity of his heart, they have merely the pretension to greatness and an unconquerable penchant for wasting paper. They are all poets, and the "metrical ballast" in the magazines is purveyed only by them. In brief, they are today the most obnoxious, most inane and vulgar people.

Tatiana ... but we shall speak of her in the next article.

ARTICLES ON THE WORKS OF ALEXANDER PUSHKIN

ST. PETERSBURG. ELEVEN VOLUMES.
MDCCCXXXVIII—MDCCCXLI

ARTICLE NINE

EUGENE ONEGIN

(Conclusion)

IT IS PUSHKIN'S great merit that he was the first, in his romance, to give us a poetical picture of Russian society of the times, and to reveal to us in the persons of Onegin and Lensky its principal, *i.e.*, male, side; perhaps still greater is our poet's merit in that he was first to give us, in the person of Tatiana, a poetical delineation of Russian womanhood. The man, in all conditions and in all circles of Russian society plays the leading role; but we cannot say that woman has played a secondary, inferior role, because she plays no role at all. The only exception is the highest circle, at least to a certain degree. It is time we confessed that, despite our passion for blindly copying European ways, despite our balls and dances and the despair of our Slav-lovers at our having completely become *Germans*—despite this, it is time, at last, that we confessed that we are still poor knights, that our attentions to woman, our readiness to live and die for her sake are still sort of theatrical and smack of the fashionable idiom—and even that is not of our own invention, but borrowed. Why, even our respectable merchantry with a beard *sum'at* redolent of cabbage and onions walks down the street with *the missus* arm in arm instead of pushing her from behind by aid of the knee, while leading the way with an injunction not to gape around; but at home.... But why speak of what goes on at home? Why wash one's linen in public?... Having picked up some cut and dried phrases we cry in prose and verse: "woman is the queen of society; her charming presence adorns society" and so on. But look at our societies (with the exception of high society):

everywhere the women sit apart from the men. And the most dashing gallant, in keeping the ladies company, looks as though he were sacrificing himself out of courtesy; then he gets up with an air of fatigue, as though having performed an arduous task, and joins the men, seeking, as it were, a respite .nd relaxation. In Europe woman is really the queen of society: proud and happy is he who had enjoyed a larger share of her conversation than another man. With us it is the other way round: the woman waits as a favour for a man to speak to her; she is proud and happy of his attentions. How could it be otherwise when so-called good manners and courtesy with us are replaced by mincing manners, when everybody likes poetry only in books and fears it in life more than the cholera or the plague. How will you offer your arm to a girl if she is afraid to take it unless she has first obtained mamma's permission? Will you risk being seen in long and frequent conversation with her when you know that this will be taken as a sign that you are in love with her, or even that you might be announced as her fiance? It would mean compromising her and getting into trouble yourself. If you will be thought to be in love with her you will find no escape from arch and witty innuendoes and the railllery of your friends, and the naive and well-meant curiosity of utter strangers. You will be in a still worse predicament if people suspect that you want to marry her: if her parents do not consider you an advantageous match for their daughter they will not be at home to you and will strictly forbid the daughter to be friendly with you in other homes; if they do consider you to be a good match—you may look out for worse trouble; they will spread the nets and snares, and you will very likely find yourself tied up in the nuptial knot before you are aware of it, and then wonder: how and when did it all happen? If, on the other hand, you are a man of character not to be caught napping, you will lay yourself open to a "scandal" which you will long remember. What is the reason for all this? It is that men with us do not understand and do not want to understand what woman is, that they have no need for her, do not want and do not seek her, in a word, that woman does not exist with us. Our "fair sex" exists only in novels, stories, plays and elegies; but actually it is divided into four categories: little girls, marriageable girls, married women, and, finally, old maids and old women. The first, being children, no one is inter-

ested in; the last are feared and hated (often with good reason); consequently, our fair sex consists of two departments: marriageable girls and married women. The Russian girl is not a woman in the European sense, not an individual: she is merely a would-be bride. While still a child she calls all the men she sees about the house her betrothed and very often promises to marry her *papa* or her *little brother*; while still in the cradle she is told by mother and father and sisters and brothers and nurses and maids and everyone around her that she is a future bride and has to have suitors. Barely has she reached the age of twelve when her mother, reproving her for laziness, bad manners and other similar faults, tells her: "you ought to be ashamed of yourself, young lady: don't you realize that you're a coming *bride*?" No wonder, then, that she is incapable of looking upon herself as a womanly creature, a human individual, and thinks of herself only as a *bride*! No wonder that from her earliest years till her late youth, sometimes even till old age, all her thoughts, all her dreams, all her strivings and prayers become centred in a single obsession: marriage—that to marry is her sole passionate desire, the sense and purport of her existence, that outside of this she understands nothing, thinks of nothing, desires nothing, and that she looks upon every eligible bachelor not as a man but merely as a suitor! Is she to blame for this? From the age of eighteen she begins to feel that she is no longer the daughter of her parents, the darling of their hearts, the sunshine and gladness of the family and the adornment of the home, but a tiresome burden, goods threatening to become stale, superfluous furniture that may at any moment fall in value and become unsaleable. What option has she but to concentrate all her faculties on the art of suitor-baiting? The more so that this is the only direction in which her faculties develop, thanks to the lessons of her "fond parents" and dear aunts, cousins, etc. What does a solicitous mamma mostly scold and reproach her daughter for?—For lacking proper poise, for being unable to ogle and look sweet upon good suitors, or for wasting her favours on men who do not represent an advantageous match. What does she mostly teach her? To flirt with prudence, to pretend to be an angel, to hide cat's claws beneath the soft sleek fur of kittenish paws. And, whatever the poor daughter's nature may be, she involuntarily enters into the role which life has dealt to her and in the mysteries of which she has been so diligently

and thoroughly initiated. At home she goes about a slattern, with unkempt hair, in a soiled, shrunken and short little frock of faded cotton, in shoes worn down at heels and soiled slack stockings: for who, in the country, will see her, except the house servants—and it is not worth dressing up for them! But no sooner is a carriage seen coming down the road promising unexpected visitors, than our would-be bride lifts her arms and holds them for a long time above her head crying breathlessly: *visitors are coming, visitors are coming*! This makes her red hands white: *the device of rural wit*! Then pandemonium breaks out: mamma and daughter wash themselves, comb their hair, change their shoes, put on woolen or silk dresses, made five years ago, over their soiled underwear. Why bother about clean underwear—it's worn beneath the dress and no one sees it; in any case who doesn't know that you dress up for other people, not for yourself. And now, at long last, all the secret strivings and ardent vows are about to be fulfilled: the would-be fiancée has become affianced and dresses up only for her betrothed. She had known him for a long time, but fell in love with him only the moment she learned that he had designs on her. And she really believes that she is in love with him. The painful striving towards matrimony and the joy of fulfillment are capable of momentarily exciting love in a heart that has for long been played upon by secret and overt dreams of marriage. Besides, when you have not a moment to lose and are being hurried, you have no option but to fall precipitately in love without having time to ask yourself whether you really are in love or only imagine yourself to be.... But the "fond parents" have only taught their daughter the art of getting married at all costs; they never thought of preparing her for the married state, of explaining to her the duties of a wife and mother and rendering her capable of fulfilling these duties. And they did quite right; there is nothing more futile and even harmful than precepts, be they of the best, unless they are upheld by example and vindicated in the eyes of the pupil by actual environment in all its entirety. "Take an example from me, young lady!" the mother keeps repeating to her daughter in a dictatorial tone. And the daughter dutifully copies her mother, preparing for the world and her future husband a replica of her mamma. If her husband is a wealthy man he will be pleased with his wife: at home there is everything in full measure, though it is all in bad taste, ridicu-

lous, dirty, dusty and disordered and is only tidied up on the eve of big holidays (when pandemonium is let loose, a perfect Babel of peoples); there is a huge crowd of domestics and a vast staff of servants, but you can never get anyone to bring you a glass of water or serve you a cup of tea.... And what of the recent bride, now the young wife? O. she lives "to her heart's content"! She has at last attained the goal of her life; she is no longer an orphan, an adopted child, an unwanted burden in the parental home; she is the hostess in her own home, her own mistress, enjoying complete freedom: she goes whither she wants and whenever she wants and entertains whoever she wishes; she need no longer pretend to be the meek lamb or innocent angel; she can have her whims, and fainting fits, and drive her husband, children, and servants to distraction. She indulges all her fancies, whether it be for carriages or shawls or expensive playthings galore; she lives the aristocratic lady, will yield the palm to nobody, is second to none, while her husband barely has time to mortgage and remortgage the estate.... A child of the new generation, she has lavishly though garishly fitted out the drawing room and reception room, which care is taken, after a manner, to keep in a state of semi-cleanliness and semi-tidiness, for these are the visitors' rooms, the best rooms, the rooms for show; dirt reigns triumphant only in the bedrooms, the nursery and her husband's study—in short, in the private rooms to which visitors have no access. And she is constantly receiving visitors, she has a constant circle around her; but she captivates her visitors not with her cultivated mind, nor the grace of her manners, nor the charm of her sparkling conversation,—no, she merely tries to show them what a lot she has of everything, how rich she is, how everything she has is of the best—the appointments of her rooms, her entertainment, her guests, her horses, that she is not just anybody, that people like her are few.... The conversation consists of scandal and toilette, toilette and scandal. God has given His blessing to this wedlock, which every year begets a child. How is she going to bring up her children? Why, in the very same way in which she herself was brought up by mamma: while they are little ones they will be kept out of the way in the nursery, amid wet nurses, nurses and maids, in the bosom of servility, which is to inculcate in them the primary rules of morality, develop in them noble instincts, explain to them the difference between hobgoblins and werewolves, witches

and mermaids, interpretate to them the meaning of various tokens, relate all sorts of stories about dead men and wraiths, teach them to swear and fight and tell lies without turning a hair, and put them in the way of eating without ever having their fill. And the dear things are very pleased with the sphere in which they live; they have their favourites among the menials as well as their aversions; with the former they live in harmony, the latter they scold and beat. And now we see them grown up: then the father does what he likes with the boys, while the girls are taught to trip and lace themselves, to strum the piano a little, to prattle French a little—and there their education ends; their sole pursuit and care after that is to angle for suitors.

But should our would-be bride marry a man of modest though not impecunious means, living slightly beyond these means and applying a rigorous system to make both ends meet, then woe to her husband. She had never done anything in her country home (for *misses* are not *house serfs* to be expected to do anything), had had no occupations, knows nothing about keeping house, no ideas about order, cleanliness and tidiness in the home—she had never seen or heard about it. To her marriage means becoming a lady, and that means ruling over everybody in the house and becoming mistress of her own actions. Her business is not thrift and saving, but buying and spending, dressing smartly and making a display.

And would you blame her for all this? What right have you to demand that she be other than what you have made her? Could you even blame her parents? Have you not yourself made of woman merely a bride and wife, and nothing more? Have you ever approached her disinterestedly, simply, without any designs, merely for the sake of relishing that flavour, that harmony of womanhood, that poetic charm of feminine presence and society which exercises such a chastening and tranquilizing spell on men's cruder natures? Have you ever sought a friend in a woman you have never been in love with, or a sister in a woman who was a stranger to you? No! If you enter woman's circle, it is merely for the purpose of fulfilling the conventional proprieties, a ritual; if you dance with a woman, it is merely because it is not the custom for men to dance with men. If you ever pay a woman exclusive attention it is always with a definite intention of marriage

or philandering. Your view of women is purely utilitarian, almost commercial; she represents to you capital plus interest, a dowry village, a paying proposition; if not this, then a cook, laundress, housekeeper, nurse, at the very most an odalisque.

Of course, there are exceptions; but society consists of general rules, and not exceptions, which more often than not are painful ulcers on the body of society. This sad truth is best borne out by our so-called "ideal maids." They are usually passionately fond of reading, and read hard and fast—they devour books. But how they read and what they read—ye gods! ... The most admirable trait of our ideal maids is their assurance that they understand what they are reading and that reading is very beneficial to them. They are all worshippers of Pushkin, a fact which does not, however, prevent them from paying due tribute to the talent of Mr. Benediktov; some of them even read Gogol with pleasure, which, however, does not prevent them from admiring the stories of Messrs. Marlinsky and Polevoy. They rave about everything that happens to be the vogue, everything that is written or spoken of at the time. But they perceive in all this their favourite idea, the justification of their mood, *i.e.*, their ideality, perceive it even where it does not exist at all or where it is derided. They all have their intimate notebooks in which they copy out paltry verses that have struck their fancy or thoughts that have pleased them in books. They are fond of moonlight strolls, of gazing at the stars and watching flowing brooks. They have a great penchant for friendship and each of them carries on a lively correspondence with her friend living in the same village or even in some other room of the same house. In their correspondence (enormous volumes of it) they confide to each other their emotions, thoughts and impressions. In addition each keeps a diary filled with "conned sentiments" wherein (as all diaries of ideal and intrinsic natures, feminine and masculine) all is pretense and idealizing, and nothing genuine and alive. They despise the crowd and the world, and nourish an irreconcilable hatred of all that savours of the material. That hatred often extends to a hankering after utter renunciation from matter, to which end they starve themselves, abstain from food sometimes for a week on end, burn their fingers over a candle, place snow on their bosoms beneath their dresses, drink vinegar and ink, try to wean themselves

from sleep—and so notably succeed in this striving towards the sublime and ideal existence that they effectually render themselves a nervous wreck and become a live, raw and egregiously material sore.... For, extremes always meet! All the simple, human, and particularly the feminine feelings, such as passion, an ability to be carried away by the affections, maternal love, feeling for a man who is in no way extraordinary and not a genius, who is not persecuted by ill-fortune, does not suffer, is neither sick nor poor—all these simple feelings appear to them vulgar, trivial, ludicrous and contemptible. Especially interesting are the "ideal maids'" conceptions of love. They are all votaresses of love—they think, dream, speak and write only about love. But they admit only a pure, unearthly, ideal, platonic love. Marriage to them is a profanation of love; happiness is a vulgarization of love. They positively must love in separation, and their highest bliss is to dream of the object of their love beneath the moon and to meditate: "Perhaps *he* too is now gazing at the moon and thinking of me; and so love knows not separation!" Pitiful fish with cold blood, the ideal maids think themselves birds; swimming in the turbid pools of artificial highly-strung exaltation they think they are soaring in the clouds of sublime feelings and thoughts. They are strangers to all that is simple, true, heartfelt and passionate; believing they love the "sublime and beautiful" they love only themselves; they do not suspect that they are merely tickling their petty vanity with the glittering firecrackers of imagination in believing themselves to be votaresses of love and self-renunciation. Many of them are not averse to matrimony, changing their convictions suddenly at the first opportunity, and from ideal maids soon become just ordinary women; but with others the capacity for deluding themselves with visions of their fancy keeps them in a state of rapturous virginity all their lives, and they retain a faculty for sentimental exaltation and febrile idealism till the ripe age of seventy. The best of this feminine genus sooner or later come to their senses; but their former aberrancies become forever the evil spirit of their lives which, like the traces of an ill-cured malady, preys on their mind and poisons their happiness. More terrible than all the others are those of the ideal maids who not only have no aversion to matrimony, but regard it as the height of earthly bliss to be wedded to the object of their love: what with their want of intelligence, their

entire lack of moral development and depraved imagination they create for themselves an ideal of matrimonial happiness—and when they perceive the impracticability of their absurd ideal being fulfilled they vent upon their husbands all the bitterness of their disappointment.

The ideal maids of all kinds are for the most part girls who had been left to their own development. Can they be blamed for having turned out to be moral deformities instead of living creatures? The positive reality of their environment is indeed very ugly, and they are involuntarily seized with an overpowering conviction that only that is good which is unlike, diametrically opposite to that reality. Yet, original development that does not occur on the soil of reality, in the sphere of society, invariably leads to deformity. And so they are faced with the alternative: either to be vulgar on the general pattern, to be vulgar like the rest, or to be vulgar in an original way. They choose the latter, thinking they have jumped from the earth to the clouds, whereas they have merely shifted from the plane of positive vulgarity to that of romantic vulgarity. And what is most lamentable is that there are natures among these unfortunate creatures which are not devoid of a real need for more or less humanly rational existence and are worthy of a better fate.

But in this world of morally-warped phenomena there are rare and happy exceptions of truly great magnitude, which always pay dearly for their exclusiveness and fall a prey to their own superiority. Natures of genius, themselves unaware of their genius, they are relentlessly killed by an unconscious society as an expiatory sacrifice to its own sins.... Such is Pushkin's Tatiana. You are familiar with the Larin family. The father, though he could not be called very foolish, is none too clever; you could not call him human, neither could you call him brute, but something in the nature of a polyp belonging simultaneously to both kingdoms of nature—the vegetable and the animal.

A tender father, a good master,
His passing came as a disaster
To friend and child and faithful wife;
He's led a kind and simple life;
He died a short hour before dinner.
His epitaph is plain as he;

Graved on the monument you see:
"*Dmitri Larin, a poor sinner,*
God's servant, and a brigadier,
Come to eternal rest, lies here."

The repose which was his beneath the stone was a continuation of the peace which the *good master* had enjoyed during life beneath his Tatar dressing gown. There are such people in the world in whose lives and joys death produces no change whatever. Tatiana's father was one of these fortunate people. Her mamma, however, stood on a higher rung of life's ladder than her spouse. Before her marriage she had adored Richardson, not because she had read him, but because she had heard a lot about Grandison from her Moscow cousin. Engaged to Larin, she had sighed for another. But she was led to the altar without her wishes being consulted. In her husband's country home she had at first given herself up to grief and despair, but then had grown accustomed to her position and even liked it, especially since she had mastered the secret of ruling absolutely over her husband.

She did the overseeing; cool
And resolute, she shipped the peasant
For army service; kept the books;
She pickled mushrooms with her cooks:
Slapped servant girls who were unpleasant:
And steamed herself on Saturday—
Her spouse had not a word to say.

Time was when she would be composing
An album verse with tender mien;
She used a singsong voice; and, posing,
Praskovya she would call "Pauline";
She pinched her waist with tightened laces,
Affected a most nasal "n";
But years went rolling by, and then
She lost her Frenchy airs and graces:
The album and the corset vanished,
The tender verse, Princess Pauline;
She said "Akulka" for Celine;
The nasal twang she also banished.
And wore—her last defences down—
A mob-cap and a dressing gown.

To make a long story short, the Larins lived in clover. so like so many millions of people who live on this earth. The monotony of family life was broken by guests:

> .....at times, the neighbours,
> Some friendly family—at eve,
> Dropped in to gossip, laugh, or grieve
> Together, o'er some simple matter;
> And time would pass....
> The local gentry's round of pleasure
> Could scarce inspire young Lensky's zest.
> He fled their noisy conversation
> And found their prudent talk vexation:
> All kin and kennels, crops and wine;
> Here not a wit was found to shine
> (Not with fine words are parsnips buttered);
> No syllable of sentiment,
> No grace, no flash of merriment,
> Lay hid in all the prose they uttered,
> No *savoir vivre*, no hint of verse;
> And when their wives talked, it was worse.

And this was the circle of people among whom Tatiana was born and grew up! True, there were two creatures here who stood out sharply from the rest—Tatiana's sister Olga and the latter's betrothed Lensky. But even they failed to understand Tatiana. She loved them simply, without knowing why, partly through habit, partly because they were not vulgar; but she did not reveal to them the inner world of her soul; some dim instinctive sense told her that they were people of a different world, that they would not understand her. Indeed, the poetical Lensky was far from suspecting what Tatiana was: such a woman did not fit in with his impulsive nature and would strike him as being strange and cold rather than poetical. Olga was still less capable of understanding Tatiana. Olga was a simple impulsive creature who never reasoned, never asked questions, to whom everything was clear by habit, and who relied in everything upon habit. She wept much over Lensky's death, but was soon solaced, married a uhlan officer, and from a pretty, graceful little girl grew into a quite ordinary lady, duplicating her mamma with the slight modifications which the times demanded. But it is by no means so easy to define Tatiana's character. Tatiana's nature is not complex, but it is deep and

strong. Tatiana lacked those painful contradictions which are inherent in over-complex natures; Tatiana is made, as it were, out of one whole piece without any complements or admixtures. Her whole life is steeped in that integrity and unity which, in the world of art, constitutes the highest merit of a work of art. A passionately infatuated, simple village girl, later the lady of fashion, Tatiana is always the same in all conditions of life; her childhood portrait, painted by the poet with such mastery, was subsequently merely touched up but not altered.

No, silent, wild and melancholy,
And swift to flee from fun and folly,
Shy as the doe who runs alone,
She seemed a stranger to her own.
To fondle either parent never
Was our morose Tatiana's way,
And as a child she'd romp and play
With other children scarcely ever,
But by the window—she would brood
The whole day through in solitude.

Since infancy her only pleasure was reverie, which brightened the monotony of her life; Tatiana's fingers had never known the needle, and even as a child she had not been fond of dolls and was foreign to childish pranks; the noise and ringing laughter of childish games were devoid of interest to her; she preferred thrilling narrations on a winter's evening. She therefore very soon acquired a predilection for romances, and romances absorbed her whole life.

Tatiana might be found romancing
Upon her balcony alone
Just as the stars had left off dancing,
When dawn's first ray had barely shown;
When the cool messenger of morning,
The wind would enter, gently warning
That day would soon be on the march,
And wake the birds in beech and larch.
In winter, when night's shade encloses
More lingeringly half the world,
And in the misty moonlight furled,
The lazy Orient longer dozes,
Roused at her wonted hour from rest,
By candlelight she rose and dressed.

And so, the summer nights were devoted to reveries, and the winter nights to the reading of novels—and that in a world addicted to the judicious habit of snoring peacefully at such a time! What a contradiction between Tatiana and her surrounding world! Tatiana is a rare and precious flower that had accidentally sprung up in the crevice of a rugged cliff.

> A lily in the valley blowing
> In the thick grass where none can see,
> Unknown to butterfly and bee.

These three lines, which Pushkin has dedicated to Olga, apply much more truly to Tatiana. What butterflies, what bees could know this flower and be captivated by it? Certainly not such uncouth gadflies, horse-flies and beetles as Messrs. Pikhtin, Buyanov, Petushkov and their like? Yes, such a woman as Tatiana can capture the heart only of people standing on the two extreme steps of the moral world—those with a nature like her own, of whom there are so few in the world, or those utterly vulgar people of whom there are so many in the world. To the latter Tatiana might appeal by her face, her country freshness and health, even by her retiring disposition which they might interpret as docility, meekness and submissiveness towards a future husband—qualities precious to their coarse animality, not to mention their calculations in regard to a dowry, kinship, etc. Those occupying an intermediate position between these two categories of people are still less capable of appreciating Tatiana. It should be said that these intermediate people, standing between the highest natures and the human rabble, these *talents*, serving as *genius' link with the mob*, are for the most part "ideal" people, of a piece with the ideal maids we have mentioned above. These idealists think they are filled with passions, feelings and lofty aspirations, whereas the fact of the matter is that their imagination is developed to the detriment of all their other faculties, pre-eminently that of reason. They possess feeling, but more of sentimentality and still more a proclivity and capacity for contemplating their sensations and eternally discussing them. They have wit, but not their own—it is conned and bookish, and therefore frequently full of glitter and always void of sense. But the worst of them, their weakest point, their heel of Achilles, is the fact that they have no passions other than ambition—and trivial

ambition at that, confined to an inactive and barren contemplation of their intrinsic virtues. Natures that are neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm, they do possess a pitiful ability of flaring up for a moment from everything and nothing. This is why they are forever talking of their ardent feelings, of the flame that devours their soul, of the passions that inflame their heart, without suspecting that it is all merely a storm in a teacup. And there are no people less capable than they of appreciating genuine feeling, of understanding genuine passion, of discovering in a person true depth of feeling and authentic passion. Such people would not have understood Tatiana; they would have unanimously declared her to be a very *odd* creature, if not simply a vulgar fool, and in any case that she was as frigid as ice, devoid of feeling, and incapable of passion. How could it be otherwise? Is not Tatiana silent and wild, carried away by nothing, excited by nothing, indifferent to everything, showing no one affection, making no friendships, feeling no need to pour out her soul and the secrets of her heart, and, chiefly, never speaks of feelings in general and of her own feelings in particular? ... If you are withdrawn into yourself and your countenance does not betray a sign of the flame that is devouring you within, petty people who are so rich in fine petty feelings will promptly declare you to be a frigid creature and an egoist, will deny you a heart and leave you a bare mind, especially if you are inclined to speak ironically of your own feeling, albeit from a chaste desire to conceal it and a dislike of flaunting or parading it....

We repeat: Tatiana is an exceptional creature, a deep, loving and passionate nature. Love for her could either be the greatest blessing or the greatest calamity of her life, without any compromising mean. Given the joy of reciprocity the love of such woman is a bright and steady flame; failing this it is a stubborn flame to which strength of will, perhaps, will not allow an outlet, but which is all the more destructive and poignant for being pent up. As a happy wife Tatiana would have calmly, but none the less passionately and deeply, loved her husband, sacrificed herself fully to her children; devoted herself completely to her maternal duties, not by any exercise of reason but through her passions, and in this sacrifice, in the rigorous fulfillment of her duties she would have found her greatest delight, her sublime bliss. And all this without phrases, without argument, with that composure, that outward

impassiveness, that outward coldness which constitutes the merit and sublimity of profound and strong natures. Such is Tatiana. But these are only the chief, so to speak, general features of her individuality. Let us look at the form in which this individuality is embodied, those specific traits which go to make up character.

The human being is created by nature, but he is developed and formed by society. No circumstances of life will save or safeguard a person from the influence of society, from which there is no escape or concealment. The very endeavour of a person to develop independently, extraneously of society, imparts to him a sort of singularity, a freakishness which, in its turn, also bears the stamp of society. That is why with us gifted people richly endowed by nature are often unbearable, and that is why with us only genius can save a man from vulgarity. By the same token we have so little genuine and so much *bookish, conned* sentiments, passions and strivings; in short, so little truth and life in sentiments, passions and strivings and so much verbal flourish instead of them. The general spread of reading is bringing us untold benefit; herein lies our salvation and the lot of our futurity; but it also, on the other hand, breeds much harm, no less than it does good, for the present. Let us explain. Our society, which consists of the educated estates, is the fruit of reform. It remembers the day of its birth, because it had existed officially before it existed in reality; because, finally, this society for long represented a style of dress instead of a spirit, a privilege instead of education. It began in the same way as our literature: by the imitation of foreign forms devoid of all content, either our own or foreign, for we had rejected our own without being capable of adopting, leave alone understanding, the foreign. The French had tragedies—so we must needs begin to write tragedies too; and Mr. Sumarokov combined in his own single person Corneille and Racine and Voltaire. The French had a famous fabulist La Fontaine, and the selfsame Mr. Sumarokov, according to the testimony of his contemporaries, threw La Fontaine into the shade with his Russian parables. Similarly, in the briefest space of time, we begot our own home-bred Pindars, Horaces, Anacreons, Homers, Virgils, etc. Foreign works were full of amorous emotions and amorous adventures, and we must needs fill ours with the same. But there the poetry of books mirrored the poetry of life, the

rhyme of love was a reflection of the love that formed the life and poetry of society: with us love only found its way into books and there it stayed. The same thing, more or less, is going on today. We are fond of reading passionate verses, novels and stories, and today such reading matter is not held to be unseemly even for young girls. Some of them scribble poetry themselves, and sometimes not at all badly. And so, many people with us like to talk about love, to read and write about it; but as to loving ... that is an entirely different matter! So be sure, if the parents give it their blessing, and if passion culminates in lawful marriage, why shouldn't one love! Many not only do not consider it superfluous but regard it as necessary, and talk about love when marrying a dowry.... But to love merely because the heart craves for love, to love without hope of marriage, to sacrifice all to the absorbing flame of passion—prey, how can one!—for that would mean creating a "stir," making a scandal, becoming a byword in society, an object of derogatory interest, stricture and scorn; and then what about the proprieties, conventions and social morals! Ah! so you are people who are as prudent and judiciously sensible as you are moral! That is good; but then why do you give yourselves the lie in your penchant for verses and novels, in your mania for pathetic drama? But poetry is one thing and life another: why mix them together, let them each go their respective ways: let life drowse in apathy and poetry purvey to it entertaining dreams. —Now that is another matter!...

The worst of it is that that other matter necessarily gives birth to a third, rather ugly matter. When life and poetry lack a natural vital bond of unity their disparately-hostile existence gives rise to a spuriously poetical and exceedingly morbid, ugly reality. One part of society, true to its innate apathy, peacefully dozes in the slough of gross materiality; but the other, numerically still the smaller, though already fairly considerable, takes great pains to create for itself a poetical existence, to combine poetry with life. It does so in a very simple and innocuous manner. Seeing no poetry in society it takes it from books and works out its life accordingly. Poetry says that love is the soul of life: therefore, we must love! The syllogism is correct—it is backed up both by the mind and the heart itself! And so our ideal youth or our ideal maid seeks an object with which to fall in love. The main duty

weighs the pros and cons of black eyes or blue eyes being the most poetical, and the object is finally chosen. And then the fun begins! The ensuing comedy contains everything the heart desires: sighs, and tears, and dreams, and walks in the moonlight, and despair, and jealousy, and rapture, and vows—everything except genuine feeling.... No wonder that the last act of this mountebank comedy always ends in disillusionment—and in what?—in your own feeling, in your own capacity for loving! And yet this bookish tendency is quite natural: was it not the book that turned the kind, chivalrous and sensible country gentleman of La Mancha into the knight-errant Don Quixote, made him don a paper coat of mail, climb onto the back of the rawboned Rocinante and set out to seek the fair Dulcinea, battling as he went with rams and windmills? How many divers Don Quixotes did we not have between the generations of the 'twenties to the present time? We had and still have the Don Quixotes of love, science, literature, convictions, Slavophilism and God knows what else! They are too numerous to mention! Above we spoke of the ideal maids; and what a lot of interesting things could be told of the ideal youth! The subject, however, is so rich and inexhaustible that it had better be left in peace unless we lose sight of Pushkin's Tatiana altogether.

Tatiana did not escape the sad fate of falling into the above-mentioned category of ideal maids. True, we said that she represents a great exception in the world of like phenomena—and we do not retract what we have said. Tatiana excites warm sympathy and not derision—not because she bore no resemblance to the "ideal maids," but because her deep and passionate nature overshadowed whatever there was in her of this ideality's ludicrous and vulgar traits, and Tatiana remained inartificially simple within the very artificiality and malformity of the mould in which her environment had cast her. On the one hand—

> Tanya with simple faith defended
> The people's lore of days gone by;
> She knew what dreams and cards portended,
> And the moon might signify.
> She quaked at omens; all around her
> Were signs and warnings to confound her—
> Her heart assailed, where'er she went
> By some obscure presentiment.

On the other, Tatiana liked to roam the fields,

There, wistful-eyed, behold her stand,
With a French volume in her hand.

This amazing mixture of crude, vulgar prejudices with a passion for French books and a veneration for the profound work of *Martin Zadeka* is possible only in a Russian woman. Tatiana's entire inner world consisted of a craving for love; her soul responded to nothing else but that; her mind slumbered, and probably only some grievous affliction in subsequent life could have awakened it, and even so merely to restrain passion and subordinate it to the voice of prudent morals.... Her maiden days were unoccupied; they lacked a sequence of work and leisure, were devoid of those regular pursuits and diversions which are peculiar to cultivated life and which maintain the balance of a person's moral powers. A wild plant, thrown entirely upon her own resources, Tatiana created for herself a life of her own, in the emptiness of which the rebellious flame devouring her inner being burned all the more fiercely that her mind was wholly unoccupied.

Long since her dreams had set her yearning
And coveting the fatal food;
Long since with sweet disquietude
Had her shy wistful heart been burning;
And freighted with a youthful gloom
Her soul was waiting ... ah, for whom?

He came. And her eyes opened. Quaking,
She whispered to herself: *'Tis he!*
Alas, she dreams, asleep or waking,
From thoughts of him she is not free;
All speaks of him, but to confound her;
His magic presence hovers round her.

. . . . . .

Now with what eager concentration
She reads the sweet romance, and how
Discovers a new fascination
In its seductive figments now!
The creatures fancy animated:
Werther, to be a martyr fated;
Malik-Adil and de Linar,
St. Preux, the rival of Wolmár,

And Grandison, who leaves us sleeping,
The matchless bore—on these she mused;
And all, our tender dreamer fused
Into one image, her heart leaping
As fancy in the lot would trace
Onegin's form, Onegin's face.

And so her quick imagination
Reveals herself in every scene;
She is the novelist's creation:
Julie, Clarissa, or Delphine;
She wanders with imagined lovers
Through silent woods, and she discovers
Her dreams in every circumstance
Of some imported wild romance.
Another's joy her heart possesses,
Another's grief is hers to rue,
And in her mind a *billet-doux*
To her dear hero she addresses.

Here it was not the book that kindled passion, though passion could not but manifest itself in a slightly bookish manner. Why did she have to imagine Onegin a Wolmár, Malik al-Adil, de Linar and Werther (Malik al-Adil and Werther—is it not the same as Jeruslan Lazarevich[14] and Byron's Corsair)? Because the real Onegin did not exist for Tatiana—it was not given to her to understand or know the real one; hence she must needs endow him with qualities borrowed from books instead of from life, because life, too, Tatiana was unable to understand or know. Why did she love to imagine herself as Julie, Clarissa and Delphine? Because she understood and knew herself as little as she did Onegin. We repeat: a creature passionate, deeply emotional and at the same time undeveloped, closely locked up in the dark vacancy of its intellectual being, Tatiana, as an individuality, appears before us in the shape not of a graceful Greek statue wherein all the inbeing is so transparently and saliently reflected in outward beauty, but of an Egyptian statue, immobile, heavy and bound. But for the books she would have been an utterly inarticulate creature and her burning parched tongue would not have found a single live and passionate word with which to relieve the stress of her emotions. And though the immediate source of her passion for Onegin was her

passionate nature, her overflowing craving for sympathy, it began nevertheless somewhat ideally. Tatiana was not capable of falling in love with Lensky, and still less with any of the other men she knew; she knew them too well, and they offered too little food for her exalted ascetic imagination.... And then Onegin appears upon the scene. He is surrounded by mystery: his aristocratism, his man-of-the-world air, his indubitable superiority over all this placid and vulgar world into which he made his meteor-like appearance, his indifference to everything around him, and the singularity of his life—all this begot the mysterious rumours which could not but act on Tatiana's imagination, could not but predispose and prepare her for the crucial effect of her first meeting with Onegin. And she beheld him, he appeared before her young, handsome, dashing, brilliant, listless, bored, inscrutable, mysterious, an insoluble riddle to her unsophisticated mind, an irresistible allurement to her unbridled fancy. There are creatures whose imagination wields much greater influence on the heart than some people believe. Tatiana was such a creature. There are women to whom it suffices for a man to appear rapturous and passionate and they are won; but there are women whose interest a man can arouse only by indifference, coldness and scepticism, as tokens of immense demands on life or as the result of a life lived rebelliously and brimmingly: poor Tatiana belonged to the latter class of women....

Her grief into the garden taking,
Tatiana goes impelled by love.
She drops her eyes, her heart is aching,
Her langour will not let her move.
Her eyes shine, and her breath has dwindled,
Her chest heaves, and her cheeks are kindled
With flame that fails as it appears;
There is a roaring in her ears....
Night falls; the moon, already riding
Aloft, the whole of heaven sees;
The nightingales keep melodies
Pour from the boughs where she is hiding.
Sleepless Tatiana would converse
In gentle whispers with her nurse.

Tatiana's conversation with her nurse is a marvel of artistic perfection! It is a complete drama imbued with profound truth.

It portrays with remarkable fidelity the *Russian young lady* in the tumult of her overmastering passion. Repressed feeling always breaks through to the surface, especially in the early period of a new and unexperienced passion. To whom should she open her heart?—her sister?—but she would *misunderstand* her. Her nurse would not understand her at all; precisely because of this Tatiana reveals to her her secret, or rather does not conceal her secret from her nurse.

"But, nurse, you still can tell me of
Your own days. Were you in love?"
"What notions! You may find it blameless,
But in my youth no one engaged
In talk of love. *It was thought shameless—*
My mother-in-law would have raged."
"But you were married, nurse," said Tanya.
"How was it?" "*By God's will* my Vanya
Was but a boy, if truth were told,
And I was just *thirteen* years old.
The marriage broker kept on pressing
The matter for a fortnight; oh,
What tears I shed you do not know,
The day my father gave his blessing;
They loosed my braids, and singing low
Led me to church. I had to go...."

That is how a poet of the people, a truly national poet writes! In the words of the nurse, simple and popular, without triviality and vulgarity, we are given a complete and vivid picture of the inner domestic life of the people, its view on the relations of the sexes, on love and marriage.... And this the great poet accomplishes by a single dash, cursorily, in passing! How fine are those well-natured simple-hearted lines:

What notions! You may find it blameless,
But in my youth no one engaged
In talk of love. It was thought shameless—
My mother-in-law would have raged.

What a pity that so many of our poets who are so preoccupied with nationality, fall short of precisely this kind of nationality, and accomplish no more than a garish triviality....

Tatiana, on the spur of the moment, decides to write Onegin: the impulse is naive and noble; but its origin lies in unconsciousness, not in consciousness: the poor girl did not realize what she was doing. Later, when she became a grand lady, these innocently generous impulses of the heart were lost to her.... Tatiana's letter sent all Russian readers raving when the third part of *Onegin* made its appearance. We, along with all the rest, thought to see in it a supreme example of the revelation of a woman's heart. The poet himself apparently both wrote and read this letter without a hint of irony, without ulterior aim. But much water had flowed since then.... Tatiana's letter is beautiful even today, though it savours of a sort of childishness, of something "romantic." It could not be otherwise: the language of passions was so novel and inaccessible to the morally-dumb Tatiana: she would not have been able either to understand or to express her sensations had she not resorted to the aid of impressions left on her mind by good and bad novels which she had read in such indiscriminate and haphazard fashion.... The opening of the letter is splendid: it is pervaded with sincere feeling; here Tatiana is herself:

I write you, and my act is serving
As my confession. Why say more?
I know of what I am deserving—
That you should scorn me, or ignore.
But for my wretched fate preserving
A drop of pity, you'll forbear
To give me over to despair.
I first resolved upon refraining
From speech: you never would have learned
The secret shame with which I burned,
If there has been a hope remaining
That I should see you once a week
Or less, that I should hear you speak,
And answer with the barest greeting,
But have one thing, when you were gone,
One thing alone to think upon
For days until another meeting.
But you're unsociable, they say,
The country, and its dullness, bore you;
We ... we don't shine in any way,
But have a warm, frank welcome for you.

Why did you come to visit us?
Here in this village unfrequented,
Not knowing you, I would not thus
Have learned how hearts can be tormented.
I might (who knows?) have grown contented,
My girlish dreams forever stilled,
And found a partner in another,
And been a faithful wife and mother,
And loved the duties well fulfilled.

Splendid too are the verses at the end of the letter:

.....Now my destiny
Lies in your hands, for you to fashion;
Forgive the tears you wring from me,
I throw myself on your compassion....
Imagine: here I am alone,
With none to understand or cherish
My restless thoughts, and I must perish,
Stifled, in solitude, unknown.

Everything in Tatiana's letter is genuine, but not all of it is simple: we have cited what is both genuine and simple. The combination of simplicity and veracity constitutes the highest beauty of feeling, acts and expressions....

It is noteworthy how hard the poet tries to justify Tatiana's decision to write and send this letter; the poet, obviously, knew only too well the society for which he wrote:

I have known women, stern and rigid,
Great ladies, far too proud to fall,
As pure as winter, and as frigid;
I understood them not at all.
I marvelled at their iron virtue,
Their freezing glances framed to hurt you,
And sooth, I fled these haughty belles
Upon whose brows methought was hell's
Inscription written: "*Ye surrender*
All hope, for aye, who enter here."
The like to fill a man with fear,
And shun the heart that would be tender.
By the Neva it may be you
Have seen such ladies, not a few.

And where the faithful suitor hovers,
I have seen other belles who bent
A glance upon their urgent lovers,
Self-centred and indifferent.
And what was my amazement, finding
They thought to make love's ties more binding
By an assumed austerity;
And fright but bred fidelity;
At least, if pity seemed to soften
Their voices, and their words were kind,
Young love, because it is so blind,
Would grow more ardent very often,
And the fond fool would then pursue
The unconcerned beloved anew.

Why is Tatiana an offender?
Is it because she cannot deem
Deceit exists, but clings with tender
Simplicity to her young dream?
Is it because her love is artless,
And she not knowing men are heartless,
Obeys her feeling *sans* demur?
Or because Heaven gifted her
With fiery imagination,
With rebel will and lively mind,
And with a heart for love designed,
A spirit brooking no dictation?
And can you not forgive, if she
Shows passion's volatility?

Not like a cool coquette who tenders
Her heart, and when she likes, withdraws,
Tatiana like a child surrenders
Herself to love and all its laws.
She does not argue: by delaying
We win the game that we are playing,
And raise love's value cleverly;
First let us sprink its vanity
With hope, then prove it an illusion,
Raise doubts that leave his heart perplexed,
With jealousy revive it next,
And thus reduce him to confusion;
Lest, sick of pleasure, momently
The sly thrall struggle to be free.

Here is another fragment from *Onegin* which the author has omitted from this poem, and which was published separately in volume IX of his collected works:

Oh you, who loved with tender yearning.
Without your elders' wise consent,
Whose youthful heart, in secret burning,
Held fancies, fresh and innocent,
And joy, and languorous, sweet devotion.
You, maidens, full of warm emotion,
Oh, if you chanced to break the seal
Of some dear letter, you conceal,
Or to confide, though timid-hearted,
To some bold hand a lock of hair,
Or, in a passion of despair,
When you and he must soon be parted,—
Allow a timorous, ardent kiss
In tearful and emotional bliss,
Oh you, forbear to judge erroneous
My pure Tatiana's *thoughtless mood,*
But scorn the judgment ceremonious
Of her accusers, cold and prude.
And you, *oh virgins, prim and moral,*
Who shudder from a speech immoral
As from a serpent's fatal hiss,
Come, hearken closely unto this:
Who knows? Beset with hopeless passion,
You too may sadly waste away,
And wagging tongues will have their say.
Ascribing to some lion of fashion
The triumph of a conquest new:
The god of love calls out to you.

But will hardly find them, we would add, in prose. It is cause for regret that the poet should have deemed himself constrained to thus justify his heroine before society—and in what?—in that which constitutes the essence of womanhood, woman's greatest title to existence—in the fact that she has a heart and not cavity covered by a corset! Still greater cause of regret is there for a society before which the poet felt himself constrained to justify the heroine of his romance for being a woman, and not a block of wood carved to the likeness of woman. The saddest thing of all

is that he tries to justify his Tatiana most of all before women.... But then with what bitterness does he speak of our women wherever it concerns social deadness, frigidity, prudery and dryness. How conspicuous is this first stanza of the first part of *Onegin:*

He first abandoned you, capricious,
Great ladies, of whom he'd been fond:
Indeed, today there is a vicious
Ennui pervading the *haut monde.*
Perhaps some lady may find matter
In Say and Bentham for her chatter,
But the discussions I have heard,
Though innocent, are quite absurd.
If you have any mind to flirt, you
Are turned by one cool glance to ice,
So pious are they, so precise,
And so inflexible their virtue.
They are so clever, so serene,
The sight of them produces spleen.

This stanza involuntarily calls to mind the following verse published separately from the poem:

Both frost and sun—a glorious day!
But our languid dames display
No wish to join the Neva races,
And there parade their handsome faces.
In vain the sand-strewn, granite roads
Lure them away from their abodes.
Indeed, the eastern rules are clever,
And wise our fathers' ancient laws:
They're born to grace the harems ever,
Or pine in bondage....

Even in the Orient there is poetry in life, and passion steals into the harem too.... But then with us strict morality reigns at least superficially, and beneath it you will sometimes find such an unpoetical poetry of life that should the poet use it for his subject it would assuredly not be for a poem....

Had we a mind to follow all the beauties of Pushkin's poem and point out all the features of consummate artistry there would be no end to our quotations and to our article. But we consider

this superfluous, since this poem has long ago been appraised by the public and the best of it is in everyone's memory. We pursue a different objective—to reveal, if possible, the poem's attitude to the society which it portrays. The present subject of our article is the character of Tatiana as a representative of Russian womanhood. We therefore omit the whole fourth chapter, the principal interest of which lies in Onegin's conversation with Tatiana in reply to her letter. How this interview affected her we all know: all the hopes of the poor girl were dashed, and she withdrew into herself still more deeply from the outer world. But dashed hope did not quench the flame by which she was devoured: it burned all the more stubbornly and fiercely the more repressed and forlorn it was. Misfortune gives new strength to passion in natures with an exalted imagination. They even take a sort of pleasure in the exclusiveness of their position; they are in love with their grief, cherish their sufferings, and prize them perhaps still more than they would have cherished happiness, had it fallen to their lot.... And that in the great forest of our society where Tatiana might or might not soon have met another creature who, like Onegin, would have fired her imagination and turned the flame of her soul to another object! Generally speaking unhappy, unreciprocated love which stubbornly survives hope is a rather morbid phenomenon whose origin, for only too rare and probably purely physiological reasons, would seem to be latent in an exalted imagination developed to the detriment of other spiritual faculties. However that may be, the sufferings of the imagination fall heavily upon the heart and rend it sometimes more keenly than the sufferings which are rooted within the heart itself. The picture of Tatiana's hopeless desolate anguish is painted in chapter five with wonderful fidelity and simplicity. Tatiana's visit to Onegin's deserted home (in chapter seven) and the emotions awakened in her by the forsaken dwelling, every object of which bore such a sharp imprint of the spirit and character of its departed master, belong to the poem's finest passages and to the most precious treasure of Russian poetry. Tatiana more than once repeated this visit—

> Into the silent study, setting
> Aside all timid thoughts, forgetting
> The world without, Tatiana crept,
> And there she stayed, and wept and wept.

The volumes at long last succeeding
In catching Tanya's eye, she took
A glance *at many a curious book,*
And all seemed dull. But soon the reading
Absorbed the girl, and *she was thrown*
Headlong into a world unknown.

. . . . . .

So Tanya bit by bit is learning
The truth, and, God be praised, can see
At last for whom her heart is yearning
By Fate's imperious decree.

. . . . . .

Has she the answer to the riddle
And has she found *the word?*

And so the act of consciousness had been fulfilled in Tatiana at last: her mind had awakened. She understood at last that a person has interests, sufferings and sorrows besides the interest of suffering and the sorrows of love. But did she understand precisely what these other interests and sufferings were, and if she did, did it serve to mitigate her own sufferings? Of course she understood them, but only with her mind, her head, for there are ideas which have to be experienced by the body and soul to be properly realized, ideas which cannot be studied in books. Therefore this bookish acquaintance with a new world of sorrows, though it may have been a revelation to Tatiana, made on her a painful, dismal and barren impression: it startled her, horrified her, made her look upon passion as the destruction of life, persuaded her as to the necessity of submitting to reality as it existed, made her realize that if one was to live the life of the heart one had to keep it to himself, to live it in the depth of his own soul, in the peace of seclusion, in the gloom of night given over to tears and heartache. The visits to Onegin's house and the reading of his books prepared Tatiana for her transformation from a little country girl into the lady of society which so amazed Onegin. We have already dealt in the preceding article with Onegin's letter to Tatiana and the result of all his passionate epistles to her.

Then, at a party he attends
He comes upon her, as he enters.

How firmly her attention centres
On all but him! She never sees
Onegin, but she seems to freeze
As he comes near; it's no illusion:
Upon her wrath her lips are sealed.
Onegin watches her, congealed:
Where is compassion, where confusion?
Is there a sign of tears? No trace!
Mute anger only marks her face....

Yes, and the fear of the impression
The world would gain if it should learn
About her early indiscretion....
No more my Eugene could discern....

Now we shall pass directly to Tatiana's last meeting with Onegin. In this meeting Tatiana's essence is fully expressed. In this meeting is expressed everything that constitutes the essence of a Russian woman with a deep nature developed by society—everything: ardent passion, the sincerity of simple and deep-felt emotions, the purity and sanctity of the naive impulses of a noble nature, moralizing, injured vanity and outraged virtue masking a servile fear of the world's opinion, the cunning syllogism of the mind and conventional morals that paralyze the generous impulses of the heart.... Tatiana's speech begins with a reproach, revealing a desire to avenge her injured vanity:

"Onegin, need I ask you whether
You still retain the memory
Of that lost hour beneath the tree
When destiny brought us together?
You lectured me, I listened, meek;
Today it is my turn to speak.

"Then I was younger, maybe better,
Onegin, and I loved you; well?
How did you take my girlish letter?
Your heart responded how? Pray, tell!
Most harshly: there was no disguising
Your scorn. You did not find surprising
The plain girl's love? Why, even now,
I freeze—good God!—recalling how
You came and lectured me so coldly—
Your look that made my spirit sink!...

Onegin was in fact to blame in that he had not loved Tatiana *then*, when she was *younger* and *better* and had loved him! After all, love needs only youth, beauty and reciprocity! Such are the conceptions borrowed from bad sentimental novels! The inarticulate country girl with her childish dreams, and the society lady, tempered by life and sufferings, who has acquired the faculty of expressing her thoughts and feeling: what a difference! Yet in Tatiana's opinion, she was more capable of inspiring love then than now, because then she was younger and better!... How obviously does this view betray the Russian woman! And that reproach that she had met in Onegin nothing but harshness. "You did not find surprising the plain girl's love?" Yes, that is a criminal offence—not to cherish the moral embryo! But the reproach is instantly followed by exoneration:

> *"But for that sermon do not think*
> *I blame you....* For you acted boldly,
> Indeed you played a noble role:
> I thank you from my inmost soul....

The underlying idea of Tatiana's reproaches consists in her conviction that Onegin had not loved her then merely because there had been no lure of temptation for him; whereas now it was the thirst for scandalous repute which brought him to her feet.... This whole conception betrays an obvious fear for her reputation....

> "Then far from Moscow's noise and glitter,
> Off in the wilds—is it not true?—
> You did not like me.... That was bitter,
> But worse, what now you choose to do!
> Why do you pay me these attentions?
> Because society's conventions,
> Deferring to my wealth and rank,
> Have given me prestige? Be frank!
> Because my husband's decoration,
> A soldier's, wins us friends at court,
> And all would relish the report
> That I had stained my reputation—
> I would give you in society
> A pleasant notoriety?

I cannot help it: I am weeping....
If you recall your Tanya still,
One thought I would that you are keeping
In mind: that if I had my will,
I would prefer your harsh cold fashion
Of speech to this *insulting* passion,
To these long letters and these tears.
My childish dreams, my tender years,
Aroused your pity then.... You're kneeling
Here at my feet. But dare you say
In truth what brought you here today?
What petty thought? What trivial feeling?
Can you, so generous, so keen,
Be ruled by what is *small and mean*?

These lines reveal a trembling fear lest her good name be blemished in society, whereas the next lines provide undeniable evidence of a profound contempt for high society.... What a contradiction! And saddest of all, both are equally true of Tatiana....

"To me, Onegin, all these splendours,
The tinsel of unwelcomed days,
The homage that the gay world tenders
My handsome house and my soirées—
To me all this is naught. This minute
I'd give my house and all that's in it,
This giddy play in fancy dress,
For a few books, a wilderness
Of flowers, for our modest dwelling,
The scene where first I saw your face,
Onegin, that familiar place,
And for the simple churchyard, telling
Its tale of humble lives, where now
My poor nurse sleeps beneath the bough....

We repeat: these words are as unfeigned and sincere as the preceding. Tatiana does not like society, and would gladly relinquish it for the peace of the country; but as long as she is in society its opinion will always be her idol and fear of its judgment will always be her virtue....

"And happiness, before it glided
Away forever, was so near! ...

But now my fate is quite decided
I was in too much haste, I fear;
My mother coaxed and wept; the sequel
You know; besides, all lots were equal
To hapless Tanya.... Well, and so
I married. Now, I beg you, go.
I know your heart; I need not tremble,
Because your honour and your pride
Must in this matter be your guide.
I love you (why should I dissemble?)
But I became another's wife;
I shall be true to him through life."

This last verse is remarkable—truly *finis coronat opus*! This reply could serve as an example of the classical *sublime* with the reply of Medea: *moi*! and old Horace's *qu'il mourût*. Here is the true boast of feminine virtue! But I *became* another's wife—precisely *became* and *not gave myself*! Eternal fidelity—*to whom* and *in what*? Fidelity to relations which are a desecration to feelings and to the chasteness of femininity, for there are certain relations, which, unsanctified by love, are supremely immoral....[15] But with us these things somehow get on well together: poetry and life, love and marriages of convenience, the life of the heart and strict execution of outward obligations which are all too often inwardly violated.... A woman's life is chiefly centred in the life of the heart: for her to love means to live, and to sacrifice means to love. It was for this role nature created Tatiana; but society remade her.... Tatiana involuntarily brings to mind Vera in *A Hero of Our Time;* a woman emotionally frail, always yielding to her emotions, beautiful and lofty in her frailty. True, a woman acts immorally when she belongs at one and the same time to two men, one of whom she loves, the other deceives: no one can dispute this dictum; but in Vera this transgression is redeemed by her sufferings from the realization of her unhappy role. And how could she adopt a firm line of conduct in regard to her husband when she perceived that the man to whom she had completely sacrificed herself did not wholly belong to her, and though loving her, was unwilling to join his life to hers? Frail woman that she was, she felt herself to be under the spell of this man's fateful force, whose demonic nature she was unable to resist. Tatiana is superior to her

in nature and character, not to mention the immense difference in the artistic portrayal of these two feminine characters: Tatiana is a full-length portrait, Vera merely a silhouette. Nevertheless, Vera is more the woman . . . but also more the exception, whereas Tatiana typifies Russian womanhood.... The enthusiastic idealists who have studied life from Marlinsky's stories demand that the ordinary woman should scorn society's opinion. That is a falsehood: a woman cannot despise society's opinion, but she can forego it modestly, without phrases and self-praise, if she be aware of the greatness of her sacrifice, the weight of the obloquy she is bringing down upon herself in obeying another sublime law—the law of her nature, and her nature is love and self-abnegation.

Thus, in the person of Onegin, Lensky and Tatiana Pushkin has portrayed Russian society in one of the phases of its inchoation and development—and how truly, with what fidelity, fullness and artistry he has shown it to us! We say nothing of the multitude of episodic portraits and silhouettes included in the poem which complete the picture of Russian higher and middle society; we say nothing of the scenes of rural balls and city fêtes: these are now all too familiar to our public and have long since received their due meed of appraisal.... We would merely remark that the personality of the poet, so fully and vividly reflected in this poem, is at one and the same time superb and humane and eminently artistic. He is everywhere discernible as a man who in body and soul belongs to the fundamental principle that comprises the substance of the class which he portrays; in short, you see everywhere the Russian landed gentry.... In this class he attacks everything that is opposed to humanity; but the principle of class is to him an eternal truth....[16] Hence his very satire contains so much affection, and his very negation so often resembles approbation and admiration.... Remember the description of the Larin family in the second chapter and especially the character-study of Larin himself. That is the reason why there is so much that is now out-of-date in *Onegin*. But without it *Onegin* would perhaps not have been such a complete and comprehensive poem of Russian life, such a definite fact negatory of ideas which developed so swiftly within that society itself....

Onegin was written in the course of several years, and the poet therefore developed together with his poem, each new chapter of

which was more interesting and mature than its predecessors. And the last two chapters differ sharply from the first six: they bear obvious signs of a higher and maturer stage in the poet's artistic growth. One could not stop speaking of the beauties of various passages and scenes—and there are so many of them! Among the best are the night scene of Tatiana and her nurse, the duel between Onegin and Lensky and the whole end of the sixth chapter. In the last two chapters we are at a loss what to select for praise, since everything in them is excellent; however, the first half of chapter seven (the description of spring, reminiscences of Lensky, Tatiana's visit to Onegin's deserted house) stand out amid the deep and wistful fragrance that pervades the exquisite lines.... The poet's digressions from his narrative and his disquisitions are filled with ineffable grace, sincerity, emotion, intellect and wit; the individuality of the poet here is so loving, so humane. He has succeeded in this poem in touching on so much and hinting at so much that belongs exclusively to the world of Russian nature, to the world of Russian society! *Onegin* could be called an encyclopedia of Russian life, and a supremely national work. No wonder that this poem was so enthusiastically received by the public and exercised such a profound influence on contemporary and subsequent Russian literature! And its influence on the ways of society? It was an act of consciousness for Russian society, almost the first, but nevertheless great step forward for it! It was a gigantean stride, after which there could no longer be any question of standing still.... Time may flow and bring with it new exigencies and new ideas, Russian society may grow and excel *Onegin*: but however far it advances it will always love this poem and bring a grateful and affectionate gaze to rest upon it.... The following stanzas, so befitting a conclusion to our article, will impress themselves on the soul of the reader in a way more eloquent than words of ours could hope to achieve:

Alas! by God strange will we must
Behold each generation flourish,
And watch life's furrows briefly nourish
The perishable human crop,
Which ripens fairly, but to drop;
And where one falls another surges....
The race of men reeks nothing, save
Its reckless growth: into the grave

The grandfathers it promptly urges.
Our time will come when it is due,
Our grandchildren evict us too.
Meanwhile, forget all toil and trouble,
Take what is offered of delight.
I know that life is but a bubble,
My fondness for it is but slight;
I am deceived by no illusion;
But I salute hope's shy intrusion,
And sometimes in my heart I own
I would not leave the world unknown.
I have no faith in its requitting
My labours, yet perhaps this name
May wear the laurel-crown of fame,
And yet win luster from my writing;
One line, held in the memory,
May speak, like a fond friend, of me.
My words may move some unborn lover;
My stanza, saved by jealous fate,
It may be Lethe will not cover;
Ah, yes, at some far distant date,
When I am gone, and cannot know it,
The cordial words: "There was a poet!"
Some dunce may yet pronounce as he
Points out my portrait unctuously.
Such are the bard's gratifications;
My thanks, friend, you will not refuse,
You venerator of the Muse
Who will recall my poor creations,
You who will smooth in after days
With kindly hand the old man's bays.

BOOK REVIEWS
1842–1845

ON BOOKS ON HISTORY

THE HISTORY OF MALOROSSIA BY NIKOLAI MARKEVICH
MOSCOW, 1842, FOUR VOLUMES[1]

(A fragment)

ONE of the most characteristic features of our time is the striving towards unity and affinity of the hitherto scattered elements of intellectual life. Life, apparently, is now striving to become unified and whole. And if it has hitherto manifested itself in thousands of differentia, disunited and split up into an infinitude of aspects each of which has laid claim to a monopolistic right in the realm of the spirit, extolling itself above all others and proudly disowning their importance—this striving, opposed though it was to organic unity, was essential to this very unity whose dawn is already breaking on the horizon of humanity. Each element of intellectual life must needs have fully matured and developed, and to that purpose each element had to develop separately. Thus segregation is a prerequisite of unity, the first moment in the process of unity. Only elements that have developed separately could develop fully, and only fully developed elements could be conscious of their affinity and perceive each other to be not dangerous enemies, but friends, equally needing each other and equally useful to each other. Proof of this truth is furnished by the history of nations, the history of societies, the annals of science, art and even the crafts. Every nation has been foreordained to develop a given aspect of life, and hence one nation has achieved vast success in war, another in science, a third in art, a fourth in commerce, and so on. And each of these nations, until the period of its maturity, regards all other nations with hatred and contempt, and considers only itself clever, good and valid. Hence all the national enmities, all the rivalry akin to animosity, all the competition akin to hatred. Thus, for example, the history of Europe for three centuries was kept moving and was governed by the idea of a balance of power, which consisted in not allowing any one state to become stronger

than the other, even though its strength was of a purely internal origin due to its successes in commerce, industry, civilization and education, and no sooner did a state increase in prosperity and political welfare than all the rest hastened to weaken it; the means adopted for this purpose was in most cases a profuse bloodletting, war usually ending in the general exhaustion and disablement of both the coveted and the covetous.... An idea that is now absurd and puerile, but which then took heavy toll of human blood and human tears! It was a moment of crisis, a moment of transition from childhood to manhood. The very idea of states being obliged to watch each other jealously and having the right to restrict each other—this very idea contains the principle of unity, albeit misinterpreted. This unity is now interpreted in a different way and consists in the subordination of the great idea of national individuality to the still greater idea of humanity.[2] The nations are beginning to realize that they are members of the great family of mankind and are beginning to share with each other in a spirit of brotherhood the spiritual treasures of their nationality. Every success of a nation is rapidly assimilated by the other nations, and every nation adopts from another, especially what is alien to its own nationality, giving in return what constitutes the exclusive possession of its own historical life and is alien to the historical life of others. Today only weak and narrow minds can think that the successes of humanity are detrimental to the successes of nationality and that we need Chinese walls to safeguard nationality. Strong and clear minds understand that the national spirit is quite a different thing from national customs and the traditions of antiquity which ignorant mediocrity so greatly cherishes; they know that the national spirit can no more disappear or regenerate through intercourse with foreigners and the invasion of new ideas and new customs than a man's face or nature can disappear or become transformed through science and intercourse with people. And the day is not far off when the petty, egoistic calculations of so-called politics will disappear and the nations will fraternally embrace amid the triumphant sunshine of reason, and paeans of reconciliation between jubilant earth and conciliated heaven will be sounded! If the present historical situation forms such a sharp contrast to this picture and makes it appear an irrealizable dream of the heated imagination, to thinking minds who are capable of

grasping the gist of things this present historical situation of mankind, however inauspicious it may appear, presents all the elements and all the data on the basis of which the most daring dreams today will become the most positive reality tomorrow.

If by "societies" we understood the select, *i.e.*, the most educated, enlightened and civilized classes and estates in the country, then the humane rapprochement has, in the person of societies, long been achieved. The educated European today, outside his own country, lives as in his own home without relinquishing his habits and without ceasing to be a son of his own land—and enjoys everywhere esteem and welcome. Persons of different nations and creeds enter into matrimony without thereby infringing the customs, laws or moral concepts of their native countries. For all that the Englishman in France remains an Englishman, the Frenchman in Germany remains a Frenchman, and, on the contrary, none of them, in sympathizing wholly with an alien land and feeling himself, as it were, its citizen, ceases to be a son of his own land, or loses the spiritual features of his nationality. It may be remarked, *à propos*, that our haters of Europeanism reproach their countrymen for their passion for travelling, for the ease and zest with which they adopt Western ways (*i.e.*, the ways of enlightened and educated men). These would-be patriots go to such lengths in their benighted fanaticism that they look upon the educated section of Russian society almost as renegades, almost as degenerates having nothing Russian in them, and hold up to them the unkempt dirty rabble as an example of unspoilt Russian nationality worthy of imitation. "Look"—they exclaim: "the Frenchman, Englishman, German, wherever and no matter how long they live outside their own country, are everywhere the Frenchman, Englishman and German; whereas our Russian is a Frenchman in France, an Englishman in England and a German in Germany; at home he is any one of the three, and therefore neither this, that, nor the other." Of course, there is a particle of truth in this accusation, but it is as far from the whole truth as light from darkness, and on the whole, this accusation is utterly absurd. Torn irretrievably from its past by the reform of Peter the Great Russia could hardly be expected, in the space of a hundred odd years, to grow suddenly to maturity, to begin to live an independent and original life and acquire a world-historical importance. Instead of hankering after

the impossible it were better to rejoice in the gigantic successes in civilization which she accomplished in so short a time. It is absurd to think that this accusation of imitativeness for everything foreign has been reiterated in diverse forms for the last fifty odd years. At first it impugned gallomania in customs and in literature and held up to execration both the French language and those Russians who used it in reading and writing in preference to their own language. A whole literary *camarilla* was formed against Karamzin, reproaching the famous reformer of the Russian language with corrupting the Russian language by Gallicisms, although Karamzin's language, replete as it was with Gallicisms, was a thousand times more natural and essentially Russian than the long Latino-German periods of Lomonosov's bookish language. Time, however, revealed the crass superficiality and inanity of these pseudo-patriotic sallies against things that constituted the glory and honour of Rūs. If educated Russian society did not speak or write in Russian, there was a reason for it: at that time there was only a bookish and popular language—there was no conversational Russian language; consequently, educated society had no language in which to speak, even had it wished to speak in Russian. If a social and conversational language has not been fully evolved in Russia even today, it nevertheless exists as a half-formed material, and our middle circles of educated society (recently formed) have long been using it, while high society (long since formed) is beginning to use it. That a knowledge of French was in no way incompatible with or damaging to true patriotism, was best borne out by the great war of 1812-1814: it is a well-known fact that not only the Guards but the army of Russia as well had many educated officers who spoke French—yet that did not prevent them from shedding their blood and dying valiantly for their country to whose language they preferred the tongue of their brave foes. It may be mentioned too, in passing, that even today, despite the Russians' passion for travelling and going abroad, it is almost an unprecedented thing for a Russian to stay there permanently: consequently, strange customs do not break a Russian's kindred ties with his native country, and those few of them whom fate has cast on alien shores beneath alien skies, those, amid the wonders of nature and civilization,—we are sure—are able to preserve, as a

treasure of the soul, a sacred yearning for the steppes, cities and villages of their native land....

As to the indifference of the old society towards native literature—this was inevitable: society did not read Russian because there was nothing to read in Russian: two or three authors, albeit of admirable force of talent, who wrote, however, in a language that had not yet become established, were by no means able to fill the leisure and satisfy all the intellectual demands of people before whom were opened the inexhaustible treasures of the rich and ripe literatures of Europe. Today all classes of educated and even semi-educated society read more Russian than before, because today in comparison with the past Russian literature offers more reading matter, though it does not by far reduce the demand for foreign literatures. High society, as the most educated society in Russia, incurred most of the reproaches and complaints for indifference to Russian literature on the part of its self-styled defenders.... But are these reproaches and complaints just? In the first place, by social status if not by birth, Derzhavin himself belonged to the higher circle of society; Fon-Vizin was admitted to it by virtue of his intellect and talent; Krylov, Zhukovsky and Batyushkov were bound by ties of friendship with many men of this society; Griboyedov, Pushkin and Lermontov belonged to it more than to any other circle of society. Secondly, high society patronized Lomonosov in the reign of Elizabeth; it was almost the only one to read Derzhavin and Fon-Vizin in the reign of Catherine; it knew and read Krylov, Ozerov, Zhukovsky, Batyushkov, Pushkin and Griboyedov in the reign of Alexander; today it knows and reads Lermontov and Gogol.... Our literature still has names which belong to higher circles, consequently they are known there not by mere society relations. That high society does not know and has never heard of numerous other "great" Russian writers is due to the fact that there are so many of them, and that it is so easy with us in Russia to become a great writer for a single little verse, a single little story or magazine article: who can read them all and remember them? ... There is sometimes deeper sense in calm indifference than in impetuous but childish enthusiasms which see genius in everything that barely reveals tokens of plain talent, which attach importance to what is really insignificant and take pride in riches that quickly deteriorate and

decay in dark storehouses. Russian literature, without doubt, has something worthy of interest even for foreigners, and, consequently, worthy of all our affection and our esteem; but it does not ensue that we are entitled to compare the tender green stems of our young literature with the majestic and mighty trees of European literature. The very idea that we can do with our own—an idea nurtured with such filial tenderness by people who have self-appropriated the *modest* title of "patriots"—the idea itself proves the infancy of our education and the infancy of our literature. French, German and English literatures are not inferior to each other, yet every new work in one of them, remarkable in one way or another, is immediately translated into the languages of the others. This fraternal exchange of treasures of the national spirit only increases the wealth of each literature.

In science and art too there are striking evidences of this striving towards unity by means of the mutual contact of heterogeneous elements. There was a time when the common view, ascribing to the poet an ardent heart and to the philosopher a cold mind, denied the former a mind and the latter a heart. Poetry was believed to be a revelation of some sort of delirious inspirations, and a poetical work something in the nature of an utterance of the Pythian oracle squirming in convulsions on the sacred tripod. The poet was left only the right of rapturous frenzy and frenzied rapture and he was denied the right of a thinking creature—the most sacred right of man; to his absolute jurisdiction was left love; and he was excluded from the right of reason, as if love and reason are inimical opposites and not merely two aspects of the same spirit. A philosopher was taken to be a creature of cold, dry, unemotional nature. Appearances, in fact, favoured such a view. While philosophy was only just entering upon its great career it naturally withdrew from life into its own exclusive sphere, submerged in an analysis of reason as valid force and of thought as an object of reason. Hence its ascetism, its cold and dry character, its austere solitude. Kant, the father of modern philosophy, was the consummator of this first labour of thought, whose object was thought itself and whose valid force was reason. The gist of Fichte's philosophy on the other hand is more general, and he shows himself in it to be the ardent advocate of the rights of the subjective spirit which he has reduced to exclusive one-

sidedness. Schelling, in the great idea of identity, discovered the reconciliation of Fichte's *Ego* with the objective world. And finally, the philosophy of Hegel embraced all the questions of the universal life, and if its solutions of them sometimes show themselves to belong to a past and fully outlived age of humanity, its rigorous and profound method has opened the highway to the consciousness of the human mind and has for ever rid it of the sinuous bypaths along which it has hitherto stumbled and strayed in quest of its goal. Hegel has made philosophy a science, and the greatest service of this greatest of thinkers of the modern world consists in his method of speculative thought, so true and valid that it forms itself the only basis on which one can refute such of the results of his own philosophy as are today inadequate or wrong: Hegel erred in its applications only when he forsook his own method. In Hegel philosophy attained its highest development, but it came to an end with him as a cognition that is mysterious and alien to life: grown to sturdy manhood, philosophy is now returning to life, from the madding noise of which it was once forced into retirement to cognize itself in solitude and quiet. The beginning of this beneficent reconciliation between philosophy and practice was achieved on the left side of present-day Hegelianism. This reconciliation has manifested itself in the vital power of the issues which now engage philosophy's attention, in the fact that it is gradually discarding the ponderous scholastic language which is within reach only of its adepts, and that it has aroused against itself furious enemies no longer and not only in schools and books. It is now no longer a scholarly, bookish philosophy cognizant only of itself and esteeming its own interests, cold and indifferent to the world whose consciousness constitutes its essence: no, today it must needs be rigorous, austere and cold like reason, but at the same time inspired like poetry, passionate and sympathetic like love, alive and lofty like faith, mighty and valiant like exploit....

Art, on its side, has taken the same step. It is now no longer confined to a passive role—to mirror nature faithfully and dispassionately; but it brings into its reasonings a living *personal* idea that imparts to them design and meaning. The poet of our days is at the same time a thinker. The philosopher cannot say of a work of art what, if I remember rightly, Descartes told his

friends when asked to give his opinion on Racine's tragedy:[3] "Presuming it is good, but what does it prove?" The predominance of the subjective principle must needs involve in poetical works of our time the abundant digressions which are made in the person of the poet, who passes judgment, raises questions and answers them. In short, poetry and philosophy no longer shun each other, but constantly join hands in mutual support, and sometimes so commingle together that certain philosophical works would strike one as being primarily poetical and poetical works as philosophical.

Poetry is now also invading the prose of life which it formerly held in scorn, and a thinking person cannot fail to discern as instructive the fact that today even furniture and toys for the adornment of rooms are not only beautifully made but bear the stamp of creative genius....

There has recently arisen a science which is also an art, and which combines dry factual knowledge, the cold analysis of mind, sublime philosophical contemplation, slavish subservience to reality, keen poetical feeling and creative imagination. This science is history. The conditions which go to make it up are so great and complex, their fusion in a single person so rare, that there have hitherto been more essays at history and generally historical works of different kinds than what is called "history" proper. The best essays in this field belong to the French who, as writers, besides other reasons, are more adept than other peoples at writing history because, as a nation, they are in a greater degree than others *making history* their national life. The Germans, on the contrary, understand the theory of history much better than they write history, because they live more an intellectual and reflective than a historical life. And so we have another condition for becoming a good historian—a condition that does not depend upon the historian!

History is divided into universal and specific, the former applying to the whole race of mankind, the latter to a particular nation. The division is not so important and essential as many think: for though the scope of "universal" history is incomparably broader and deeper than that of "specific" history, the demands which both make upon the historian are absolutely identical: he who is unable to contemplate humanity as an ideal individuality,

and therefore regards every nation in itself as a separate entity devoid of a vital link with existing humanity, is incapable of writing good history, be it even of a separate nation. Consequently, it were better to define "specific" history not as the history of any single nation, but the history of one of the numerous elements of which the life of humanity and the life of every nation is formed. Hence the history of religion, art, science, law, commerce and industry, political, military history, etc., will be "specific" history. Such a history, being the least complex, makes less demands on the historian and can form but the material of real (universal) history, though it may at the same time possess the merits of a complete and well-modelled history. Histories of such a kind are most essential: without them there can be no universal history.* Historical critique, consisting in the collation and verification of data, analysis of facts, etc., gives the man engaged therein the right to the title of "scientist" but not historian, though history both as a science and an art would be impossible without such "scientists."

The subject of our article is history proper (universal history in the way we understand it), and we shall therefore deal with it alone. We have said in the foregoing that history is both a science and an art, a scientific work and a work of art at the same time. History has acquired this signification only quite recently as a result of that striving towards unity and completion of the formerly detached elements of life which characterizes modern times and which we have touched on in the beginning of our article. This new trend in history was greatly promoted by

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*While on this subject it may be remarked that we shall never have a satisfactory history of Russia until our historians have compiled specific histories on subjects to which each has devoted an exclusive study, such as: the history of the church, the history of warfare, customs and morals, commerce, industry, law, politics, finance and so on. All these subjects require separate and special treatment, factual, critical and philosophical, require treatises and complete histories. It is furthermore useful to treat every important event separately, *e.g.*, the Tatar domination, the interregnums, different reigns, etc. Our "Slavophiles" and "patriots" are engaged instead in a sleeveless errand, enquiring into such matters as the origin of Rūs and solving them by arbitrary hypotheses.[4] Others more daring write the history of Russia for which no factual data have been elaborated; no wonder they publish compilations, and those unfinished, instead of histories!...

a man of genius who has written only one history, and a bad one at that, and numerous excellent novels. This is Walter Scott, who was the creator of a new poetical genre, such as could only have arisen in the nineteenth century—the *historical novel.* In Walter Scott's novel history and poetry have met for the first time as kindred and not hostile principles. Nor is there anything strange or unnatural in this: poetry is life first and art afterwards; where, if not in history, is life manifested so fully, deeply and variedly? Marius standing on the ruins of Carthage is not only a historic but a profoundly poetical fact; Napoleon is a poetical personage not only at Toulon, in Egypt, at Austerlitz and Marengo but at Moscow and on the isle of Elba, at Waterloo and on St. Helena and at the Hôtel des Invalides in Paris.... Only narrow minds and arid hearts can see historical moments merely as a matter of politics and wars, as matters rather tediously serious and dryly important: a deep mind and a virile heart will see in it the pulsation of world life.... It will be said: in this manner history can be made to read like a fairy tale filled with poetical ideas but false in matters of fact. Not at all! The difficulty of the conditions which go to make a historical talent consists precisely in the fact that it must combine strict investigation of historical facts and data, critical analysis and cold impartiality with poetical fervour and the creative ability of associating events, turning them into a picture in which all the conditions of perspective and light and shade are properly employed. The movement of historical events possesses, besides extrinsic causality, an inner necessity which endows it with a profound intrinsic meaning: the movement of events itself is neither more nor less than the movement from within itself and in itself of the dialectically evolving idea. And therefore the general trend of history, the sum-total of historic events, knows neither accidents nor hazards; everything bears the impress of necessity and rationality. Such a view of history is far removed from all fatalism: it admits both hazard and chance without which life would be mechanically unfree, but it regards hazard and chance as a temporary and transient evil, as a force which is in perpetual combat with rational necessity and perpetually vanquished by it. The historian must first of all lift himself to the contemplation of the universal in the particular, in other words of ideas in facts. Here he will be confronted with a no less difficult task—

that of passing with credit between the two extremes without being carried away by either: between the risk of losing and entangling himself in the multiplici.y of events and losing sight, behind their particularity, of the dialectical link that binds them, of their relation to the whole and universal (the idea)—and between the risk of arbitrarily straining events to fit a favourite idea, compelling them to perjure themselves in favour of a one-sided if not utterly false doctrine. The most gifted historian can evade these extremes only by aid of a genuine poetical intuition and a modern philosophical education. To distinguish the true from the false, the doubtful from the certain is the business of historical criticism; but history which rests merely on historical criticism and is unerring only on this side would be dry, tedious and lifeless; the facts, verisimilar as they are, would be set forth chronologically without perspective, non-pictorially, so that when turning over the next page the reader has forgotten the one that went before. Histories like these have their value and their merits as material prepared for the historian-artist by a scholarly hand. One can grasp the meaning and probe the vital core of facts only by poetical intuition. Hence, in reading some histories, entirely devoid of fiction and filled with the most authentic facts, one has the impression of reading a poor fairy tale in which everything happens not by the laws of rational necessity but by the waving of a magic wand. That is why, when reading the novels of Walter Scott, in which a single historical event is intermingled with a multitude of fictitious events you receive an impression that you are reading history—everything in the story is so natural, vivid and true. Chronicles and other historical records are but bricks from which the creative genius of the artist can build up a handsome and stately edifice. In reading Augustin Thierry's *Histoire de la Conquête de l'Angleterre par les Normands* or his *Récits des temps mérovingiens* you would think you are reading a novel by Walter Scott; yet there is not a single feature in these works of the eminent French historian that is not based on facts and substantiated by the chronicles; but even those who were intimately and scientifically acquainted with these chronicles made their first real acquaintance with both epochs from the works of Thierry and were astonished to find that there could be so much life, poetry and rationality in these epochs. Hence it is clear that his-

tory requires creativeness, like poetry. Why is it that a poetical work, which sometimes so forcefully reminds us of our own position in the past, affects us more strongly than did that past, when it was the present? In other words: why does poetry have a more powerful effect upon us than the reality that serves it as subject matter? Because a poetical composition is shorn of all the accidental and extraneous and depicts only the necessary and the significant, presents to us the copulative in a harmonious picture bearing the stamp of unity and integrity. The same condition is required of history, and that condition requires creativeness. Hence, history in our days has acquired the same significance as the epic had with the ancients....

A GUIDE TO THE STUDY OF MODERN HISTORY

COMPILED FOR THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS BY
S. SMARAGDOV, ADJUNCT-PROFESSOR OF THE
IMPERIAL ALEXANDER LYCEUM.
ST. PETERSBURG 1844[1]

MR. SMARAGDOV'S work is finished: before us lies the last volume of his universal history for the schools. We are thus able to give our opinion on its merits as a complete and full work. The readers are aware that we accorded the first two volumes of Mr. Smaragdov's history the hearty welcome merited by anything that is in any way out of the pale of the ordinary, that reveals an impulse towards the novel and the estimable, a striving to strike off the beaten track which indolent habit and obtuse mediocrity so blithely and unconcernedly traverse. We would say more: Mr. Smaragdov's work, coming so suddenly to take the place of Mr. Kaidanov's history, which seemed bent with such amazing importunity on playing the role of Wandering Jew in our educational literature, has aroused in us a feeling more akin to enthusiasm than to cold indifference or antipathy. In addition to the circumstance already mentioned the reason for this is that the first volume of Mr. Smaragdov's history appeared before the first volume of Mr. Lorentz's history, and his medieval history too was published before the medieval history of Mr. Lorentz. However, despite the fact that Mr. Smaragdov's history is far inferior to Mr. Lorentz's, it possesses indisputable merits and is an important acquisition to our historic textbook literature which is so poor in good works. Though one scholar has justly imputed to Mr. Smaragdov's medieval history important defects and even blunders, it nevertheless has full claim, in *our* literature, to our forbearance, especially if we take into consideration that medieval history in Europe too is less elaborated and reduced to an orderly system than ancient and modern history. All the more impatiently did we await the publication of this author's *Modern History* to which we looked for

confirmation of the hopes which this new champion on the hard and slippery path of historico-educational literature held out to us, hopes which we might have expected at worst to be dampened but not dashed. Modern history is pre-eminently the touchstone of all historic talent: more than ancient and medieval history it should express all the sympathies and beliefs, all the impartiality and at the same time all the enthusiasm, the living human side of history. Before saying whether Mr. Smaragdov's *Modern History* has justified our hopes or not, we deem it necessary to expound once more our views on history as a *modern* science, in order that the reader may see what our demands of an historical primer and, consequently, of Mr. Smaragdov's history rest on.

The simplest definition of history consists in the limitation of its scope to historical fidelity in the presentation of facts. In keeping with this definition the historian should be free of all demands on the part of criticism if he has a good knowledge and gives an accurate statement of events. Many men do in fact regard history in this light. In consequence they obdurately deny the right of any interference in the exposition of events on the part of what is called opinion, view, conception, conviction and, above all, philosophy, because, in their opinion, they only obscure and distort the reality of facts and violate the sanctity of historical truth. In confirmation of their opinion they point triumphantly to those historians, especially the German, who write history according to a preconceived idea and who, desirous at all costs of laying the facts on the Procrustes' bed of their outlook, unwittingly misrepresent them. As a matter of fact there have been many historians like these and the fault imputed to them cannot really be considered their merit. But the question arises: can a man accurately set forth historical facts if he is entirely devoid of any view of his own on them? He can, if we take the historical truth of facts to be merely geographical and chronological veracity. In that case we could count excellent historians almost by the thousand—for there is nothing wonderful, given diligence and vulgar empirical scholarship, in not only studying but learning by rote a multitude of annals and other irrefragable historical sources. Were there not oddities who had the patience to count the number of letters in the Bible? Does it require much ingenuity to find out in

what country and in what age Alexander of Macedonia was born, lived and died, to be able to recapitulate what he did from day to day? Is it so impossible to reread a hundred times over all the ancient and modern authors who wrote ten volumes or ten lines about Alexander, and compare and verify these writers' statements; or, finally, to study the critical authenticity of all, even the minutest, facts from the life of this colossus of the ancient world? We do not say that this is easy and that this kind of erudition is not worth anything; no, this erudition should certainly comprise one of the historian's instruments, but not more than *one* among other instruments; it is not surprising that a man capable of stopping at this alone would turn himself into a prodigy of learning and his head into a vast library to which the whole world would come for information. This is all the more possible since it requires very little mind but very great patience and painstaking pedantic drudgery. Assuming that such and such a gentleman has acquired this immense factual scholarship, and can tell you without hesitation in what year, month and on what day Alexander was born, on which side he was in the habit of twisting his neck, what colour his eyes were, on which shoulder he had a birthmark, if any, and, finally, what he did at the age of twenty-three on the seventh day of the month of February one hour after dinnertime. Assuming that this gentleman loathes philosophy and venerates only the irrefragable authenticity of facts, regarding it as a sin to dare preserve his own personality in describing the great events of the past. Do you believe that if he set himself to the task of writing history he will to all intents and purposes produce an utterly truthful narrative of the deeds of nations and historic personages? No, a thousand times no; you will find much less historic truth in his history than in one which is distinguished even for deliberate distortion of facts in favour of a one-sided and prejudiced view. A coldly-impartial record of irrefutable and authentic facts—the sole merit of a history by a "scholar" of the type which we have adduced as an example—can be found in any well-compiled historical dictionary. You will say: a dictionary is not a history, for in history facts are presented in their historical bearing and sequence. But that is just the point, that in the kind of history of which we are treating, the facts are presented not in their historical but merely chronological bear-

ing and sequence, and as a consequence, they are worse than distorted—they are devoid of all meaning, and he who would cull his knowledge of history from such a book will not have made a single step towards acquiring historical knowledge, even though he may have previously been entirely ignorant of this science. This is so because, besides presentation of events there is such a thing as judgment of events—not that the historian must necessarily want to judge them, it sufficing that he has taken it upon himself to describe them. We shall illustrate this by an example. Should anyone relate in society an important, albeit particular occurrence affecting some person,—the more extraordinary the occurrence the sooner will the narrator be asked by his listeners why the person concerned did this and not that, or acted thus and not otherwise. Naturally, if the narrator waives all explanation when he could have merely told them what kind of man it was, what his character was, his education, in what circumstances his education, way of thinking, proclivities, habits, etc., had placed him, the listeners would fail to understand the occurrence, no matter how interesting it might be in itself; and this need to *understand* is so inherent in men, so peculiar to their nature, that they would rather satisfy themselves with a random though unfounded surmise than accept a bare fact in its meaningless authenticity. On the other hand, were the narrator to merely utter a single phrase, such as: *I think it happened for such and such a reason*, or: *it would not have happened if*—he would no longer be merely relating the event but judging it too. Had he told his story without explanations or reasoning but in a way that would have made an unusual occurrence sound natural to his hearers, it would have been an obvious sign that *judgment* played a much greater role in his narration than might have appeared at first glance: it was implicit in the narration itself, permeated it, gave it meaning and character; apparently the narrator had thought over the reason for the occurrence and formed his conception of it. It goes without saying that the nearer that conception is to the truth the better it is, and vice versa. In any case, the storyteller's *individuality* plays here an important role: in having revealed judgment the narrator has revealed himself—his views, his education, even his character. All life has multiple aspects, and one man grasps only one aspect of an object. another two aspects, a third several, and a fourth

the multiple aspects. Each of them is right in regard to the aspect which he more readily understands, though he may thereby be wrong in regard to the other aspects of the same object. But he who, seeing an object, regards it from no point of view, has not gained much from the fact that he has eyes. Were such a man to speak of a thing that he sees he would be nothing more than a mirror, a distorted mirror at that, a talking machine—and we know the name for people whose only designation is that of a machine.

How, with all due conscientiousness and zeal for truthfully setting forth the facts, can a historian correctly describe, say, the Crusades, unless he gives his mind to the meaning and significance of that great event? And would we learn much from him if he were to tell us that the Crusades began in the eleventh century, lasted until the fourteenth and were attended by such and such circumstances? No, we would also want to know why the Crusades engrossed Europe only until the fourteenth century and why they became utterly impossible in the fifteenth and subsequent centuries? Should the historian tell us that that was a religious time—we shall ask him, why did the same religious movement which gave rise to the Crusades in the eleventh century bring about the reformation in the sixteenth century? Such events could not have been adventitious, they must have been the result of necessary causes. The illiterate sailor who has cruised around the world knows that there are countries in which there is practically no summer, and countries where the winter is like warm autumn; of course, he knows more than the man who believes that the world like two peas resembles the backwoods where he has spent the whole of his life; but could that be called knowledge which is combined with absolute ignorance of the causes of climatic differences which are explained by mathematical geography? There are sailors like these even among literate people, even among "scientists"—and it is precisely they who object to philosophy in history. The greatest weakness of mind consists in disbelief in the mind's capacities. Every man, however great, is a finite being, and his very genius goes hand in hand with finitude, for though frequently powerful and deeply-penetrating in one thing he is all the less capable of grasping another. Yes, the mind of man is finite, but all the more infinite is the human mind, *i.e.*, the mind of mankind. Yet whatever mankind—that ideal individuality

—has cognized, has been cognized through men, through real individualities. Indeed, in the process of the general life of mankind all that is false and finite in the human being vanishes without leaving a trace, and all that is true and rational yields fruit a hundredfold. Many of the peoples contemporaneous with Alexander of Macedonia had to pay for his heroic lust for fame with rivers of blood and tears; we paid nothing for it, yet, thanks to it, we have become the heirs to all the treasures of ancient civilization and the wisdom which has been brought to shed its dying light to the capital of the Ptolemies. We would say more: in the process of the universal life of mankind it not infrequently happens that good and useful comes of what originally had its roots in lies and covetous interest: the search for the philosopher's stone laid the foundation of an important science—chemistry—and enriched it with the discoveries of nature's great mysteries; the self-interested and crafty policy of Louis XI was the source of one of mankind's most beneficent institutions—the postal service. The same is applicable to the efforts of the human mind to make a science out of the biography of that great personage called humanity. Despite an infinite divergence of views on one and the same thing, despite sheer one-sidedness due to partiality and narrow-mindedness, in a word, despite the fact that we do not yet have two historical works of any note that would be fully in accord with each other in the exposition of one and the same events, history nevertheless already has its secure foundations, its ideas, which have assumed the significance of an axiom. For everything in historical works that is of the finiteness of *man's* mind, is, as it were, corrected and supplemented by the mind of *mankind*. From this point of view the very moral finiteness of separate individualities becomes the source and cause of the infinity of the human mind and the triumph of truth. An infatuated, fanatical Catholic, writes, for example, a history of the Reformation: if he be a man of intellect, learning and talent, his history, despite its flagrant bias, cannot but be useful, because the very spirit of partiality which inspired it will compel him to seek and bring out the good traits of moribund Catholicism, as well as facts which do not speak in favour of the Protestant party and that have been intentionally suppressed or misrepresented by the blind followers of Lutheranism. In the same way the triumph of truth is fostered by the Protestant writer who is inspired with blind

hatred of Catholicism and blind zeal for his own party. The false aspect of such works, by its very obviousness, is powerless to distort the truth; lie soon dies; it bears death within itself from the moment it is born—and truth remains. But it does not ensue that all historical works have been written partially and one-sidedly: we merely wanted to say that even the most one-sided and biassed works often subscribe to the triumph of truth. There sometimes appear, though not too often, lucid and exalted minds which are able to reconcile within themselves a love of their own conviction with impartiality towards and even respect for their opponents—in short, men, who while being adherents of a given party and citizens of a given country, are able at the same time to be human members of the great family of mankind. When this noble and many-sided impartiality of the mind, testifying to a great heart, is combined with lofty talent or genius, history in the works of these men acquires all the merits of a science which is as important in its designation as it is constant in its immutable principles that are independent of the fortuity of human passions and limitations. The human mind can produce nothing that is perfect, and often the very merits of its labour necessarily display its deficiencies as the reverse side; however, more or less proximity to perfection is without doubt one of the inalienable rights of the human mind. Why do many men of different characters and qualities operate in one and the same field if not in order that the errors or deficiencies of one be corrected and supplemented by the others, and that the true and beautiful of each individuality be laid on the sanctuary of humanity while the false and inadequate be consumed in the cleansing fire of the sacrificial altar? Impartiality is as much inherent in the human spirit as is partiality; only the base-minded who measure everything in the world by their own baseness can doubt this. Especially conspicuous in this respect are the bespoken sceptics who are proud of their disbelief in all that is true and great, like the ancient cynics who were proud of their bestial slovenliness. In their eyes every impulse of the mind towards truth is merely a new effort to give the semblance of truth to a new lie out of self-interest or petty ambition. In their eyes history is a pattern of lies woven by human passions for the sake of self-justification or profitable speculation. These people will always have the best of the argument, but they are not worth arguing with. Less blameworthy and more abject

than these are the weak minds who require tokens for their faith, and ardently acknowledge the truth only when even external circumstances have contributed to its triumph and the right of even material force is on its side; but no sooner has the time come for lies and evil, no sooner has contemporary reality yielded the mace of force to the enemies of truth and goodness, than these good enthusiasts, albeit far from going over to the side of darkness, nevertheless begin to despair of the authenticity and validity of what they only recently regarded as their deep-rooted conviction! In their pusillanimity they are prepared to acknowledge truth as the vision of their fancy, the deception of their heart, the delusion of their mind; not having the courage to adhere to either side they fall into doleful jeremiads about bitter disillusionment, the weakness of the human mind, the delights of belief in a sweet little fantasy of their own invention which they genially offer to all and sundry as an anchor of safety in the stormy sea of life.

Faith in an idea is the sole basis of all knowledge. Ideas should be sought in science. Without ideas there is no science! A knowledge of facts is valuable *only because* facts contain ideas; facts without ideas are mental dross. The eye of the naturalist observing the phenomena of nature discovers in their diversity common and immutable laws, *i.e.*, ideas. Actuated by ideas he sees the classification of natural phenomena no longer as an artificial aid to memory, but as a progression from the lower to the higher genera—in other words, he sees movement, life. Can it be that the social phenomena, which constitute the essential form of man's life, are less interesting, less rational than the phenomena of nature? There were and are sceptics who have asserted and still assert that nature originated by accident out of some kind of atoms from God knows where; but the sceptics have long ceased to exist who, suffering from sense delusion, disavow the order, harmony and immutability of the laws by which nature exists. Are we to believe that human society, that highest manifestation of the rationality of the highest phenomenon of unconscious nature, man, originated out of and is governed by accidental causes? Yet there are people who think so, perhaps themselves unaware that they think so! For to deny the possibility of history as a science is tantamount to denying the immutable laws of social evolution, and seeing in the destinies

of man nothing but a meaningless hazard of blind chance. When factual knowledge was still in its infancy such a view would have been pardonable; but when knowledge of facts has discovered their correlation and sequence and philosophy has discovered the sense and meaning of that correlation and sequence in which it has revealed evolution and progress, the possibility of history as a science and its great significance can be hidden only from imbecility or brazen charlatanry which, in paradoxes more shameless than they are audacious, seek miserable fame capable of satisfying petty vanities....

History is the science of our day, and therefore a new science. Nevertheless it has already succeeded in becoming the predominant science of the day, the alpha and omega of the age. It has given a new trend to art, communicated a new character to politics and entered into the life and morals of human individuals. Its problems have become the life and death problems of nations and individuals. This *historic* trend is great evidence of the great step which humanity has made in recent times on the path of perfection: it testifies that separate persons are beginning to be conscious of themselves as living organs of society, living members of humanity, and that, consequently, humanity itself is no longer existing purely objectively, but as a living, self-conscious individuality.

There are two histories: an immediate and a conscious history. The former is the life of humanity itself, developing from within itself by the laws of rational necessity. The latter is an exposition of the facts of human life, written history—the direct conception of history. Everything rational has its starting point and its goal; movement is the manifestation of life, goal is the sense of life. In the immediate life of mankind we see a striving towards rational consciousness, a striving to render the immediate at the same time the conscious, for the complete triumph of rationality consists in the harmonious merging of immediate existence with conscious existence. The life of the animal is likewise governed by the immutable and general laws of nature; but it is not given to the animal to enjoy the consciousness of its existence, to perceive and conceive itself as a thing in itself or even as a thing outside itself. The animal senses its *particularity* among the objects of its environment, senses its *individuality*, but it has no personality, it cannot say *to itself: I think, consequently I am.* Immediate life has its

degrees, and is either lower or higher, but its laws are everywhere the same: the human even in his immediate being is higher than the animal, but he can be fully a man only as a conscious creature. Hegel said that man is an animal who is no longer an animal by the mere fact that he knows that he is an animal. This definition may strike a superficial mind as being a philosophical pun; commonplace wags might even call it obscure, and vainglorious ignorance put it down as another canny German saying. We have neither the time nor desire to argue with these gentlemen. Thinking people will understand the profundity of this expression which, for all its apparent simplicity, quite definitely and pointedly embraces a great thought. Indeed, is not the savage who devours the body of his slain enemy precisely a beast because he does not know that he is a beast. Were his crude perception to be illuminated by the consciousness of his being a beast, he would have had the chance of ceasing to be a beast, though he may not yet have ceased to be one. This can be applied to many cases. Which of the two evildoers has the greater chance of becoming a good man: he who is conscious of being an evildoer, or he who regards his wickedness as a legitimate form of life and even prides himself on it as if it were a thing of valour? In this connection consciousness must be understood not simply as a cold logical process of thought, but a passionate conviction passing over into life. The fullness of a man's life should consist in the equal participation of all sides of his moral being. Thought without sensation and sensation without thought merely betray an impulse towards consciousness, a semi-consciousness, but not real consciousness: it is a machine operating indifferently with only half its wheels, and therefore operating poorly and uncertainly.

We know that in ancient times and even among rude and ignorant peoples there were great personalities who rose to considerable heights of human consciousness. But man is not an aim in himself: he lives among others and for others, as others live for him. A nation, like man, is also a personality, but a still higher one; humanity, too, like a nation, is a personality, but a still higher one. Thus, if the life-aim of every separate man is consciousness, what then, if not consciousness, should be the life-aim of every nation and the whole of humanity? This is all the more clear in that, however great a man is, the nation is always higher than he, and

the joint efforts of many people will always in their results surpass his efforts.

Notwithstanding, we see that the successes of consciousness so far merely consist in the fact that they have passed from the individuals to the social estates. Consequently mankind is faced with a longer path towards perfection or consciousness than it has so far travelled; but this path will now be straighter and broader; and it means a lot to have emerged from the thickets and jungles onto the highroad. That is why we perceive humanity's great success to be in the historic trend of our age. Once humanity has begun to be conscious of itself as humanity, the time is not far off when it will be humanity not merely in immediacy as heretofore, but consciously. And the beginning of this consciousness it could derive only from history.

History in the East is still legend, for it has not yet been divorced from poetry. Strictly speaking there can be no history in the East: history can be *written* only by a nation that *makes* history with its own life, *i.e.*, builds up a mass of *rational*, not *haphazard* events, such as constitute the subject matter of history; whereas the East died in its infancy, at a time when its consciousness could only be displayed in poetry. The ancients had history, but it was a history that complied with their spirit and satisfied them alone. They had a capacity for presenting events with wonderful artistic skill; they were even able to perceive them in their organic relation and sequence, but they had no ideas (nor could they have had) of progress and the evolution of mankind. The Greek and the Roman saw mankind only within themselves, and all that was not Greek or Roman they called barbarian. The contemplation underlying their history was a purely ancient, tragical feature, whose dominant idea was the struggle of man and nations with fate and the victory of the latter over the former. The ancients carried within their soul a dark premonition of the impermanence of their forms of life, and hence their conceptions of the dismal kingdom of fate before which even their gods trembled. Such a narrow outlook was incapable of rising to the conception of history as a science, and hence history with the ancients was merely an art and belonged to the realm of rhetoric. A true conception of history could only arise with the Christian nations whose God is the God of all men without distinction of nationality. Nevertheless this idea

of humanity, which constitutes the soul and life of history and has raised it to the importance of a science, has appeared only recently and developed still later. The famous discourse of the great Bossuet on universal history (which appeared in 1681) was the first work to lead to the idea of applying a single point of view to all historical events, of seeking in them a common idea. It was an idea still in embryo, and its development began with the last century (Vico, Kant, Schlözer, Herder) and is making swift progress in the present age. We have in mind merely the theoretical development of this idea, in which respect it probably owes more to Hegel than to anyone else. It goes without saying, that practice, too, was not without its attempts to keep abreast of theory, and history today which is alien to the idea of progress will not be conceded the merits of history. We must say, however, that in this respect theory has far outstripped practice, and the ideal of history, clear and definite in consciousness, has so far not been fulfilled in facts. If there has been anything noteworthy in the matter of historical essay it is either the history of separate nations or the presentation of a separate given epoch out of universal history. The best historians are the English and the French; but their names are few: Hume, Robertson, Gibbon, Guizot, Thiers, Michelet, Barante, Thierry; the first three belong to the last century, and the latter to the present. Noteworthy among the Germans are: Johannes Müller, Schiller, Raumer, Ranke and Leo. It must be admitted that this number is all too small. As for attempts at writing a universal history there is nothing we can point to except the works of Rotteck and Schlosser, especially the latter—works which are more noteworthy than satisfactory. The reason for this is obvious: a man needs to possess a remarkable faculty of combining within himself too many and too great conditions to be able to write a good universal history: immense erudition, broad sympathies, versatile contemplation, a high philosophic education combined with a profound knowledge of men and life, an infallible sense of realities, a lofty strength of personal conviction bearing a religious character and united to the humane tolerance which proceeds from a vital awareness of the laws of necessity; and ultimately, a great artistic talent, in which the epic element would organically merge with the opposite dramatic element. The time for history, in the real sense of the word, has not yet come: the transition epochs, when the old is being

shattered or slowly undermined, and the coming dawn is descried only by the elect few endowed with the clairvoyant gift of presaging the future by the signs of the present hidden from the ken of the many,—the transition epochs, being barren and destitute of great and living creeds, are unfavourable to history as a joint work of science and art.

Among the men who have contributed most to the cultivation of a true view on history an honourable place belongs to the man who has written one very bad history and a multitude of excellent novels: we have in mind Walter Scott. The ignorant have proclaimed his novels to be the illegitimate product of the liaison of history with fiction. Evidently, the idea of history and fiction did not dovetail in their narrow conception. Thus, there are people who cannot for the life of them see any sense in opera as a production of art because the actors do not speak, but sing, and that does not happen in real life. Thus, there are people who consider verse as nonsense, rightly claiming that no one speaks in verse. There are different kinds of people and different kinds of narrow-mindedness! The people who are seduced by the blending of history with romance regard history as a military and diplomatic chronicle, from which point of view they are, of course, right. They do not understand that the history of customs and morals, which change with every new generation, is more interesting than the history of wars and treaties, and that the renovation of morals through the renovation of generations is one of the principal means by which Providence leads mankind to perfection. They do not understand that the historic and private lives of people are mingled together and fused like holidays with workdays. Walter Scott, as a man of genius, fathomed this with his instinct. Being familiar with the chronicles, he was able not only to read their lines, but between the lines. His novels are filled with a moving crowd, are alive with passions and seething interests great and small, base and lofty, and everywhere we feel the pathos of the epoch which the author has grasped with amazing skill. To read his novel is like living the age he describes, becoming for a moment a contemporary of the characters he portrays, thinking for a moment their thoughts and feeling their emotions. He was able, as a man of genius, to throw a retrospective glance at the sanguinary intestine disturbances of ancient England and turbulences of the new England which assumed

the form of conservatism and opposition, and disclosed their meaning and significance in the strife of the Anglo-Saxon element with the Norman. That is why Guizot calls Walter Scott his teacher in history, and he himself explained the origin of the French revolution to be a result of *thirteen centuries* of strife between the Frank and Gallic elements.

The idea underlying universal history should be that of humanity, as a unitary, individual and personal subject. The aim of universal history is to sketch the picture of humanity's progress from the savage state to what it is today. This essentially presupposes a link between the modern and the ancient lost in the dimness of time—in short, it presupposes an uninterrupted thread that passes through all events and connects them, giving them the character of something whole and integral. This thread is the idea of consciousness evolving dialectically in events, so that every sequence is a necessary outcome of the precedent, and the precedent is the origin and cause of the sequent, just as in logical argument one inference proceeds out of another and gives rise to a third. This truth is apparent: it is borne out by the fact that much in our age would be incomprehensible in regard to its causality unless we knew ancient history. In tracing the destinies of mankind we see in the procession of historic epochs an undeviating, continuous sequence, just as we see in events a living, organic connection. We see that every man, in existing for himself, at the same time exists for the society into which he was born; that he is related to society as a part to the whole, as a limb to the body, as a plant to the soil which breeds and nourishes him. Hence every man lives in the spirit of that society, mirroring in himself its virtues and failings, sharing with it its truths and errors. We see that society, as a vast agglomeration of human beings who, despite their individual distinctions have something in common in mentality, sensations and creeds, is a united, organic whole, in short, that society is an ideal individuality. We see that every society (tribe, nation, state), in living for itself and living its own life, like an individual, at the same time lives for humanity and is related to it as a part to the whole, as a limb to the body, as a plant to the soil that breeds and nourishes it with its juices. Just as the diversity of characters, abilities and wills of a multitude of men, a diversity albeit distinguished by a common trait, forms an organic, united body politic—a nation

or a state, so does the diversity of characters in nations form the unity of mankind. Every man is in some way or other different to all other men inwardly and outwardly precisely because diversity of faculties resolve themselves into a harmony of cumulative actions; and every nation is more or less distinguished from other nations precisely because it must contribute its share to the common treasury of mankind. In society one man is a tiller of the soil, another a craftsman, a third a soldier, a fourth an artist and so on, each according to his ability and his calling—and for that very reason each represents an essential wheel in the social machine. The same applies to nations in their relation to humanity: Egypt was the birthplace of mathematical and natural sciences; Greece developed the idea of art and civic virtues founded on a noble and free love of country; Rome developed the idea of law and gave to the ancient world civil organization; the Jews, pre-eminently God's chosen people, were called upon by Providence to be the guardians of the sacred flame of the true faith in God, the faith whose foundation was *a zeal for God*; and this people, truly the chosen of the Lord, brought salvation to the world, brought forth the God-Man who announced to the world the faith that is the faith not of a single people but of all men and that bade men to worship the Lord not only in Jerusalem but everywhere and in all places in *spirit* and *truth*. The ancient world passed away; Greece ceased to be; world-mighty Rome fell a prey to the barbarians and the remnants of God's once chosen and beloved people were scattered over the face of the earth; it seemed that the end of the world had come, that the lamp of civilization had been extinguished for ever and that mankind was to be submerged in barbarism. But on the rubicon of the two worlds—the moribund old and the nascent new, amid the chaos of the Middle Ages, that epoch of crass ignorance, bloody wars, anarchy and confusion, never for a moment was there silenced the almighty voice of life: *Let there be*! and Lo! *there was*! ... The new faith grew and spread throughout the best parts of the earth, political anarchy was reduced to monarchic unity, the municipal system of cities founded by the Romans in Spain, Gaul, Britain and Germany survived and developed; Roman law replaced barbarian legislation and there were resuscitated at last in Europe wisdom and art and the humane forms of ancient Hellenic civil life! Nothing in mankind's life had been lived in vain; everything

had been preserved to come to life in new, more complex and riper forms, to enter as nutritive juices into the new social body, where, having become implanted, they filled it with new health and new vigour! And even today, in our cold and calculating, our positive manufacturing age wherein pusillanimity sees only decay and imminent death, and wherein, in truth, petty vanities have superseded great passions, and little men have replaced great men—has the progress of mankind come to a standstill? Yes, if you wish, it has come to a standstill, but merely in order to gather strength and store up the material resources which are as necessary to it as the spiritual! And all these steam engines, these railroads and electrical telegraphs—what are they if not the triumph of the spirit over crude matter, if not a forerunner of the coming emancipation of men from material works which humiliate the soul and destroy the will, from the slavery of want and materiality! Yet it would be still more absurd to think that progress must cease because it has now reached its extreme point and can proceed no further. There is no limit to human progress, and never will humanity say to itself: *stop, enough, there is nowhere further to go*! That which we call humanity is not a real personality limited in its very spirituality by material conditions and living only in order to die: humanity is an ideal personality for which death does not exist: for men die, but humanity does not grow smaller, leave alone die, because of it. Humanity is the human spirit and every spirit is immortal and everlasting! What would humanity's everlasting life consist in, what would it be filled with if its progress ceased for ever? Life consists only in movement; death is in repose. What will humanity's progress consist in in a thousand years?—such a question is ridiculous, because it is insoluble. But in an epoch of general disintegration of elements which had hitherto formed the basis of societies' life, in an epoch of negation of the old principles on which this life had rested, in an epoch of universal yearning after renovation and universal strivings towards a new ideal, one can have a presentiment and even prevision of the fundamentals of the future epoch, for negation itself posits demand, and the destruction of the old is always accomplished through the appearance of new ideas. If mankind has hitherto accomplished a great deal, it means that it must accomplish still more in the near future. It has already

begun to realize that it is humanity: soon it will want to become humanity in actual fact....

A proud and inspiring thought! Chance is no more; the spirit of God conducts and impels the spirit of humanity towards its goal! Historic fatalism is blasphemy; living faith in progress and—its effect—consciousness of one's human dignity: such are the fruits of historic study, such is the great significance of a great science!...

Herein we see the great importance of a historic primer. In the life of every person there is a period of immediate perception of ideas, and there is a period when the perception of new ideas or the further development of the old ones becomes possible only as a result of the labours of the first period. Very few people are capable, upon attaining maturity, of grasping the simplest truths which were easily within the reach of childhood and youthful years devoted to study. That is because childhood accepts on faith and immediately the ideas which at first glance seem to be abstract, and which later, at a more mature age, assume the character of tangible reality, being verified and developed by the consciousness. He who has studied history in the period of his first youth will first lend himself to the immediate contemplation of a nation or humanity as an ideal individuality. But to a person who begins to think and learn in the period of his maturity such ideas are sometimes absorbed with a great effort of mind and sometimes not at all: for a mind that has not been developed by learning and thereby rendered supple from childhood and youth becomes hardened and incapable of receiving abstract conceptions; it can only comprehend the materially lucid and concrete. But the selfsame pliancy and delicate sensitivity of young minds which so greatly fosters a rapid and facile receptivity to ideas, and forms the basis for assimilation of science's essence—the truth, is also the cause of dulling the faculties and rendering truth difficult of perception. It depends upon *what* truths the young brain is first brought in contact with and *in what manner* they are conveyed to it. Herein lies the great importance of every textbook, including historic textbooks.

A textbook on history, nothwithstanding the current and false view to the contrary, should most decidedly not be alien to an expression of the author's own opinions. The important point is

that these opinions should be relevant and contain ideas no less than words. They should be expressive without being prolix, concise without being obscure, eloquent without being farfetched, forceful without being pompous. Their aim should be to accustom the young mind to reason without moralizing, to think without dryness and to probe both the sense and poetry of great world events. But still more the ability of the writer of historic textbooks should consist in a lively and at the same time simple presentation of events appealing directly to the mind and imagination and therefore all the more easily retained by the memory. This cannot be accomplished other than by imbuing the whole thread of events with living thought throughout the whole of the textbook and imparting to every special event the enlivening influence of the mind. The persons playing a part in historical events should not be mere historical names, but historical ideas as well; each one should be shown both as a person possessing ideas of his own, ideas which supply reason for his actions, and their bearing on the general idea of the people among whom he lived, in such a way as to bring home to the pupil why such a personage as, for example, Alcibiades was possible only in Athens, and such a person as Marius only in Rome, though both were as much friends as they were enemies of their country. A good historical primer should by the very tone of its narration and not merely by its interpretation of events (though the latter is essential) teach the pupil first of all and above all to regard every nation separately and all mankind generally not as statistical numbers, not as artificial machines or abstract ideas, but as living organisms, ideal personalities living in a never-ending continuous striving towards self-cognizance. Without such contemplation of a nation and humanity as ideal personalities history as a science is impossible, for it would then be a science without content, a narrative without a hero, a congeries of events without meaning and relation. The conception of *progress* as the source and aim of historic movement giving rise and origin to events should be the direct and immediate inference emanating from a view of a nation and mankind as ideal personalities. But this movement and its product—*progress*—should be defined and characterized as deeply and many-sidedly as possible. There are people who understand progress to mean merely a conscious movement effected by noble agents, and when they fail to see these agents on the arena of history

they give way to despair, and their living faith in Providence is replaced by recognition of a hostile fate, blind hazard and wild chance. Such people regard every material movement as the decline and decay of society, and the abasement of human dignity bending its knee before the golden calf and the altar of Baal. There are other people who, on the contrary, believe that general progress can be the result of only private gain, self-interest and egoistic activity of several social estates at the expense of the mass of society, and who, consequently, busy themselves furiously with factories, mills, trade, railroads, machines, establishing stock companies and similar *essential* and *useful* pursuits. Such people regard all lofty thought, all generous feeling, all noble deeds as quixotic, illusory, a futile ferment of the mind, since none of it yields interest. These are obviously the two extremes of which the compiler of a course of history for the young should beware. The first extreme produces empty idealists, high-flown dreamers who are clever only in barren theories and alien to any kind of practical tact. The second extreme produces scientific speculators and tradesmen, narrow-minded and vulgar utilitarians. To avoid these extremes the historical textbook should show society as a many-sided object, a complex organism made up of a body and a soul and, consequently, whose *moral* aspect should be intimately fused with the *practical* aspect, and its *spiritual* interests with material interests. Society rests on secure foundations when it lives on lofty creeds—the source of great movements and great deeds; creeds hold ideas; through the spread and generalization of ideas societies move forward. But ideas do not float in the air; they spread in proportion as communications develop between societies, and communications require material means. Hence the great moral significance, for example, of the railroads beside their great material significance as a means of strengthening the material welfare of societies. The historian should show that the starting point of moral perfection is first and foremost material exigency and that material exigency is the great lever of moral activity. If man did not need food, clothes, dwellings and the comforts of life he would have remained forever in the brute state. This is a truth that can only alarm puerile sentiment or vulgar idealism. But this truth will not lead the sensible mind to disillusionment; the sensible mind will merely see therein corroboration of the fact that the spirit

disdains no paths and conquers matter by the latter's own aid, by its means. And therefore history requires not only its heroes of virtue and heartfelt persuasions but its ambitious egoists and even its evil-doers; not alone its Solons, Aristides and Timoleons, but its Peisistratuses, Alcibiadeses, Philips and Alexanders of Macedonia; not alone its Alfred and Charlemagne but its Louis XI and Ferdinand the Catholic; not alone its Henries IV and Peters the Great but its Napoleons. And they all in equal measure served the same spirit of humanity, some consciously, acting for and on its behalf, others unconsciously, acting for themselves on behalf of their own *ego*. And nowhere is the presence of the sovereign fates of God so obvious as in this equal service to the spirit by good men, wicked men and egoists which sceptics hold to be incontestable proof of the fact that humanity is ruled by blind chance: for where then would there be the guarantee of progress, the pledge of the lofty goal to which mankind is aiming if the fate of a nation or of mankind depended only upon the appearance of ambitious personalities liable to both death and all hazards? On the contrary, since the fountainhead of progress is the human spirit itself, which is continuously living, *i.e.*, continuously moving, progress is not interrupted even during the epoch of decay and death of societies, for this decay is necessary as a means of preparing the soil for the blossoming of a new life, and death itself, in history as well as in nature, is merely the regenerator of new life. The moral depravity which reached such an excessive degree in the Western Roman Empire spelt the doom of the ancient world and sounded the note of preparation for the triumph of the new faith under the protection of which all those who thirsted for renewal and regeneration knelt in worship—and so Rome, the metropolis of the pagan world, became the metropolis of the Christian world. Great historic personalities are merely an instrument in the hands of the spirit: they retain their will, but it is, unknown to them, circumscribed by the spirit of the times, of the country and the exigencies of the moment and is unable to break away from this magic circle. When it does break through this circle and is at variance with the higher will amazed mankind becomes a witness to the repetition of the holy legend of ancient Israel who was rendered lame in a combat with a divine wrestler.... The human will that has sundered itself from the will of the spirit falls to the ground like a leaf from the tree,

whether it has acted for good or for ill. There still live generations which have been eyewitnesses to the fall of the son of destiny who, having fulfilled his mission, paid no heed to the call of the spirit, and he fell before the tempest which he himself had brewed, fell neither in weakness, nor fatigue, nor exhaustion, but in the fullness of his strength, at the height of his power—and his fall astonished the world no less than it did himself: so clearly was visible to the mind's eye, but not to the bodily eye, the invisible hand that struck him down.... There are epochs in history when the last spark of vivifying idea would seem to have been extinguished in societies, when nihility and egoism rule the world, when salvation seems lost—but it is ever near at hand, and the feeble spark of life that seemed about to be quenched suddenly flares up in a sea of flame, and the world over which its blaze is set marvels whence salvation has come....

These ideas all the more readily lend themselves to elaboration in a historical textbook in that the latter consists entirely of facts, and facts are but a manifestation of the selfsame ideas. Consequently, they merely require to be set forth from the genuine point of view in order to be able to speak for themselves. We must confess, with regret, that the modern history by Mr. Smaragdov is very far in our opinion from meeting these demands.

First of all the size of the work itself does not reveal in its author a contemporary view of modern history. Like all our writers of historical textbooks, Mr. Kaidanov not excepted, Mr. Smaragdov divides modern history into three periods—*religious, mercantile* and *revolutionary*. He is fully entitled to consider this division justified if he wishes to; but we are astonished that he has failed to notice that such a division would make modern history, if presented in conformity with the importance and complexity of the facts, look like a dwarfish man with tiny feet and an enormous head, or, if the last period were to be set forth briefly and perfunctorily, like a freak with a tail where its head ought to be. Strictly speaking, the latter period does not belong to modern history at all, for modern history should cover the period from the late fifteenth century or the discovery of America up to the end of the eighteenth century or the French revolution which is the beginning of *up-to-date* history and bears exactly the same relation to modern history as the latter does to medieval history. For the division of history into periods

should not be a matter for the arbitrary choice of the author, or a matter of tradition, but should be based on the spirit of events. The justice of our view is confirmed by the fact that had Mr. Smaragdov set forth events since the French revolution on the same scale and in such detail as he has described preceding events his book would very likely run into 1,200 pages instead of its present 611 pages. But he has dealt with post-revolutionary events perfunctorily and made them a sort of dry summary in which, to a person unacquainted with history from better sources, everything is obscure, incomprehensible, confused and unintelligible; that is how he has managed to squeeze the whole of modern history into a single book: to fit it in he has been obliged to cut its head off and fix a knob in its stead.

The history of mankind is composed of many facets: it is a history of wars, treaties, finance, administration, law, commerce, inventions, science, art, literature and morals; but since political essence constitutes the principal form of life of civil societies, and since the strife of all ideas comprising the basis of spiritual life of societies has hitherto been displayed in wars, the history of mankind should be essentially a *political* history. However, the history of wars, treaties and governments should in this case serve merely as a framework for the historical narrative, a framework embracing all sides of the life of nations and all the ideas evolving in their lives. But Mr. Smaragdov in this respect has followed the beaten track; while merely hinting at the causes of war, he has given all his attention to the wars themselves, in other words to a summary of battles that is of little interest. Thus, for example, he describes in fair detail all the wars engendered by the *vision* of a balance of power in Europe, and most unsatisfactorily deals with the Reformation. The vision of a balance of power in Europe he regards as something important in principle and results; whereas it was actually nothing but a vision which held the states of Europe in a state of constant tension. This is borne out by the fact that the sole result of a number of sanguinary wars over balance of power politics was sheer unbalancement, and that first-class powers such as Spain and Sweden were reduced to the category of second-rate countries, while such second-rate powers as England and Prussia rose to first-rate eminence. The upsetting of the balance was attributed not to the successes of industry, commerce and

education, but to territorial expansions, whereas precisely the latter were the cause of weakening the *outwardly* strengthening states: for the combining under a single power of heterogeneous and frequently mutually hostile territories merely augmented the cost of maintaining troops in the acquired country and offered no substantial benefits by way of compensation, not to mention that it entailed sanguinary wars with jealous foreign states. France under Louis XIV became the leading power in Europe not through conquests, but through the triumph of monarchism over feudalism, a triumph the way for which was paved by Cardinal Richelieu,—and all the wars kindled by Louis XIV's ambition, which wrought untold havoc to France, were unable to reduce this country to second-rate status, for it had managed to strengthen itself *from within* and was no weaker than other states either in the shameful days of the regency or in the miserable reign of Louis XV, whilst under Napoleon it again became the most powerful state in Europe; even today, dispossessed as she is of all the acquisitions made by Napoleon, France is scarcely weaker than any of the other European countries. England, too, rose to eminence not by conquest but by the development of her inner forces, the consolidation of her political organization and an egoistic policy deriving directly from her national character. Prussian greatness was based on the principle of Protestantism which was adopted as the principle of Prussia's political life, whereas the Catholic principle was the undoing of Spain on account of its oppressive preponderance over all the other elements of the politic life. Sweden owed her momentary greatness under Gustavus Adolphus, Charles X and Charles XII to the private characters of these three sovereigns and not to her inner powers. Austria alone was formed by force of external gravitation and set up on artificial foundations as a result, firstly, of Germany's disintegration, secondly, of her own designation as the shadow of Charlemagne's empire, and, finally, of her mission to serve as a bulwark against Turkish invasion. At any rate Austria was the only country to gain from the odd game of balance of power wars. On the whole these wars originated firstly from a puerile conception of politics, and secondly from the ambition of the erstwhile rulers of Europe. It was at first a sort of struggle between all but moribund knighthood and the unestablished new policy (the wars of Charles VIII, Louis XII and Francis I with Spain and Austria over Milan

and Naples), and later an effort to build up a system of sound politics. The nations of Europe were destined to pass through the forge of sanguinary conflict with each other, and for that purpose any reason was good enough; but balance of power politics derived nothing from these wars, because the *hegemony* of any single state was absolutely out of the question. Mr. Smaragdov regards the wars of Francis I with Charles V in a majestic and noble light as a struggle of Europe for independence against the Hapsburgs and not as a continuation of the Italian wars (p. 36); however, the very character of Francis I is sufficient to utterly refute this view. Francis I was a knight and not a politician; if he did achieve any good results for the general benefit of Europe it was the effect of unconscious effort directed to an entirely different aim. Strictly speaking, Europe until Henry IV did not possess a single figure versed in statecraft, not a single politician in the real sense of the word. Henry IV's policy, however, beneficial though it was for France, could not have been beneficial for Europe, for it was too lofty, noble and humane for its time. For sweeping design, conceived with genius and filled with true discernment of possibilities and reality, the first really great politician of Europe was Cardinal Richelieu. In working for his time he worked for the ages; he delivered the final and terrible blow to feudalism which he forced into degeneration as an impotent aristocracy which later quailed beneath the mere glance of Louis XIV. The balance of power wars were nothing short of a historic comedy, especially up to the Reformation which imparted to them a different and more important character. But the Reformation did not appear on a single day together with Luther; it was prepared by centuries and its inception lay hidden in the Middle Ages. One hundred years before Luther's appearance John Huss and his fellow-champion Jerome of Prague were burned at the stake. But this was not yet the beginning of heresy: in the twelfth century, two hundred odd years before John Huss, Peter Waldo formulated his doctrine with the same aim, a doctrine that gave rise to the Albigenses wars. Luther's reform was merely an ultimately successful (because opportune) attempt at a cause in which both Waldo and Huss had failed. But the period of the Italian wars, from 1494 till 1517, was not occupied solely by the French campaigns in Italy, papal intrigues and Spanish retaliation; beneath these external events which, generally speaking, are of

little interest and exercised no perceptible influence on subsequent events, lay hidden another labour of the spirit, outwardly less conspicuous because not so brilliant, but none the less important and great in consequence and effect. The invention of book printing, which prepared the way for the success of the Reformation, spread swiftly and enabled chosen intellects to influence the masses. The appearance of Luther, who registered his protest against the sale of indulgences in ninety-five theses on October 31, 1517, was preceded by a subdued but none the less strong and dramatic struggle of which the Reformation was merely the climax. Besides, this event was brought about by Luther not without the aid of other remarkable men. The beginning of the Reformation was contemporaneous with a great moral event in the life of Europe—the *renascence of learning*. Upon the capture of Constantinople by the Turks (1453) numerous Byzantians abandoned their country and sought refuge in Italy; they brought with them the treasures of ancient literatures into a country which had long been familiar with Latin literature. This circumstance furnished a powerful impetus to the education of Europe; classical learning entered the lists against the scholasticism of the Middle Ages. Germany, the principal hotbed of this scholasticism, in the person of its universities fanatically took up the cudgels against the spirit of the new movement. Professors of Greek and Latin were persecuted as heretics and atheists. They ran from town to town, perishing from the sword and poison. Despite all this the spirit did what it had to do—and crass ignorance yielded its ground step by step. Enthusiasm for the new learning took such a hold upon the new generation that young men, those who could not afford to pay professors, entered their service as servants; others, defying the surveillance of the police, impervious to the cold, gathered at night in some remote field or wood to discuss Cicero and translate Homer. The universities were obdurate; a papal bull was obtained proscribing the teaching of the Hebrew language and the reading of Hebrew books; the famous and noble scholar of the time, *Reuchlin*, barely escaped the stake for his knowledge of ancient and Hebrew languages. Then there appeared the witty pamphlet of Von Hutten *Litterae Obscurorum Virorum* in which crass ignorance and fanaticism were with scathing skill hoisted on their own petard. This consolidated the triumph of enlightenment in Europe. Herder said that neither Hudibras in England, nor

Gargantua in France nor Don Quixote in Spain have exercised such a strong influence on the improvement of humanity as Hutten's letters which broke down the last defences of barbarism—the scholasticism of the colleges. We believe that the deeds and services rendered even by such men as Konrad Celtes, Hermann Busche, Esticampian, Rhegius Urbanus, Hegius, the teacher of Erasmus of Rotterdam, Drinagerberg, the enlightener of Melanchthon, Agricola and others are worth honourable mention in a historical textbook though they are not captains of war. Still more so such men as Reuchlin, Erasmus of Rotterdam and Hutten, whose importance, whose mortal combat with barbarism and triumph over it are worth much more space in a historical textbook than the few lines we have here devoted to them; for there is a thousand times greater interest and importance in this than in the trivial details of the trivial Italian wars. But of all this Mr. Smaragdov had not a word to say: he describes only what has already been described by Mr. Kaidanov. We do not maintain that the Italian wars should have been passed over in silence; no, let the frame of political events remain a frame and be *concisely* set forth in paragraphs in bold type; but let events that are fraught with an inner meaning, events whose omission renders the movement of humanity unintelligible, be set forth *in more detail* in paragraphs of small type. Mr. Smaragdov has not even deemed it necessary to resort to this differentiation of types which is indispensable in a textbook.

Generally, we find in Mr. Smaragdov's modern history such events as, for example, the Thirty Years' War, the Treaty of Westphalia and so on—the same things said in the same way as in Mr. Kaidanov's book, neither more nor less, no better and no worse; but we do not find the evolution of humanity, the causes of progress and even progress itself. The heroes of history, such as Wallenstein, Gustavus Adolphus, Richelieu, etc., are drawn faintly and colourlessly. It will be said: a textbook is not a comprehensive history, its principal concern is with gist and facts, not poetry. An old tune that is convincing only to indolence, ignorance and incompetence. We would refer these objectors to a book published in Russian and printed in Russian type, to Mr. Lorentz's *History of the Middle Ages*, and suggest that they should peruse, say, the description of the reign of Charlemagne: it will serve a useful purpose in convincing them that profound erudition and an extremely efficient handling

of the facts do not in any way interfere with the poetic narrative which is itself the natural result of a live contemplation of the ideas contained in events....

This, however, is not half so bad. It is usually said that the end crowns the deed, but precisely the end with Mr. Smaragdov is no good at all.

His history of Napoleon is a downright pamphlet. One would think that Mr. Smaragdov is relating contemporary events where it is impossible to maintain a calm impartiality. Napoleon's actions draw from him such epithets as insolent, impudent, outrageous—in short, he is definitely in a scolding temper.... In the Egyptian expedition he accuses Napoleon of inhuman conduct; in brief, the world, according to him, has never produced such a frightful man as Napoleon.... *Sic transit gloria mundi*!... And describing the death of the Duke of Brunswick, he makes him terminate his long career of glory, obviously acquired in the famous campaign against France, in the year 1792.... *Et voilà comme on écrit l'histoire.*

Mr. Smaragdov's modern history is more complete than all the other histories that have preceded it: it has been brought up to 1839. That would have been a great merit had it not, towards the end, resembled a dry summary conveying nothing to the mind. We hope that when publishing the second edition of his *Modern History* Mr. Smaragdov will considerably improve it. We believe he would do still better to destroy it and write an entirely new one....

LES MYSTÈRES DE PARIS

NOVEL BY EUGÈNE SUE
TRANSLATED BY V. STROEV.
ST. PETERSBURG, 1844. TWO VOLUMES[1]

THE HISTORY of European literatures, especially in recent times, is replete with examples of brilliant success that has attended some writers or some works. Who does not remember the time when all England, for example, avidly bought up all the poems of Byron and the novels of Walter Scott, so that the entire edition of any new work by these authors was sold out in thousands of copies in the course of a few days. This popularity is quite understandable: apart from the fact that Byron and Walter Scott were great poets, they laid entirely new paths in art, created new forms and gave it a new content; each of them was a Columbus in the realm of art, and amazed Europe set full sail to the newly discovered shores of the creative world, no less rich and wonderful than those of America. And so, there was nothing surprising in this. Neither was it surprising that ordinary talents, too, enjoyed a similar, albeit evanescent success: the crowd must have its geniuses, as humanity has its. Thus, in France during the latter period of the Restoration, there appeared on the literary arena under the banner of romanticism a phalanx of writers of medium magnitude which the crowd looked upon as its geniuses. They were read and marvelled at throughout France, followed, as usual, by the whole of Europe. Hugo's novel *Notre Dame de Paris* had a success which should have only been due to the great works of great geniuses who come into the world with the living message of revival and regeneration. But barely fourteen years have elapsed, and this novel is now regarded as the *tour de force* of a purely extrinsic and spectacular though admirable talent, as the product of an imagination that is at odds with creative reason though powerful and stirring, as a brilliant but overwrought work compounded of exaggerations, filled with pictures of the exceptional and not of reality, egre-

gious without grandeur, vast without symmetry and harmony, morbid and absurd. Many people today simply do not regard it in any light, and nobody is concerned in dragging it up from the waters of Lethe in whose depths it lies resting in sweet and eternal sleep. Such is the fate that overtook the finest work of Victor Hugo, the *ci-devant* world genius: what then can be said of the fate of all his other, especially his later works. This writer's fame, recently so great and wide, can now easily be fitted into a nutshell. Is it so long ago that the stories of Balzac, those scenes of salon life with their women of thirty, were a source of general delight and a subject of all talk? Is it long since our Russian magazines flaunted them? Three times the reading world avidly read, or rather devoured, *Histoire des treize,* in which it hoped to find the *Iliad* of modern social life. Yet who now would pluck up the courage and patience to reread these three long tales? We do not mean to say that nothing good could now be found in the works of Balzac or that he was an untalented man: on the contrary, his works can be found to contain much that is beautiful, though transient and relative; he possessed a talent, even a remarkable talent, but one that was good for a given time. That time has passed and the talent is forgotten—and the very crowd that raved about him is today not in the least concerned whether he exists or ever existed.[2]

For all that, there is hardly an epoch in any literature which affords an instance of such amazing success in any way comparable to the success which in our days has fallen to the lot of the notorious *Les Mystères de Paris.* We shall not dilate on the fact that this novel, or rather this *European Arabian Nights,* published in feuilleton scraps in a daily newspaper, engrossed the public of Paris and consequently the public of all the world where French newspapers are read (and where are they not read?), that on its publication in a separate edition the book was immediately bought up, read, reread, thumbed and worn bare at all points of the earth where French is spoken (and where is it not spoken?), translated into all European languages, stirred up a discussion more unliterary than it was literary and provoked an intense desire to imitate it, nor that a sumptuous new edition with illustrations by the best artists is being prepared in Paris. All this in our day is not yet a measure of true and real success. In

our day the scope of genius, talent, learning, beauty, virtue and, consequently, success, which in our age is considered to be above genius, talent, learning, beauty and virtue—this scope is easily measured by a single measure which conditions and comprises all others—by MONEY. In our day there is no such thing as genius, learning, beauty or virtue that has not made good and enriched itself. In the good and ignorant old days genius ended its great career at the stake or in the poorhouse, if not in the madhouse; learning died a hungry death; virtue shared the fate of genius, and beauty was regarded as a dangerous gift of nature. Not so today: all these qualities sometimes find it difficult to begin their career, but having begun it they end it happily: dry, skinny and pallid in youth, in manhood stout, fat and ruddy-cheeked, they recline in proud and carefree ease on bags of gold. At first they are misanthropes and Byronists, and later they become philistines satisfied with themselves and the world. Jules Janin started his career with *L'âne mort et la femme guillotinée* and ended it with mercenary feuilletons in the *Journal des Débats* where he established a profitable business in the sale by auction of praise and censure. Eugène Sue at the beginning of his career regarded life and mankind through dark-coloured spectacles and tried to create the impression that he belonged to the satanic school of literature: he was not rich at the time. Now he has put his hand to moralizing, because he has grown rich.... In addition to having received a large sum for his *Les Mystères de Paris* he is offered *one hundred thousand francs* for his next unwritten novel by a new publisher who wishes to raise the fortunes of his magazine. There is success for you! He who wishes to outdo Sue in greatness would need to write a novel for which a publisher would pay *two hundred thousand francs:* then anyone who is able to count, but not necessarily to read, would understand that the new novelist is twice as great as Eugène Sue.... The aesthetic criticism, as you see, is very simple: any Russian contractor complete with beard and abacus can be the greatest critic of our age....

This, it seems, would suffice to settle briefly and satisfactorily the question of *Les Mystères de Paris;* but, true to our convictions, which may strike all people possessing a considerable fund of morality as being prejudices, we wish to look at *Les*

Mystères from another point of view and take its measure by a gauge other than that of its success, *i.e.*, the money paid for it. We even consider that to be our duty, since *Les Mystères de Paris* had a great success in Russia, too, as everywhere else. Thanks to Mr. Stroev's good though incomplete translation that part of the Russian public which is unable to read foreign works in the original have now been able to acquaint themselves with this novel. *Les Mystères de Paris* is mooted and discussed with us in the provinces and some of our magazines in the capital even bruit the discovery of Eugène Sue's genius and his novel's immortality, leaving, however, the reasons for that genius and immortality an inscrutable mystery for their public. We have already expressed our opinion concerning *Les Mystères de Paris* and quoted in the Foreign Literature column the opinion of one of France's best contemporary critics. This might be considered sufficient; but could we have expected at the time that this novel would rouse the interest of the Russian public to such an extent? It is the business of a magazine to treat of matters of general interest. So let us say some more about *Les Mystères de Paris.*

The underlying idea of the novel is genuine and noble. The author wished to present to a depraved and egoistic society worshipping the golden calf the spectacle of the sufferings of wretched people doomed to ignorance and poverty and condemned by ignorance and poverty to vice and crime. We know not whether this picture, which the author painted as best as he could, drew a shudder from this society amid its industrial and commercial orgies; but we do know that it irritated that society which accused the author of *immorality*! The words "morality" and "immorality" have become very flexible in our days and can be applied indiscriminately to anything you like. Look, for example, at that gentleman who carries with such dignity his fat paunch that has glutted itself on the tears and blood of helpless innocence, that gentleman whose face is expressive of such smug self-satisfaction that your first glance will leave you in no doubt as to the fullness of his deep-bottomed coffers in which lie buried the gratuitous toil of the poor man and the lawful legacy of the orphan. He, that gentleman with the head of an ass and the trunk of a bull, most frequently and with special pleasure speaks

of *morality* and passes judgment with special severity on youth for its *immorality*, consisting in a lack of respect for worthy (*i.e.*, rich) people, and for its freethinking, consisting in a disinclination to believe in words that are not upheld by deeds. One can find thousands of such examples, and it is not the least matter for surprise that there are people in our times who call Socrates a cheat, a rogue and a madman dangerous to the morality of youth. It is a specific feature of our time that for every expression of truth, for every noble impulse, for every honest action spontaneously and actually explaining the meaning of morality and unintentionally exposing perverted moralists, you will promptly be called an immoral man. With such horrific epithet was also met Eugène Sue's novel in Paris: the author, then, would seem to have achieved his goal, his letter reached destination.... *Les Mystères de Paris* even excited administrative debates in the Chamber of Deputies: so great was the novel's success....

To make the Russian public more readily understand the extraordinary success achieved by *Les Mystères de Paris* we must explain the local and historical reasons for this success. These reasons now belong to history; politics have ceased to speak about them: consequently, they have already become the subject of *historical criticism*. The French charter was modified by royal decree in 1830; the working class in Paris was fomented to unrest by the party of the middle estate (the *bourgeoisie*). A struggle ensued between the people and the royal troops. In its blind and reckless self-sacrifice the people did not spare itself, fighting for the violation of rights which made it no happier and, consequently, bearing as much interest for it as the health of the Chinese emperor. Fighting in detached masses from behind barricades, without a common plan, without a banner, without leaders, barely knowing against whom and not at all knowing *for whom* and *for what*, the people in vain appealed to the representatives of the nation recently assembled in the reserved chamber: these representatives had other things on their mind; they all but hid themselves, pale and trembling, in the cellars. When everything was brought to an end by the blind zeal of the people these representatives crawled out of their holes and climbed dexterously to power over the bodies of the dead, removed

all the honest men from the government, and made others pull the chestnuts out of the fire while they sat warming themselves contentedly before it, arguing about morality. And what did the people, which had in reckless zeal shed its blood for a word, for an empty sound the meaning of which it had not understood itself,—what did the people gain by it? Alas! immediately after the July days this poor people was horrified to see that its position had not only not improved but was much worse than it had been before. Yet the whole of this historical comedy had been enacted in the name of the people and for the good of the people! The aristocracy had fallen for good and all; the bourgeoisie had stepped firmly into its place, succeeding to its privileges but not to its culture, its elegant forms of life, its blue-blooded arrogance, supercilious generosity and vain liberality towards the people. The French proletarian is equal before the law to the richest *propriétaire* and capitalist; both are tried by the same court, and, if guilty, punished with the same punishment; but the trouble is that the proletarian is no better off for all this equality. Eternally a worker for the proprietor and capitalist the proletarian is entirely in his hands, is eternally his slave, for the former gives him work and arbitrarily fixes his payment for it. This payment does not always suffice for the poor workman's daily bread and for the rags to cover himself and his family, whereas the rich proprietor keeps 99 per cent as his own premium.... There is equality for you! And is it easier to die in the winter in a cold basement or freezing garret with wife and children shivering from the cold and without having had anything to eat for three days; is it easier to die with a charter for which so much blood had been shed than without a charter, but without the sacrifices which it demands?... The proprietor, like every parvenu, regards the workman in his blouse and wooden clogs as the painter regards the Negro. True, he cannot force him to work for him; but he can refuse to give him work and force him to starve to death. The bourgeois proprietors are prosaically sober-minded men. Their favourite rule is: *every man unto himself*. They want to see justice done by the civil law and will have nothing to do with the law of humanity and morality. They honestly pay the workman his wages which they themselves have fixed, and if those wages are insufficient

to save him and his family from death by starvation and he is driven by despair to become a thief or a murderer—their conscience is clear, for are they not right within the law! The aristocracy does not reason so: it is generous even in its vanity, by conventional habit. By the same token it was always partial to intellect, talent, science and art and was proud of the knowledge that it patronized them. The petty bourgeoisie of contemporary France imitates the aristocracy only in luxury and vanity which it manifests in a gross and vulgar manner like Molière's *bourgeois-gentilhomme*. And that is for whom the people sacrificed their lives! According to the French charter only a proprietor who pays not less than four hundred francs in yearly taxes on real property can be an elector and candidate. Consequently, all the power and all the influence in the state is concentrated in the hands of the property owners who did not sacrifice a single drop of blood for the charter, while the people have been completely alienated from the rights of the charter for which they had suffered. With us in Russia, where the term "to starve to death" is used hyperbolically, since there is absolutely no chance of even an arrant idler and beggar, leave alone a hard-working poor man, dying of hunger, not everybody will easily believe that it is quite possible and not at all unusual for poor people in England and France to die from starvation. Several weeks, two or three months of sickness and unemployment —and the poor proletarian must die of starvation with his family unless he resorts to crime which must lead him to the guillotine. That is why we have dilated on this subject which is so closely connected with the plot of *Les Mystères de Paris*. The misery of the people in Paris surpasses the most daring flight of the imagination.

But the sparks of goodness have not yet died out in France—they are merely covered up by the ashes and await a favourable wind that will blow them into a bright and pure flame. The people is a child; but the child is growing and promises to become a man full of strength and reason. Sorrow has taught it wisdom and shown it the constitutional tinsel in its true light. It no longer believes the windbags and the fabricators of laws, and it will no more shed its blood for words whose meaning is obscure to it or for men who love it only when they can use it as a cat's

paw to further their own interests. Enlightenment is spreading swiftly among the people which already possesses its own poets who premonstrate its future, sharing with it its sufferings and not dissociating from it either in dress or manner of life. It is still weak, but it alone bears within itself the flame of national life and the fresh enthusiasm of conviction which has gone out in the sections of "educated" society. Today, moreover, it has true friends, men who have linked their vows and hopes with its destiny, men who have voluntarily renounced participation in the mart of power and money.[3] Many of them enjoying European repute as men of science and letters live and work in self-appointed and honest poverty while possessing every means of occupying a position in the foreground of the constitutional market. Their conscientious and energetic voice is terrible to the buyers, sellers and shareholders of the administration—and that voice raised in defence of the poverty-stricken duped people sounds in the ears of the administrative entrepreneurs like the trumpet blast of doom. The moans of the people which this voice promulgates to the world stirs public opinion and therefore disturbs the men who speculate in government. Together with these honest voices other more numerous voices are heard which look upon intercession on behalf of the people as a sure speculation for power, a reliable means for overthrowing the ministry and occupying its place. Thus, in France the people has become a public, political and administrative issue. The success of a novel whose hero is represented by the people is only natural under the circumstances. And it is a cause for wonder that the spirit of speculation which possesses French literature had not thought of seizing upon such an inexhaustible and certain source of profit before this! ...

Eugène Sue was this lucky man to whom it first occurred to venture on a profitable literary speculation in the name of the people. Eugène Sue does not belong to that little band of French literati who, disgusted with the abomination of desolation in social morals, have voluntarily renounced the present and sworn themselves to selfless service of the future, which they will probably not live to see but whose advent they will have facilitated. No, Eugène Sue is a sober character quite in sympathy with the material spirit of modern France. True, he once aspired to the role of Byron and posed in satanic novels of the genre of

Atar-Gull, *Hitano*, and *Crao*; but that was when the booksellers and publishers were not running after him with bags of gold. Moreover, the vogue of spurious Byronism has already passed and Eugène Sue was at an age when men are more sensible and can come off the stilts. He always was a decent fellow and only pretended to be a second-rate demon, but now he is quite a good sort, not at all priggish, a respectable bourgeois in the full sense of the word, a philistine of constitutional-bourgeois civility, and if there were a chance of his becoming a deputy he would be precisely one of those deputies which the charter most needs. Describing the French people in his novel Eugène Sue regards it from the standpoint of a trueborn bourgeois, simply as a hungry and ragged mob condemned by poverty and ignorance to a life of crime. He is ignorant of both true vice and true virtue among the people and does not suspect that it has a future which the triumphant dominant party no longer has because in the people there is faith and enthusiasm, there is a moral power. Eugène Sue sympathizes with the miseries of the people: why deprive him of the noble capacity for commiseration—the more so that it has promised him such certain profits? But *how* he commiserates is another matter. He would like the people not to be miserable, to cease being a hungry, ragged mob partly criminal through necessity and become a well-fed, clean and well-behaved mob, leaving the bourgeoisie, the present makers of France's laws, to remain the masters of France, the most educated estate of speculators. Eugène Sue shows in his novel how French laws themselves sometimes unconsciously connive at corruption and crime; and one must admit that he shows it very cleverly and convincingly: what he does not suspect, however, is that the evil is latent not in this or that law, but in the entire system of French legislation, in the entire system of society....

A GUIDE TO THE STUDY OF THEORETICO-MATERIALISTIC PHILOSOPHY

WORK BY ALEXANDER PETROVICH TATARINOV.
ST. PETERSBURG, 1844[1]

GERMANY is the home of philosophy of the modern world. In speaking of philosophy people always have in mind German philosophy, for there is no other known to mankind. In all other countries philosophy is an attempt by an individual to solve certain problems of existence; in Germany philosophy is a historically developing science whose treatment is steadily passed on from generation to generation. Kant was the first to place modern philosophy on a sound foundation and give it scientific form. Fichte's teaching expressed the second stage in the evolution of philosophy: working independently of Kant and even taking up a controversial attitude towards him he was nevertheless merely the continuator of Kant's theories. Schelling and Hegel are representatives of the further progress of philosophy. Hegelianism has now split into three sides—the Hegelian Right which has halted at the last word of Hegelianism and proceeds no further; the Left which has broken away from Hegel and presumes its progress to consist in a vital reconciliation of philosophy with life, of theory with practice; and the Centre. representing a sort of mean between the dead stagnancy of the Right and the impetuous movement of the Left. In saying that the Hegelian Left has broken away from its teacher we do not mean that it has repudiated his great merits in the field of philosophy and acknowledged his teachings to be an empty and barren phenomenon. No, it merely means that it wishes to proceed farther and, with all due respect for the great philosopher, ranks the authority of the human spirit higher than the authority of Hegel. Thus did Fichte break away from Kant; thus did Schelling, by the spirit of his teaching, declare himself against Kant and Fichte; thus did Schelling's pupil. Hegel. break away from

Schelling; but none of them thought of repudiating the merits of his predecessor, and each of them held himself to be under obligation to the works of his predecessor. Such a course of German philosophy renders the arbitrary displays of individual philosophizing impossible. To operate in the field of philosophy it is not enough for a man in Germany to declare in print: "This is what I think"; he must devote years of arduous labour to a thorough and efficient study of everything that exists in the realm of philosophy, he must be up to date.[2]

From this point of view there is nothing more amusing than Russian philosophy and Russian books dealing with philosophy. No one in Russia is concerned with philosophy as a science; but all our philosophers think that it is sufficient to wish it in order to become a philosopher. They consider the study of philosophy superfluous; they find it easier to declare that all the German philosophers are liars than to read any one of them. Our philosophers do not understand that we have neither the soil nor the demand yet for philosophy. Our philosopher will suddenly take it into his head to philosophize, and since no duties are imposed on tittle-tattle, the result of this sudden attack of philosophizing will be a booklet saying everything, explaining everything, settling everything except the reason why and for whom all this twaddle has been written....[3]

Perhaps the most bold-spirited of all our philosophers is Mr. A. P. Tatarinov: he expounds on forty pages of scrawling and atrociously printed script a hitherto unheard-of *theoretico-practical* philosophy and solves at one fell stroke the problems of *truth, goodness* and the *beautiful:* truth he shows us as truth, goodness as goodness, and the beautiful as the beautiful. Brief and clear! Of his philosophical antecedents he seems to know only Locke, Leibnitz and Kant, and about the further progress of philosophy he has not the faintest idea. For whom and to what purpose has this notebook (for one cannot even call it book or even booklet) been written? To those who have any idea at all about philosophy M. Tatarinov's notebook will be merely a diversion; them who have no idea of philosophy this notebook will leave no wiser than before.

SELECTED ARTICLES, REVIEWS AND LETTERS 1846–1848

THOUGHTS AND NOTES ON RUSSIAN LITERATURE[1]

WHATEVER our literature may be it has far greater significance for us than may appear: in it, and it alone, is contained the whole of our intellectual life and all the poetry of our life. Only in the sphere of our literature do we cease to be Johns and Peters and become simply people dealing and associating with people.

There is a prevailing spirit of disunity in our society: each of our social estates possesses specific traits of its own—its dress and its manners, and way of life and customs, and even its language. To be convinced of this it would suffice to spend an evening in the chance company of a government official. a military man, a landowner, a merchant, a burgess, a barrister, a clergyman, a student, a seminarist, a professor and an artist; seeing yourself in such company you might think you were being present at the distribution of tongues.... So great is the disunity reigning among these representatives of various classes of the same society! The spirit of disunity is hostile to society: society unites people, caste divides them. Many believe that hauteur, a relic of Slavonic antiquity, destroys sociability in us. That may be true in part, if it is true at all. Granted that the nobleman is loath to cultivate the society of men of lowlier station; but then what are men of lowlier station not prepared to sacrifice in order to cultivate the society of the nobleman? It is their craze! But the trouble is that this rapprochement is always an external, formal show resembling a bowing acquaintance; a rich merchant's vanity is flattered by the acquaintance with even a poor nobleman, yet even if he has made the acquaintance of the rich nobility he still remains true to the habits, conceptions, language and way of life of his own merchants' class. This spirit of particularity is so strong with us that even the new social estates that originated from the new order of things created by Peter the Great lost no time in assuming their specific features. Is it to be wondered at that the nobleman in no way resembles the merchant or the merchant the nobleman

when we have sometimes almost the same distinction between the scientist and the artist? We still have scientists who have remained faithful throughout their lives to a noble resolution not to understand art and what it stands for; we still have many artists who do not suspect the vital connection that their art has with science, literature and life. Bring *such* a scientist and *such* an artist together and you will find that they will either keep silent or exchange noncommittal phrases, and even these will be more in the nature of work for them than conversation. At times our scientist, especially if he has dedicated himself to the exact sciences, will look down on philosophy and history and those who engage in them with an ironical smile, while poetry, literature and journalism he simply regards as nonsense. Our so-called "man of letters" looks with contempt on mathematics which eluded him at school. It may be argued: this is not a spirit of disunity, it is rather a spirit of quasi-education and quasi-learning! Yes, but then did not all these people receive a fairly broad if not very deep initial education? The man of letters learned mathematics while at school, and the mathematician studied literature. Many of them can on occasion make out quite a good case to prove that the division of the sciences is merely an artificial contrivance and not a thing of intrinsic value, since all sciences comprise a single knowledge of a single subject—Being; that art, like science, is a consciousness of Being but in another form, and that literature should be a delight and luxury of the mind for all educated people alike. But when they have to apply these specious arguments to life they immediately divide themselves into guilds which eye each other with a certain ironical smile and a sense of their own worth or with a sort of mistrust.... How then expect sociability among people of diverse estates, each of which has its own mode of thinking, speaking, dressing, eating and drinking?...

However that may be, it would be wrong to say that we had no society whatever. Undoubtedly there exists with us a strong demand for society and a striving towards society, and that in itself is important! The reform of Peter the Great did not destroy or break down the walls which in old society had divided one class from another; but it had undermined the foundations of these walls and thrown them awry if it had not wrecked them—and now they are leaning over more and more from day to day,

crumbling and being buried beneath their own debris and dust, so that to repair them would only give them added weight, which, in view of their sapped foundations, would merely accelerate their inevitable downfall. And if today the estates divided by these walls cannot overstep them as they would a smooth road, they can at any rate jump over them with ease at the spots where they have suffered most from wear and dilapidation. This was previously done slowly and imperceptibly, whi'e now it is being done faster and more perceptibly—and the time is not far off when it will be done swiftly and thoroughly. Railroads will run their tunnels and bridges through and beneath the walls, and the development of industry and commerce will interweave the interests of people of all estates and classes and force them into the close and vital intercourse that needs must smooth down all the sharp and unnecessary distinctions.

But the beginning of this rapprochement among the social estates, which in fact represents the inchoation of society, does not by any means belong exclusively to our times: it merges with the beginnings of our literature. A heterogeneous society, welded into a single mass by material interests a'one, would be a sorry, humanless society. However great may be the outward prosperity and outward strength of a society one would hardly regard it as an object of envy if its commerce, industry, shipping, railroads and generally all its material motive forces constituted the primary, principal and direct instead of merely the auxiliary means towards education and civilization.... In this respect we have no cause to blame fate: social enlightenment and education flowed with us originally through the channel of a small and barely visible brook, but a brook that had sprung from a sublime and noble source—from science and literature itself. Science with us today is only beginning to take root but has not yet taken root, whereas education has taken root but not yet spread i's growth. Its leaf is small and scarce, its stem neither high nor thick, but its roots have sunk so deep that no tempest, no flood, no power can tear it up: fell this young wood in one place and its roots will give shoots in another, and you will sooner tire of felling than this vegetation tire of giving new shoots and spreading....

In speaking of the progress of society's education we have in mind the progress of our literature, for our education is the direct

effect of our literature upon the ideas and morals of society. Our literature has created the morals of our society, has already educated several generations of widely divergent character, has paved the way for the inner rapprochement of the estates, has formed a species of public opinion and produced a sort of special class in society which differs from the *middle estate* in that it consists not of the merchantry and burghers alone but of people of all estates who have been drawn together through education, which, with us, centred exclusively in a love of literature.[2]

If you wish to understand and appreciate the influence of our literature on society, glance at the representatives of its various epochs, speak with them, or make them speak among themselves. Our literature is so young and of such recent origin that one may still come across all its representatives in society. The first admirable Russian poem written in regular metre, Lomonosov's *Ode on the Taking of Khotin*, made its appearance in 1739, exactly 107 years ago, and Lomonosov died in 1765, eighty odd years ago. There are, of course, no people today who have seen Lomonosov even in their childhood, or who, having seen him, could remember it; but there are still many people in Russia today who have learned to love poetry and literature from Lomonosov's works, and who considered him to be as great a poet as he was considered to be in his time. There is a still greater number of people today who have a lively recollection of the face and voice of Derzhavin and considered the epoch of his full fame to have been the best time of their lives. Many old men today are still convinced in all sincerity of the excellent merits of Kheraskov's poems, and it was not so long ago that the venerable poet Dmitriev complained in print of the young generation's irreverence towards the talent of the creator of *Rossiada* and *Vladimir*. There are still many old men who are thrilled by memories of Sumarokov's tragedies and are ready, in a dispute, to recite what they consider to be the best tirades from *Dmitri the Pretender*. Others while conceding that Sumarokov's language is really antiquated, will point out to you with special deference the tragedies and comedies of Knyazhnin as a standard of dramatic pathos and purity of language. Still more often can we meet people who, while saying nothing about Sumarokov or Knyazhnin, will speak with all the greater heat and assurance about Ozerov. As for Karamzin,

both the old and elder generations belong to him body and soul, feel, think and live by him, despite the fact that they have not only read Zhukovsky, Batyushkov, Pushkin, Griboyedov, Gogol and Lermontov but even admired them more or less.... Then there are people today who smile ironically at the mention of Pushkin and speak with reverential awe and admiration of Zhukovsky, as though homage towards the latter were incompatible with homage towards the former. And how many people are there who do not understand Gogol and justify their prejudice against him by the fact that they understand Pushkin!... But do not imagine that these are purely literary facts: no, if you pay closer attention to these representatives of the different epochs of our literature and different epochs of our society you will not fail to discern a more or less vital relation between their literary and their worldly conceptions and convictions. As far as their literary education is concerned, these people seem to be separated from each other by centuries, because our literature has spanned the gulf of many centuries in the space of a hundred odd years. And that was why there was a great difference between the society that admired the cumbrous wording of turgid odes and heavy epic poems, and the society that shed tears over *Liza's Pond;* between the society that avidly read *Ludmila* and *Svetlana,* was thrilled by the fantastic horrors of *The Twelve Sleeping Maidens* or basked in romantic langour beneath the mysterious sounds of the *Aeolian Harp,* and the society that forgot the *Prisoner of the Caucasus* and *The Fountain of Bakhchisurai* for *Eugene Onegin,* Fon-Vizin's comedies for *Wit Works Woe,* Ozerov's *Dmitri Donskoy* for *Boris Godunov* (as once Sumarokov's *Dmitri the Pretender* had been forgotten for the former), and then would seem to have cooled to former poets for Pushkin and Lermontov; all the novelists and writers of romance whom they had so recently admired were forgotten for Gogol.... Imagine the immeasurable gulf of time that lay between *Ivan Vyzhigin* published in 1829 and *Dead Souls* published in 1842.... This distinction in society's literary education passed into life and divided people into diversely operating, thinking and persuaded generations whose lively disputes and controversial relations, originating as they did from principles and not from material interests, represented symptoms of a nascent and developing spiritual life in society. And that great deed is the deed of our literature!...

Literature was for our society a vital source of even practical moral ideas. It started with satire, and in the person of Cantemir declared implacable war on ignorance, prejudices, barratry, chicanery, pettifogging, extortion and embezzlement which it found in old society not as vices, but as rules of life, moral convictions. Whatever we may think of Sumarokov's gifts, his satirical attacks of *krapivnoye semya*[3] will always earn honourable mention in the history of Russian literature. Fon-Vizin's comedies rendered a still greater service to society than they did to literature. The same could almost be said of Kapnist's *Slander*. The fable became so popular with us because it belongs to the satirical genre of poetry. Derzhavin himself, pre-eminently a lyrical poet, was at the same time a satirical poet, as for example in *To Felitza, The Grandee* and other plays. Ultimately there came a time when satire in our literature passed into humour, represented by the artistic portrayal of life's reality. Of course, it is absurd to suppose that a satire, a comedy, story or novel could reform a vicious person; but there is no doubt that in opening society's eyes to itself, and being instrumental in awakening its self-consciousness, they cover vice with scorn and disgrace. No wonder many people cannot hear Gogol's name mentioned without a feeling of rancour and call his *Inspector General* an "immoral" work that ought to be prohibited. Equally, no one is so simple today as to believe that a comedy or a story can make an honest man out of a bribetaker—no, you cannot straighten a twisted tree when it has grown and thickened; but bribetakers have their progeny, as do the non-bribetakers: both, while not yet having cause to regard vivid descriptions of bribery as something immoral, admire them and are, imperceptibly to themselves, enriched with impressions that do not always remain barren in their subsequent lives when they will have become actual members of society. The impressions of youth are strong, and youth believes to be the indubitable truth what has first of all appealed to its emotions, imagination and mind. And so we see how literature influences not only education, but the moral improvement of society! Be that as it may, it is a fact beyond a shadow of doubt, that the number of people who are endeavouring to realize their moral convictions in deeds to the detriment of their private interests and at the risk of their social position has been growing perceptibly with us only lately.

No less undisputed is the fact that literature with us serves as the connecting link between people who are in all other respects *inwardly* divided. The burgher Lomonosov earns important titles by virtue of his talent and learning, and grandees admit him into their circle. On the other hand, it is literature again that draws him closer to poor and socially unimportant people. The poor nobleman Derzhavin himself becomes a grandee through his talent, and among the men with whom literature has brought him in close contact he has found not only rich patrons but friends as well. Kamenev, the Kazan merchant, author of the ballad *Gromval*, arrived in Moscow on business and went to make the acquaintance of Karamzin and, through him, made the acquaintance of the whole Moscow literary circle. That was *forty years* ago, when merchants got no further than the vestibules of nobles' houses and even then on matters of business concerned with the sale of their wares or an old debt for payment of which they humbly importuned. The first Russian magazines, whose very names are now forgotten, were published by circles of young men who had been drawn together on the basis of their common love of literature. Education levels men. And in our days it is no longer a rarity to meet a friendly coterie in which you will find a titled gentleman and a commoner, a merchant and a tradesman—a coterie whose members have entirely forgotten the outward distinctions that divided them, and entertain a mutual regard for each other simply as men. Here is the true beginning of educated society which literature has established! Is there anyone with a claim to the title of man who does not from the bottom of his heart wish this sociability to wax and grow by the day and the hour like the prodigy heroes of our legends! Society, like every living thing, should be organical, that is to say, a multitude of people *internally* linked together. Pecuniary interests, trade, shares, balls, social gatherings and dances are also links, but they are external, not vital, organic links, though necessary and useful. People are internally bound together by common moral interests, similarity of views and equality of education, combined with a mutual regard for each other's human dignity. But all our moral interests, all our spiritual life have hitherto been and will, still for a long time to come, be concentrated in literature: it is the vital spring from which all human sentiments and conceptions percolate into society.

There is *apparently* nothing easier and *actually* nothing more difficult than to write about Russian literature. That is because Russian literature is still an infant, albeit an infant Alcides. It is much more difficult to say anything positive or definite of children than it is of adults. In addition, our literature, like our society, presents a spectacle of diverse contradictions, opposites, extremes and idiocrasies. This is due to the fact that it did not originate by itself but was originally transplanted from an alien soil. It is much easier, therefore, to speak of our literature in extremes. Say that it is no less rich and mature than any European literature, and that we can count our geniuses by the dozen and our talents by the hundred; or say that we have no literature at all, that our best writers are incidental phenomena, or simply that they are worth nothing: in either case you will at least be understood, and your opinion will win ardent supporters. Love of controversial extremes is one of the characteristics of the still unsettled Russian nature; the Russian likes to boast beyond measure or be modest beyond measure. Hence we have, on the one side, so many inane Europeans who speak with rapture of the last newspaper story of a dried-up French novelist or sing with gusto a new vaudeville tune which the Parisians have long forgotten, and who regard the work of genius of a Russian poet with contemptuous indifference or offensive suspicion; for whom Russia has no future, and everything she has is bad and worthless; on the other side we have so many *kvass patriots* who go out of their way to abominate everything European—even enlightenment, and to love everything Russian—even *sivukha*[4] and fisticuffs duels. Adhere to any of these factions and it will instantly declare you to be a great man and a genius, while the other will hate you and declare you to be a nincompoop. At any rate, though having enemies you will also have friends. By maintaining an unbiassed and *sober* view on the subject you will incur the opprobrium of both sides. One will burden you with its fashionable, parrot-like scorn; the other will most likely declare you to be a troublesome, dangerous and suspicious character and a renegade, and will play the literary informer against you—before the public, of course.... The most unpleasant part of this is that you will not be understood and your words will either be construed as immoderate praise or immoderate obloquy and not as a faithful assessment of the fact

of reality, as it exists, with all its good and evil, its merits and defects, with all the contradictions inherent within it. This has a special application to our literature which represents so many extremes and contradictions that in saying anything positive about it one would immediately be obliged to make a reservation which the majority of the public, mostly preferring to read than to argue, might well interpret as a negation or contradiction. Thus, for example, in speaking of the strong and salutary influence of our literature on society and, consequently, of its great importance for us, we must make a reservation lest this influence and importance be ascribed a greater value than we had intended and the inference be drawn from our words that we have not only a literature, but a rich literature at that, fully capable of standing up to comparison with any European literature. Such a conclusion would be false in every way. We have a literature, and a literature that is rich in talents and works, taking into consideration its means and its youth—but our literature exists for us alone: to foreigners, however, it does not yet represent a literature, and they are fully entitled to disregard its existence, since they are unable, through it, to study and become acquainted with us as a nation and as a society. Our literature is too young, indefinite and colourless for foreigners to be able to regard it as a fact of our intellectual life. It was only too recently a shy though talented tyro who took pride in copying European models and passed off copies of pictures from European life as pictures of Russian life. And this was the character of a whole epoch in our literature from Cantemir and Lomonosov to Pushkin. Then, beginning to sense its own powers, it turned from tyro to master, and instead of copying the ready-made pictures of European life which it artlessly passed off as original pictures of Russian life, it began boldly to paint pictures of both European and Russian life. But as yet it was fully a master only in the treatment of the former, while it still aspired, and not always ineffectually, to become a master in the latter. And this was the character of a period in our literature from Pushkin to Gogol. With the appearance of Gogol our literature addressed itself exclusively to Russian life and Russian realities. It may, because of that, have become more one-sided and even monotonous, but it has on the other hand become more original, independent, and hence more genuine. Now let us take these periods of

Russian literature in connection with their importance, not to us, but to foreigners. There is no need to prove that Lomonosov and Karamzin possess great importance *for us*: but try to translate their works into any European language and you will see whether foreigners will read them, or, if they do, whether they will find them of any interest to themselves. They will say: "We have read all this long ago at home; give us *Russian* writers." They would say the same thing about the works of Dmitriev, Ozerov, Batyushkov and Zhukovsky. Of all the writers of this period they would have been interested only in the fabulist Krylov; but he is supremely untranslatable into any language in the world, and he can be appreciated only by such foreigners who know Russian and have lived a long time in Russia. Thus, a whole period of Russian literature is sheerly non-existent as far as Europe is concerned. As for the second period, it may be said to exist for Europe only to a certain degree. Were such works of Pushkin's as *Mozart and Salieri*, *The Covetous Knight* and *The Stone Guest* to be worthily translated into a European language, foreigners would be compelled to admit that they are excellent poetical works, but these plays would be practically of no interest to them as creations of Russian poetry. The same can be said of the best creations of Lermontov. No translation can do justice to either Pushkin or Lermontov, no matter how excellent these translations may be. The reason is obvious: though the works of Pushkin and Lermontov reveal the Russian soul, the clear and positive Russian mind and strength and depth of feeling, these qualities are more comprehensible to us Russians than to foreigners, since Russian nationality is not yet sufficiently fashioned and developed for the Russian poet to be able to place its sharply-defined stamp upon his works as a mode of expressing ideas common to the whole of mankind. And the demands of Europeans in this respect are very exacting. Nor is this to be wondered at: the national spirit of European nations is so sharply and originally expressed in their literatures that any work, however great in artistic merit, which does not bear the sharp imprint of nationality, loses its chief merit in the eyes of Europeans. You will find in Marryat, Bulwer-Lytton or any of the lesser English novelists the same Englishman that you will find in Shakespeare, Byron or Walter Scott. George Sand and Paul de Kock represent the extremes of the French

spirit, and though the former expresses all the beautiful, human and lofty, and the latter the narrowness and vulgarity of French nationality, both are obviously the exclusive products of France. A Clauren or an August La Fontaine are as much Germans as Goethe and Schiller. In each of these literatures the writer expresses the good or weak sides of his native nationality, and the national spirit lies like a customs seal both on the productions of genius and the productions of the literary hack. The French remained supremely national when trying their hardest to imitate the Greeks and Romans. Wieland remained a German while imitating the French. The barriers of nationality are impassable for Europeans. Perhaps it is our greatest blessing that all nationalities are equally accessible to us and that our poets are able in their works to so freely and easily become Greeks, and Romans, and Frenchmen, and Germans, and Englishmen, and Italians, and Spaniards: but that is a blessing of the future, as an indication that our nationality will have a broad and many-sided development. At present, however, it is more a defect than a merit, not so much broadness and many-sidedness as incompleteness and indefiniteness of its own basic principle.

It would therefore be more interesting for foreigners to have good translations of those of Pushkin's and Lermontov's works in which the subject matter is drawn from Russian life. Thus, *Eugene Onegin* would be of greater interest to foreigners than *Mozart and Salieri*, *The Covetous Knight* and *The Stone Guest*. And that is why the most interesting Russian poet for foreigners is Gogol. This is not a surmise, but a fact which is borne out by the remarkable success achieved in France by the translation of five of this author's stories published last year in Paris by Louis Viardot. This success is understandable: in addition to his immense artistic talent Gogol strictly adheres to the sphere of Russian *everyday* reality in his works. And that is what mostly appeals to foreigners: through the medium of the poet they want to make the acquaintance of the country that has produced him. In this respect Gogol is the most national of Russian poets, and he has nothing to fear from a translation, though by the very reason of his works being so national the best of translations could not avoid weakening the local colour.

But we should not allow even this success to turn our heads.

To a poet who would have his genius acknowledged by all and everywhere, and not only by his compatriots, nationality is the primary, but not the sole condition: in addition to being *national* he must at the same time be *universal, i.e.*, the nationality of his creations must be the form, body, flesh, physiognomy and personality of the spiritual and incorporeal world of ideas common to all mankind. In other words: the national poet must possess a great *historical* significance not for his country alone—his appearance must be a thing of *world-wide historical significance.* Such poets can only appear in nations that are called upon to play a world-historical role in the destinies of mankind, namely whose national life is destined to influence the trend and progress of all mankind. And therefore, if, on the one hand, one cannot become a world-historical poet unless possessing great natural genius, on the other hand, one can sometimes fall short of becoming a world-historical poet though possessing great genius, that is to say, to be of importance only to one's own nation. Here the significance of the poet depends not upon himself, upon his activity, trend or genius, but upon the importance of the country that produced him. From this point of view we do not possess a single poet whom we could be entitled to rank with the first poets of Europe, even in the event of it being obvious that he is in no way inferior to any of them in point of talent. Pushkin's plays: *Mozart and Salieri, The Covetous Knight* and *The Stone Guest* are of such excellence that they can without the slightest exaggeration be said to be worthy of the genius of Shakespeare himself; yet this certainly does not mean that Pushkin is equal to Shakespeare. Leave alone the great difference of power and scope that exists between the genius of Shakespeare and the genius of Pushkin such an equivalence would be too bold a hypothesis even if Pushkin had written as much and of equal excellence as Shakespeare. The more so today when we know that the volume and scope of his best works are so poor in comparison with the volume and scope of Shakespeare's works. Rather could we say that there are several works in our literature which, for *artistic merit,* could be held up to some of the great works of European literature; but we cannot say that we have poets whom we could up against the European poets of the first magnitude. There is a deep significance in the fact that we need acquaintance with the great poets of foreign literature, and that

foreigners do not stand in need of acquaintance with ours. The relation of our great poets to the great poets of Europe may be expressed thus: of certain plays of Pushkin one can say that Shakespeare would not have been ashamed to own them as his, as Byron would not have been ashamed to own as his certain plays of Lermontov; but we could not, without the risk of committing an absurdity, put it the other way round and say that Pushkin and Lermontov would not have been ashamed to subscribe their names to some of the works of Shakespeare and Byron. We can call our poets Shakespeares, Byrons, Walter Scotts, Goethes, Schillers and so on merely as in indication of the power or direction of their talent but not of their importance in the eyes of the educated world. He who is not called by his own name cannot be considered equal to the man by whose name he is called. Byron appeared after Goethe and Schiller, yet he remained Byron and was not called an English Goethe or an English Schiller. When the time comes for Russia to produce poets of world-wide significance these poets will be called by their own names, and every such poet, while retaining his proper name will become a common name and be used in the plural, because he will be *typical.*

But saying that a Russian great poet, though richly endowed by nature and equal in talent to the great European poet, cannot at present achieve importance equal to that of the latter, we mean that he can vie with him only in *form* and not in the *substance* of his poetry. The poet receives his substance from the life of his nation, consequently, the merits, depth, scope and importance of that substance depend directly and immediately upon the historical importance of his nation's life and not upon the poet himself or his talent. Only a hundred and thirty-six years have elapsed since Russia, by the thunder of the Battle of Poltava, proclaimed to the world her adhesion to European life and her entrance upon the field of world-historical existence—and what a brilliant path of progress and glory has she not achieved in that brief space of time! That is something fabulously great, unprecedented, never before heard of! Russia decided the fate of the contemporary world by "overthrowing into the abyss the idols that hung over kingdoms" and today, having occupied the place she has rightly earned among the first-class powers of Europe, holds with them the destinies of the world on the scales

of her might....[5] But this testifies that we have not lagged behind, but have surpassed many countries in politico-historical significance, which is an important but not the sole and exclusive aspect in the life of a nation called upon to perform a great role. Our political greatness is undoubtedly a pledge of our future great importance in other respects as well; but this alone does not testify to the achievements of such all-round development as necessarily constitutes the fullness and wholeness of life in a great nation. In the future, in addition to the victorious Russian sword, we shall lay the weight of Russian thought on the scales of European life.... Then shall we have poets whom we shall be entitled to rank with European poets of the first magnitude. But today let us be content with what we have, neither exaggerating nor diminishing the value of what we possess. By the standard of time our literature has achieved tremendous successes undoubtedly bearing witness to the fertility of the soil on which the Russian spirit grows. Something in our literature, if not our literature itself, is beginning to rouse interest even in foreigners. That interest is still fairly one-sided, since foreigners are able to discover in the works of Russian poets only a local colour, the picturesque manners and customs of a country so sharply contrasting to their own countries....

A VIEW ON RUSSIAN LITERATURE IN 1846[1]

THE PRESENT is a result of the past and an indication of the future. Therefore, to speak of Russian literature of the year 1846 is to speak of the present state of Russian literature in general, and that cannot be done without dwelling on what it was and what it should be. We shall not, however, go into any historical details that would carry us too far afield. The chief object of our article is to acquaint the reader of the *Sovremennik* beforehand with the latter's view on Russian literature and, consequently, with the spirit and trend of this magazine. Programs and advertisements convey nothing in this respect except promises. Hence the program of the *Sovremennik*, as brief and succinct as possible, was confined to promises of a purely external (formal) nature. This article, together with the editorial article printed in the second section of this issue, will be a second, so to speak *inner* program of the *Sovremennik*, by which the readers themselves can, in some measure, verify whether the promises have been kept.

Were we asked what constitutes the distinguishing feature of present-day Russian literature we should answer: an increasing approach to life and reality, an ever-growing proximity to the mature and adult state. It goes without saying that such a description can apply only to latter-day young literature that has arisen out of imitativeness rather than out of independent growth. Original literature takes centuries to ripen, and the epoch of its maturity is at the same time the epoch of its quantitative richness in excellent creations (*chefs-d'œuvre*). This cannot be said of Russian literature. Its history, like that of Russia herself, does not resemble the history of any other literature. Therefore it represents an exclusive and unique spectacle which is forthwith rendered odd, incomprehensible and almost meaningless when treated on the same plane with any other European literature. Like everything else in contemporary Russia that is virile, beautiful and

rational our literature is the product of Peter the Great's reformation. True, he gave no attention to literature and did nothing for its inception, but he devoted his attention to education and cast the seed of learning and enlightenment on the fertile soil of the Russian spirit—and literature eventually appeared of its own accord, without his knowledge, as a natural result of his own activity. We would remark, by the way, that the organic vitality of Peter the Great's reforms consisted precisely in the fact that they engendered much of which he himself had perhaps never contemplated or even sensed. Clever and talented Cantemir, half-imitator and half-adapter to Russian morals of the satires of the Roman poets (chiefly Horace) and of their imitator and adapter to French morals, Boileau,—Cantemir with his syllabic metre, his semi-bookish, semi-popular language which, because of this very mixture, was the vernacular of the educated society of the day, Cantemir, and after him Tredyakovsky with his jejune erudition, his untalented perseverance, his scholastic pedantry, his bootless attempts to vest Russian prosody in regular tonic metres and ancient hexameters, with his barbaric rhymes and his barbaric twofold adaptation of Rollin—Cantemir and Tredyakovsky were, so to speak, the prelude, the prologue to Russian literature. A little over a hundred and two years have elapsed since the death of the former (he died on March 31, 1744), and only seventy-seven years since the death of the latter (he died on August 6, 1769). Tredyakovsky was in the heyday of his fame and it was only six years since he had begun to call himself "professor of eloquence and prosodic cunnings"; Cantemir, young, though sick, feeble and nearing his end, was still alive* when in 1739 twenty-eight-year-old Lomonosov, the Peter the Great of Russian literature, sent in from Germany his famous *Ode on the Taking of Khotin* which may be said with full justice to have been the commencement of Russian literature. All Cantemir's efforts had left no trace or influence in the book world, and all Tredyakovsky's efforts proved to be futile—even his attempts to introduce regular tonic metres into Russian prosody.... Hence Lomonosov's ode struck everybody as being the first verses in the Russian language to be written in regular metre. Lomonosov's influence on Russian literature was similar to Peter the Great's influence on Russia in

* Cantemir was then 31 and Tredyakovsky 36 years of age.

general; literature for a long time trod the path which he had pointed out, until it ultimately escaped from his influence and took a path which Lomonosov himself could neither have contemplated nor foreseen. He gave to it a bookish, imitative trend, hence a barren and lifeless and therefore an injurious and ruinous trend. This is an absolute truth which, however, in no way belittles the great service which Lomonosov has rendered, in no way weakens his claim to the title of father of Russian literature. Do not our literary Old Believers say the same about Peter the Great? Indeed, they err not in *what* they say of Peter the Great and of the Russia which he created, but in the inference which they draw therefrom. According to them, Peter's reformation killed the national spirit in Russia and, consequently, the spirit of all life, so that Russia has no other way to save herself except by reverting to the benign semi-patriarchal morals of Koshikhin's epoch. We repeat: though drawing a false conclusion, they are right in their premise, and the spurious artificial Europeanism of Russia created as a result of Peter the Great's reform may really appear to be no more than an outer form devoid of inner content. But cannot the same thing be said of all the poetical and oratorical efforts of Lomonosov? Why, by what strange contradiction to their own views do these people revere the name of Lomonosov while evincing an unaccountable and peevish tendency to construe every free opinion concerning this rhetorician in poetry and eloquence as a crime? Would it not be much more consistent of them and more conformable with logic and common sense to regard Lomonosov in the same way as they regard Peter the Great?

Alien, borrowed content can never compensate, either in literature or in life, the absence of one's own, national content; but it may, in time, be transformed into it as the food ingested by a man is transformed into blood and flesh and maintains him in strength, health and life. We shall not dilate on how this was accomplished in the Russia of Peter's creation and in the literature of Lomonosov's creation; but that this was and is being accomplished is a historical fact, an obvious and actual truth. Compare the fables of Krylov, the comedy of Griboyedov, the works of Pushkin, Lermontov and especially Gogol with the works of Lomonosov and the writers of his school, and you will find nothing in common between them, no connection, you will think

that Russian literature is a chapter of accidents both in regard to talent and genius; and can the accidental be of any consequence; is it not a phantom, a vision? Indeed, there was a time when the question as to whether we had a literature or not did not sound paradoxical and was by many decided in the negative. Such a decision was natural and inevitable if Russian literature is to be judged according to the standards by which the history of European literature must be judged. But it is precisely one of the greatest intellectual achievements of our age that we have at last begun to realize that Russia had a history of her own that in no way resembled the history of a single European state, and that it should be studied and judged on its own merits and not in the light of the history of European nations which has nothing in common with it. The same applies to the history of Russian literature. There is virtually nothing in common, no connection whatever between the aforementioned writers and Lomonosov and his school, if compared as two extremes; but they will immediately reveal a vital and intimate connection if you study all Russian writers from Lomonosov to Gogol in their chronological order. You will perceive that the entire movement of Russian literature up to the time of Pushkin consisted of a striving, albeit an unconscious one, to free itself from the influence of Lomonosov and come nearer to life and reality, in other words, to become original, national, Russian. If we cannot trace any indication of progress in this respect in the works of Kheraskov and Petrov which were so undeservedly extolled by their contemporaries, we can already perceive this progress in Sumarokov, a writer without genius, without taste, practically without talent, but one whom his contemporaries regarded as a rival of Lomonosov. Sumarokov's attempts—though sterile,—to write comedies based on Russian morals, his satires and chiefly his artless splenetic sallies against *krapivnoye semya* as well as some of his prose articles dealing more or less with the realities of his day are evidence of some sort of striving to bring literature nearer to life. In this respect Sumarokov's works, devoid though they are of artistic or literary interest, are worth studying, while his name, first extolled beyond merit, then as unjustly disparaged, is deserving of the esteem of posterity. One cannot regard even Kheraskov and Petrov as useless phenomena: contemporaries regarded them as gen-

iuses, lauded them to the skies, *ergo* they must have read them, and if so these writers must have been greatly instrumental in cultivating a taste for literary avocation and enjoyment of literature in Russia. The uncouth parables of Sumarokov reappeared later in the shape of what was considered at the time elegant translations of French fables in the fables of Khemnitzer and Dmitriev, and later assumed the shape of excellent popular works in the fables of Krylov. Derzhavin, who imitated Lomonosov and held even Kheraskov and Petrov in humble reverence, may not have been an original Russian poet, but neither was he a mere rhetorician. Endowed by nature with a great poetical genius he failed to create an original Russian poetry only because the time for it had not yet come, and not through any lack of natural powers and resources. The Russian language had not yet crystallized, and the spirit of bookishness and rhetoric was rife in literature; but, chief of all, there existed only a state life at the time, while public life there was none, because there was no society, there was only the court at which everybody looked but which only those who belonged to it knew. There was no society, nor were there any public life and public interest; poetry and literature had nowhere to draw their subject matter from, and therefore existed and were maintained by the patronage of the great and mighty instead of by themselves, and bore an official character. That is the view we should take of this epoch in comparing it to ours; but that is not the view we should take of it in comparing it to the epoch of Lomonosov: there was comparatively great progress here. There may not have been a society at the time, but precisely at that time society was coming into being, since the brilliance and culture of the court was beginning to shed its reflection upon the middle nobility, and it was then that its morals as we know them today first began to take shape. And so, apart from an immense difference in poetical genius Derzhavin had a great advantage over Lomonosov in point of his poetry's content, though he was a man without education, leave alone learning. Hence Derzhavin's poetry is far more diverse, more lively and human in content than the poetry of Lomonosov. The reason lies not merely in the fact that Lomonosov was a superior versifier rather than a poet, whereas Derzhavin had been endowed with a poetical genius by nature, but also in the fact

that society made comparatively greater progress in the days of Catherine the Great than it did in the days of empresses Anna and Elizabeth.

For the same reason the literature of Catherine's days utterly overshadows the literature that preceded it. In addition to Derzhavin those days had Fon-Vizin, the first gifted comedy writer in Russian literature, whose works are not only an extremely interesting object for study but still a source of true enjoyment. In his person Russian literature made an immense and seemingly even premature stride towards reality: his works are a vivid chronicle of the age. At the same time our literature began to turn decidedly from the ancients studied in seminaries and seminary fashion, toward French literature. In consequence, so-called *light literature*, in which Bogdanovich excelled, became the vogue. At the end of Catherine's reign there appeared Karamzin who gave Russian literature a new trend. We shall not speak of his great service to and great influence on our literature and, through it, on the moulding of our society. Neither shall we discuss at length the writers who followed him. We shall say briefly that each of them reveals a gradual liberation from the bookish, rhetorical drift which Lomonosov imparted to our literature and a steady approach of literature to society, life and reality. Cast an eye on Pushkin's early *lyceum* verses and even many of the plays in the first volume of his works which he himself presented and you will discover in them the influence of almost all the poets who preceded him, from Lomonosov to Zhukovsky and Batyushkov inclusively. Krylov the fabulist, preceded by Khemnitzer and Dmitriev, prepared, as it were, the language and verse for Griboyedov's immortal comedy. Consequently, our literature reveals throughout a vital historical sequence, the new originates from the old, the subsequent is explained by the precedent, and nothing is accidental. "But where," we may be asked, "is the important service rendered by Lomonosov, when the whole merit of subsequent writers consisted in the gradual emancipation of Russian literature from his influence, meaning that they tried to avoid writing the way he did? And is it not a strange contradiction to speak with respect of the services and genius of a writer whom you yourself call a *rhetorician*?"

First of all, Lomonosov was by no means a rhetorician by

nature: he was too great for that; but he was made a rhetorician by circumstances beyond his control. His works can be divided into scientific and literary productions: to the latter belong his odes. *Petriada* and tragedies, in short, all his essays in verse and laudatory epistles. There is no rhetoric in his scientific works dealing with astronomy, physics, chemistry, metallurgy and navigation, though they are written in long periods of Latin-German construction with the verb at the end; his verses and laudatory addresses, however, are full of rhetoric. Why is that? It is because he had ready material for his scientific works which he obtained for himself by labour and learning in Germany without having to wait and petition for it in his own country. What he had acquired by learning and labour he developed and enhanced by his own genius. Consequently, he knew what he was writing about and did not need rhetoric. As for his poetry, he could not find the material for it in the public life of his country, where there was no consciousness and even no striving to develop it, and, consequently, there were no intellectual or moral interests; hence he was obliged to borrow for his poetry an utterly alien, but ready material, expressing in his verses emotions, conceptions and ideas that were not of our making, that had not evolved from our life or sprung from our soil. That meant becoming a rhetorician despite one's self, for the concepts of an alien life which are passed off as concepts of native life are always rhetoric. Still more rhetorical in those days were the European *cafetan, camisole, başmaq, peruke, robronde, mushka (la mouche), assemblée, minuet, etc.* Who, except theorists and visionaries would say that European dress and habits have not now become national for the best, *i.e.*, the most educated, part of Russian society, without preventing it from being *Russian* in name and fact? We would say more: all the concepts, definitions and terms of pre-Petrine Russian life have now become pure rhetoric for the whole Russian nation and not merely for the educated part of Russian society, so much so that were our military and civil titles today to be changed to strategus, boyar, dapifer and so on, the common people would be entirely at sea. The same thing, thanks to Lomonosov, took place in the literary world: all imitations of nationality now savour of the commonalty, *i.e.*, vulgarity, and all attempts at this kind of thing by the most gifted of writers smack of rhetoric.

"But by what miracle," we shall be asked. "could a superficial, abstract borrowing of an alien trait and its artificial transplantation to our native soil produce a living, organic fruit?" In reply to this we would say what we have already said before: the answer to this question is without doubt interesting; but we are not concerned with it: for us it suffices to say that such, precisely, was the case. that it is an historical fact the authenticity of which no man who has eyes to see and ears to hear can think of contesting. The writers who represented the progressive movement through the emancipation of Russian literature from Lomonosov's influence gave no thought to this whatever; it was an unconscious act with them; they were merely the mouthpiece of the spirit of the times which worked on their behalf. They highly respected Lomonosov as a poet, revered his genius, tried to imitate him, yet drifted away from him more and more. The most striking example in this respect was Derzhavin. But the vitality of the European principle which Peter the Great engrafted onto the Russian national life consists precisely in the fact that it is not stagnantly inert but moves, progresses and develops. Had not Lomonosov taken it into his head to write odes after the pattern of contemporary German poets and the French lyrical poet Jean Baptiste Rousseau, had he not written his *Petriada* after the pattern of *Aeneid*, in which, side by side with Peter the Great, the hero of his poem, he has made Neptune one of his characters, placing him with his Tritons and Naiads in the cool and vasty deep of the White Sea; had he, we affirm, instead of all these bookish schoolboyish incongruities addressed himself to the fountainhead of our folk poetry—to *The Lay of Prince Igor's Regiment*, to Russian fairy tales (now known through Kirsha Danilov's collection) and folk songs, and, inspired and imbued by them ventured to build the edifice of a new Russian literature on this purely national foundation—what would have been the result? The question is apparently an important one, but really a perfectly idle one, something akin to such questions as: what would have happened if Peter the Great had been born in France and Napoleon in Russia? or: what would happen if summer instead of spring came directly after winter? and so forth. We may know what has been and what is, but how are we to know what has not been and what is not? Of course, in the realm of history all that is petty, trivial

and fortuitous might not have been what it was; but its great events affecting the future of nations cannot happen otherwise than they do,—naturally, in regard to their main purport and not to the details of their manifestation. Peter the Great might as well have built St. Petersburg on the present site of Schlüsselburg or, at least, a little higher up, that is, farther from the sea than it now stands; he might have made Reval or Riga the new capital; chance and various contingencies played an important role in this; the essential point was not this, but the fact that we needed a new capital on the seaboard which would have afforded us an easy and convenient means of intercourse with Europe. There was nothing fortuitous in this idea, nothing of the kind that might or might not have been, or been otherwise than it was. But for the benefit of those for whom the rational necessity of great historical events does not exist we are prepared to acknowledge the importance of the question as to what would have happened if Lomonosov had founded a new Russian literature on a national foundation; our answer is: nothing would have come of it. The monotonous forms of our poor national poetry were adequate for expressing the limited content of the tribal, natural, immediate and semi-patriarchal life of old Rūs; but the new content did not suit them, did not fit into them; it needed new forms for that purpose. Our salvation then lay not in nationality but in Europeanism; for the sake of our salvation it was essential not to stifle or annihilate our nationality (that is impossible, or suicidal if it is possible) but to suspend, as it were, its development and progress in order to engraft new elements onto its soil. So long as these elements were as incompatible as oil and water with the native element, everything with us was rhetoric, both habits and their expression—literature. But we had here a vital principle of organic concretion through a process of assimilation, and literature therefore moved steadily from the abstract principle of lifeless imitation towards the living principle of originality. And we have at last lived to see the day when a translation of several of Gogol's stories into French has drawn the astonished attention of all Europe to Russian literature—we say *astonished*, because Russian novels and stories had been translated into foreign languages before this, but instead of attention they had engendered in foreigners an anything but flattering inattention to our litera-

ture on account of the fact that they had considered these Russian novels and stories translated into their languages as retranslations from their own languages: so little did they have in them that was Russian, independent and original.

Karamzin irrevocably freed Russian literature from the influence of Lomonosov, but that does not signify that he completely freed it of rhetoric and made it national: he did a good deal *towards this*, but he did not do *this*, for *this* was still a long way off. Russia's first national poet was Pushkin;* with him began a new period of our literature, a period that differed more from Karamzin's than the latter from Lomonosov's. Karamzin's influence is still perceptible in our literature, and complete liberation from it will be a great step forward for Russian literature. This, however, far from detracting from Karamzin's services by as much as a single hair, reveals on the contrary all their greatness: the baneful in a writer's influence is what is belated and backward, and in order that its domination continue beyond his time it should be new, vital, beautiful and great in his own time.

In regard to literature as an art, as poetry, as creativeness, the influence of Karamzin has now utterly disappeared without a trace. In this respect our literature has closely approached the mature and adult state which we mentioned at the beginning of our article. The so-called *natural school* cannot be accused of rhetoric, understanding this word to mean wilful or unintentional distortion of reality, false idealization of life. We certainly do not mean to say that all the new writers who (to their credit or discredit) are classed as belonging to the *natural school* are all geniuses or extraordinary talents; far be it from us to entertain such a puerile delusion. With the exception of Gogol, who created a new art, a new literature in Russia and whose genius has long been recognized not by us alone and even not in Russia alone, we perceive in the *natural school* a fair number of talents, from very

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* It may be pointed out to us, with reference to our own words, that it was Krylov, not Pushkin; but then Krylov was only a fable writing poet, whereas it would be difficult in as many words to define what kind of poet Pushkin was. Krylov's poetry is the poetry of common sense and worldly wisdom, and it could find its subject in Russian life more readily than any other kind of poetry. Furthermore, Krylov's best, and therefore most national fables were written during the period of Pushkin's activity, consequently, during the new trend which the latter had communicated to Russian poetry.

admirable to very ordinary ones. But it is not in talents or in their numbers that we see real progress in literature; rather is it in their trend and their style of writing. Talents have always existed, but formerly they *beautified nature, idealized reality*, that is to say, depicted what did not exist, dealt with the fantastic, whereas today they deal with life and reality in their true light. This has given literature an important significance in the eyes of society. A Russian magazine story is preferred to a translation, and it is not enough for the story to be written by a Russian author—it must depict Russian life. No magazine today can be successful unless it features Russian stories. And this is not a whim, not a fashion, but a rational need having a deep meaning and deep foundation: it is a need that expresses the strivings of Russian society towards self-awareness, consequently, its awakening to moral interests and intellectual life. The time is irrevocably past when even any kind of foreign mediocrity seemed superior to any Russian talent. While knowing how to give credit to things foreign, Russian society is now able to set proper store on its own works, and to avoid boastful or humble extremes. But the fact that it evinces greater interest in a *good* Russian story than in an *excellent* foreign novel is evidence of a huge step forward on its part. To be able at one and the same time to perceive the superiority of a foreign work over one's own and yet to take one's own more to heart is no sign of false patriotism or narrow bias: it is merely a noble and legitimate striving towards cognizance of self....

The natural school is impugned for a striving to depict everything in a bad light. As usual, with some men this accusation is deliberate calumny, with others a sincere complaint. At any rate, the very possibility of such a charge merely shows that the natural school, despite its immense successes, has been in existence only a short time, that people have not yet become accustomed to it, and that we still have many people of the Karamzinian formation on whom rhetoric is inclined to act as a sedative and truth as an irritant. Of course, all the charges against the natural school could hardly be said to be positively false and the school itself to be impeccable. But even if its prevailing negative trend were really its one-sided extreme, this, too, has its uses and its good: the habit of faithfully rendering the negative aspects of life will enable the

same men or their followers, when the time comes, to faithfully render the positive aspects of life without placing them on stilts. without exaggerating. in short, without rhetorically idealizing them.

But outside the world of *belles-lettres* proper, the influence of Karamzin is still very conspicuous. This is best evidenced by the so-called *Slavophile* party. We know that in Karamzin's eyes Ivan III stood higher than Peter the Great, and pre-Petrine Rūs was better than the new Russia. Here you have the origin of the so-called Slavophile movement, which, by the way, we regard as a very important phenomenon in many respects, proving as it does that the adult and mature period of our literature is close at hand. During literature's infancy all men are engaged with problems which, though they may be important in themselves, have no practical bearing on life. So-called Slavophilism without doubt has a vital bearing on the most important problems of our public life. What that bearing is and what its attitude to these problems is—is another matter. Slavophilism is first of all a conviction, and like all convictions, merits our utmost respect, even though we may entirely disagree with it. We have many Slavophiles and their number is steadily growing—a fact that also speaks in favour of Slavophilism. One may say that the whole of our literature and. with it, part, if not the whole, of the public are divided into two factions—the Slavophiles and the non-Slavophiles. Much could be said in favour of Slavophilism in speaking of the causes which brought forth this phenomenon; but upon closer examination one cannot fail to perceive the purely negative drift of this literary coterie's existence and importance and the fact that it has been called into existence and lives not because of itself but in order to vindicate and assert the very idea which it had set itself to combat. There is therefore no point in discussing with the Slavophiles what their aims are; indeed, they are only too reluctant to speak and write about this themselves, though they make no secret of it. The fact of the matter is that the positive side of their doctrine consists of some sort of nebulous, mystical presentiments of the victory of the East over the West, the fallacy of which is all too clearly exposed by the facts of reality, taken separately and severally. The negative side of their creed, however. deserves much more attention, not in that it falls foul of the allegedly decaying West (the Slavophiles are absolutely unable to

understand the West because they measure it with an oriental yardstick) but in that they fall foul of Russian Europeanism, of which they have a good deal to say that is pertinent and which one cannot help at least half-agreeing with, such as, *e.g.*, that there is a sort of duality in Russian life, consequently, a lack of moral unity; that this deprives us of a clearly defined national character such as distinguishes, to their credit, all the European nations; that this makes sort of nonesuches out of us, well able to think in French, German and English but unable to think in Russian; and that the reason for all this lies in the reform of Peter the Great. This is all correct to some extent. We must not, however, confine ourselves to an admission of the correctness of any fact, but should investigate the causes of it in the hope of discovering within the evil itself a way out of it. This the Slavophiles have not done; but this is what they have made their opponents, if not accomplish, then at least attempt to do. Herein lies the true service they have rendered. To fall asleep in ambitious dreams, whether of our national glory or of our Europeanism, is equally fruitless and harmful, for sleep is not life, but merely a realm of fancies; and we cannot but be grateful to him who breaks such a sleep. Indeed, never has the study of Russian history been of such a serious character as it has lately assumed. We probe and question the past for an explanation of our present and a hint as to our future. We seem to have taken alarm for our life, for our significance, for our past and future, and are in a hurry to solve the great problem of *to be or not to be?* It is no longer a question as to whence the Varangians came—from the West or the South, from beyond the Baltic or the Black Sea; we are now anxious to know whether any living organic idea runs through our history, and if it does, what exactly is it, what is our relation to our past from which we seem to have been sundered and to the West with which we seem to be related. And as a result of these painstaking and anxious explorations we begin to discover that we are not so sharply estranged from our past as we had thought, and not so closely related to the West as we had imagined. A Russian abroad gains an interested audience not when he European-wise holds forth on European problems but when he treats them as a Russian, even though his judgments, because of that, might be false, biassed, narrow and one-sided. He therefore feels himself impelled to

assume there the character of his nationality and, for lack of something better, sometimes becomes a Slavophile, albeit for a time and without sincerity, so long as he can make foreigners believe he is something. On the other hand, in examining our present position, in looking at it through the prism of doubt and investigation, we cannot fail to observe how pitifully and ludicrously in many respects our Russian Europeanism has reassured us in regard to our Russian shortcomings, which it has whitewashed and painted without at all effacing. In this respect foreign travel is extremely beneficial for us: many Russians set out thither as determined Europeans and return they know not themselves as whom but with an all the more sincere wish to become Russians. What does it all mean? Are the Slavophiles right, and has the reformation of Peter the Great merely deprived us of nationality and made us nonesuches? Can they be right in asserting that we must go back to the social arrangements and customs of the times of the fabulous Gostomysl or of Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich (Messrs. the Slavophiles themselves still do not see eye to eye as regards the period of their choice)?...

No, it means something quite different, namely, that Russia has fully outlived the epoch of reformation, that the reforms have done their business, done for her everything they could and were supposed to have done, and that the time has come for Russia to develop independently from out of herself. But does original development consist in steering clear of, skipping, so to speak, the epoch of reform and reverting to the times that preceded it? The idea is absurd if only because it is as feasible as changing the sequence of the seasons, of making winter follow the spring, and summer the autumn. It would also mean accepting the appearance of Peter the Great, his reformation and the subsequent events in Russia (perhaps right up to 1812—the epoch which saw the beginning of a new life for Russia) as mere accidents, as a dismal dream which will instantly vanish and break up as soon as the sleeper awakes. Only Messrs. the Manilovs can think thus. Such events in the life of a nation are too great to be accidental, and the life of a nation is not a frail craft that anyone can steer at random by the flick of an oar. Instead of dreaming of the impossible and rendering one's self a laughingstock by ambitious attempts at interference in historical destiny, it were much better

to accept the irresistible and invariable reality of existence and act on its basis, guided by reason and common sense and not by Manilovian fantasies. It is not of changing what has been done without our knowledge and in defiance of our will that we should be thinking, but of changing ourselves on the basis of the aforementioned path foreordained by a will higher than our own. In fact, it is time we ceased *becoming*, and *became*, it is time we discarded the bad habit of contenting ourselves with words and of taking European forms and externals for Europeanism. Nay more: it is time we ceased admiring everything European simply because it is not Asiatic, and admired, respected and aspired to it simply because it is *human*, rejecting on those grounds everything European which is not human as vigorously as we would reject everything Asiatic which was not human. European elements have entered so largely into Russian life and Russian habits that we assuredly have no need to be constantly turning to Europe in order to become aware of our needs: we have enough of what we have already assimilated from Europe to enable us to judge our own requirements.

We repeat: the Slavophiles are right in many ways; nevertheless their role is a purely negative one, though useful for a time. The main reason for their peculiar inferences is that they forestall time, take the process of development for its result, want to see the fruit before the blossom and, finding the leaves tasteless, declare the fruit to be rotten and propose that the huge forest that has spread luxuriant growth over a vast area be transplanted to another place and be tended by other methods. In their opinion this is not easy but feasible! They have forgotten that the new Russia of Peter is as young as Northern America, that the future holds much more in store for her than the past. They have forgotten that in the height of a process very often precisely those phenomena loom large which are destined to disappear upon the termination of the process, while the ultimate result of that process often lies hidden until the end. In this respect Russia should not be compared to the old states of Europe whose history followed a course diametrically opposite to ours and has long since yielded both its blossom and its fruit. Without doubt it is easier for a Russian to adopt the view of a Frenchman, Englishman or German than to think independently, in Russian, because that is a ready-

made view which both science and present-day realities render easy of acquaintance; whereas in regard to himself he is still a riddle, for the reason that the significance and destiny of his native country, where all is embryo and incipience and nothing determinate, evolved and formed, is likewise a riddle to him. To be sure, there is something sad in this, but still more that is comforting! The oak grows slowly, but then it lives for centuries. It is natural for man to wish the speedy fulfillment of his desires, but precocity is unreliable: we more than anyone should have convinced ourselves of this truth. It is well known that the French, English and Germans are so national, each in their own way, that they are incapable of understanding one another, whereas the Russian is equally capable of assimilating the sociality of the Frenchman, the practical activity of the Englishman and the misty philosophy of the German. Some see herein our superiority over all other nations; others draw therefrom the very melancholy conclusion of our lack of character supposed to have been cultivated in us by the reforms of Peter the Great: for, say they, he who has not his own life can easily imitate someone else's, he who has not his own interests can easily understand another's; but living someone else's life is not living, and understanding someone else's interests is not making them one's own. There is a large measure of truth in the latter opinion, but neither is the former view, for all its presumptuousness, entirely devoid of truth. First of all we would say that we most emphatically disbelieve the possibility of a stable political and state existence for nations that are devoid of nationality, consequently, that live a sheerly external life. There is one such artificial state in Europe patched together out of numerous nationalities[2] — but who does not know that its stability and strength are merely transient?... We Russians need have no doubts as to our political and state significance: only we, of all the Slavonic tribes, have formed into a strong and powerful state, and have, both before and ever since the time of Peter the Great, come through many a severe ordeal with flying colours, have often stood on the brink of ruin and invariably rode out the storm to reappear upon its crest in new and greater vigour and strength. A nation that is not capable of internal development cannot possess such strength and vigour. Yes, we have the national life in us, we are ordained to give our message, our thought to the world; but

what message, what thought, it is too early yet to conjecture. Our grandchildren or great-grandchildren will learn that without any effort at hard guessing, because that message and that thought will be uttered by them.... Since Russian literature is the principal subject of this article it will be only natural under the circumstances to refer to its testimony. It has been in existence for a mere *hundred and seven years*, yet it already possesses several works whose only interest for foreigners is that they strike them as being unlike the works of their own literature, hence, as being original, independent, *i. e.*, nationally Russian. What this Russian nationality exactly consists in, it is yet impossible to define; we are content for the time being that the elements of it are beginning to come to light and break through the expressionless imitative gloom into which Peter the Great's reform had plunged us....

As for the versatility with which the Russian comprehends alien nationalities—this constitutes both his weak and his strong side. Weak, because this versatility is really greatly assisted by his present lack of dependence on the one-sidedness of his own national interest. But we can say with certainty that this lack of dependence merely *contributes to* this versatility, but we doubt whether it could be said with any certainty to *produce* it. At any rate it seems to us too great temerity to ascribe to a situation what should most probably be ascribed to natural giftedness. Having no predilection for guesswork and dreaming, and dreading arbitrary deductions of a merely subjective import we do not incontrovertibly maintain that the Russian nation is foreordained to express the richest and most many-sided essence in its nationality, and that it is this that explains its amazing ability to adopt and assimilate all alien elements; but we venture to believe that such a thought, expressed as an assumption without bluster and fanatism is not without foundation....[3]

We apologize to the Slavophile gentlemen if we have imputed anything to them that they have not thought or said: should they have grounds for reproaching us for anything of the sort let them put it down to simple unintentional error on our part. Whatever their conceptions, or, to our way of thinking, their errors and delusions may be, we at least respect their source. We are able to sympathize with every sincere, independent and, at bottom, noble conviction without sharing it and even while regarding it

as diametrically opposed to our own conviction. On whose side the truth is—time will show, that great and infallible judge of all intellectual and theoretical causes. The magazine which has now remained the sole mouthpiece of the Slavophile trend at one time declared "irreconcilable enmity" towards every opposite trend.[4] As for ourselves, we have our own definite trend and deep-felt convictions which we cherish more than anything else on earth and which we, too, are prepared to defend with all our strength, while at the same time contending against every opposite trend and conviction; but we would wish to defend our views with dignity and contend against those of our opponents with firmness and calmness and without enmity. Why the enmity? He who bears enmity is angry, and he who is angry feels that he is not in the right. We have the self-esteem to consider ourselves so right in the fundamentals of our convictions that we have no call to bear animosity or anger, to confuse ideas with persons, and instead of an honourable and permissible controversy to set on foot a futile and undignified conflict of personalities and ambitions....

There is nothing absolutely important or unimportant in the world. This truth can be disputed only by such exclusively theoretical natures who are clever so long as they soar in general abstractions, but who no sooner descend to the sphere of application of the general to the particular, in brief to the world of realities, than they raise a doubt as to the normal state of their brains.[5] Of such people the Russian proverb says that the *mind has got muddled up with reason*—an expression that is as profound as it is just, for it does not deny men of this stamp either mind or reason, merely indicating their irregular anomalous functioning, like two wheels in a machine thrown out of gear and operating at cross purposes, thereby rendering the whole machine inoperative. And so, everything in the world is only relatively important or unimportant, great or small, old or new. "What!" we shall be asked—"are truth and virtue relative concepts?" No, as *concepts*, as *ideas* they are absolute and eternal; but as a *fulfillment*, as a *fact*, they are relative. The idea of truth and goodness was accepted by all peoples in all ages; but what is an unalterable truth, what is good for one people or one age is often falsity and evil for another people in another age. Hence the absolute mode of reasoning is the easiest, but the most precarious; it is now

called the abstract. There is nothing easier than to determine what a man should be in respect of his morality; but there is nothing more difficult than showing why a man has become what he is and not what he should have become according to the theory of moral philosophy.

Such is the point of view maintaining which we find the apparently most ordinary phenomena to contain indications of the maturity of contemporary Russian literature. Look closely, listen intently: what do our magazines mostly treat of?—of nationality and reality. What do they mostly assail?—romanticism, daydreaming and abstraction. Some of these subjects were much discussed before this, but they had had a different meaning and import. The conception of "reality" is quite new; "romanticism" was formerly regarded as the alpha and omega of human wisdom, and was held to be the sole clue to all problems; the concept of "nationality" was formerly applied exclusively to literature without the least bearing on life. Indeed, it is even now chiefly current in application to literature; but the difference is that literature has now become the echo of life. How these things are now judged is a different matter. As usual, some judge them better, some worse, but all very nearly alike in seeming to regard the solution of these problems as a way to their own salvation. The problem of "nationality" especially has attracted universal attention and led to the appearance of two extremes. Some have confused nationality with old customs which survive only among the common people, and they do not like such things as smoky and dirty huts, radish and *kvass* or even *sivukha* to be mentioned disparagingly in their presence; others, admitting the need for the higher national principle and failing to find it in real life, exert themselves to invent one of their own, while vaguely hinting at *humility* as an expression of the Russian nationality. With the former it is absurd to argue; but to the latter we would observe that humility is, on occasion, a very praiseworthy virtue in a man of any country, in a Frenchman as in a Russian, in an Englishman as in a Turk, but it could hardly constitute in itself what we call "nationality." Moreover, this point of view may be excellent theoretically, but it does not quite comport with historical facts. The appanage period of our history is more distinguished for arrogance and truculence than for humility. We suc-

cumbed to the Tatars not at all because of our humility (that would have been to our ignominy and not credit, as it would have been for any other nation), but because of impotence brought about by the fact that our forces were disunited by the principle of family kinship which lay at the foundation of the system of governance at the time. Ivan Kalita was crafty, not meek; Simeon was even nicknamed "The Proud"; and these princes were the chieftains who laid the beginnings of Muscovy's might; Dmitri Donskoy by the agency of the sword and not by humility prophesied to the Tatars the imminent end of their rule over Rūs. Ivan III and Ivan IV, both called "Grozny," were not distinguished for their humility. Weak Fyodor was the only exception to the rule. And, generally, it is somehow strange to see in humility the reason wherefore the insignificant Moscow principality eventually became the kingdom of Muscovy, and then the Russian Empire, spreading the possessive wings of its doubleheaded eagle over Siberia, Malorossia, Byelorussia, Novorossia, Crimea, Bessarabia, Liflandia, Esthland, Courland, Finland, the Caucasus.... Of course, striking traits of humility as well as other virtues can be found in public and private figures of Russian history; but in whatever history of any nation will they not be found, and in what way does a Louis IX yield the palm of humility to tsar Fyodor Ivanovich?... *Love*, too, is debated as a national principle inherent only in the Slavonic tribes to the prejudice of the Gallic, Teutonic and other Western tribes. This idea has become with some a veritable monomania, so much so that some of the "somes" have even ventured to say in print that Russian soil is sodden with tears but not with blood, and that it was with tears, not with blood, that we rid ourselves both of the Tatars and the Napoleonic invasion.... Are these words not truly a supreme example of mind muddled up with reason, owing to infatuation with a system and theory that are at odds with reality?... We, on the contrary, believe that love is inherent in human nature generally, and cannot be the exclusive attribute of any one nation or tribe, no more than can breath, sight, hunger, thirst, mind or speech.... The error here is that the relative has been taken for the absolute. The system of conquest which laid the foundation of European states gave immediate rise there to a purely juridical system of social relations in which violence and oppression themselves as-

sumed the shape of law rather than arbitrariness. Among the Slavs, on the contrary, there prevailed the rule of custom which originated from gentle and loving patriarchal relations. But did these patriarchal relationships last long, and what do we know about them authentically? Even before the appanage period we find in Russian history the by no means loving traits of the crafty warrior Oleg, the stern warrior Svyatoslav, then Svyatopolk the assassin of Boris and Gleb; the children of Vladimir who had unsheathed the sword against their father, and so on and so forth. This, it will be said, was brought in by the Varangians, who—we would add ourselves—thereby laid the first stone to the distortion of the loving patriarchal system. Then why all the bother? The appanage period was no more a period of love than it was of humility; rather was it a period of carnage reduced to custom. The Tatar period goes without saying: hypocritical and treacherous humility was then needed more than love and genuine humility. The criminal laws, tortures and executions of the Muscovy period and subsequent times as late as the reign of Catherine the Great compel us again to seek love in the pre-historic Slav days. Where does love come in here as a national principle? A national principle it never was, but it was a human principle sustained in the tribe by its historical, or rather unhistorical, position. The position changed, and, with it, patriarchal custom, and love as the underlying aspect of life disappeared. Are we expected to go back to those times? Why not, if it is as easy as for the old man to become a youth, or the youth an infant?...

Such extremes naturally give rise to opposite extremes. Some found resort in fantastic nationality; others in fantastic cosmopolitanism in the name of humanity. According to the latter nationality springs from purely external influences, mirrors all that is static, crude, finite and irrational in the nation and is diametrically opposed to humanity. Feeling that one cannot deny the nation the human element which they hold to be opposed to the national, they split up the indivisible personality of the nation into majority and minority, ascribing to the latter qualities that are diametrically opposite to those of the former. Thus, in constantly assailing some sort of *dualism*, which they see everywhere, even where it does not exist at all, they themselves fall into the extreme of the most abstract dualism. Great men, in their opinion,

are outside their nationality, and their entire merit and greatness consists precisely in the fact that they go dead against their nationality, contend with it and conquer it. There you have a truly Russian, and in that respect glaringly national opinion, that would have never entered the mind of a European! That opinion derives directly from a false view of the reforms of Peter the Great, who, it is generally held in Russia, allegedly destroyed Russian nationality. That is the view of men who see nationality in customs and prejudices, without realizing that these actually reflect nationality but that these alone do not comprise nationality. To represent nationality and humanity as two utterly alien and even mutually hostile principles is tantamount to falling into the most abstract and most bookish dualism.

What constitutes man's sublime and noble substance? Of course that which we call his spirituality, *i.e.*, feeling, reason, will, in which is expressed his eternal, intransient, essential substance. And what is considered man's lower, casual, relative, transient element? Of course, his body. It is well known that we are accustomed from childhood to despise our body, perhaps precisely because, dwelling as we do eternally in logical fantasies, we know se little about it. Physicians, on the contrary, have a greater respect for the body because they have a greater knowledge of it. Hence they sometimes treat purely moral diseases with purely material remedies, and vice versa. This shows physicians not to despise the soul while respecting the body: they only do not despise the body because they respect the soul. In this connection they resemble the clever agronomist who looks with respect not only at the rich harvest of grains he has obtained from the earth but at the earth itself which yielded them, and even at the filthy and stinking dung that has heightened this earth's fertility. You, of course, place great value on a man's feeling? Good!—then place a value on that piece of flesh which quivers in his breast, which you call the heart and whose quickened or slackened pulsation responds faithfully to every movement of your soul. You, of course, have great respect for a man's mind? Good!—then halt in awed wonderment before the mass of his brain, the seat of all his mental functions, whence run throughout his organism by way of the spinal column the threads of nerves which are the organs of sense and are filled

with fluids so fine that they escape material observation and elude speculation. Otherwise you will marvel in man at effect in lieu of cause, or—still worse—will invent your own causes, unknown to nature, and content yourself with them. Psychology which is not based on physiology is as unsubstantial as physiology that knows not the existence of anatomy. Modern science did not halt even at this: it wishes by chemical analysis to penetrate the mysterious laboratory of nature, and by observations of the embryo to trace the *physical* process of *moral* evolution. But this is the inner world of man's physiological life; all its hidden actions are, as a result, revealed outwardly in his face, look, voice, even his manners. Yet what is face, eyes, voice and manners if not the body, the outward shape, consequently the transient, casual, insignificant, because none of it is feeling, mind or will? Yes, but in all this we *see* and *hear* both feeling and mind and will. The most casual in a man are his manners, since they more than anything else depend upon his education, way of life, upon the society in which the man lives; but why beneath the rude manners of the yokel do you sometimes sense a good man whom you can implicitly trust, while at the same time the refined manners of the man of society will sometimes put you on your guard? How many people there are in the world possessing soul and feeling, yet with each of them this feeling has its own peculiar character. How many intelligent people there are in the world, yet each has his own mind. This does not mean that human minds are different: for in that case men would not be able to understand one another; but it means that every man's mind has its own individuality. That constitutes his limitation, and therefore the mind of the greatest genius is always immeasurably beneath the mind of all mankind; but that is also what constitutes its validity, its realness. Mind without body, without physiognomy, mind which does not affect the blood and is not affected by its operation is a logical dream, a lifeless abstraction. Mind is man in the flesh, or rather, man through the flesh, in a word, *personality*. That is why there are as many minds in the world as there are men, and mankind alone has one mind. Look how many moral tones there are in human nature: in one the mind is barely visible through the heart, in another the heart would seem to be seated in the brain; this one is terribly clever and efficient, but he can

do nothing because he lacks will; while the other has a terrible will but a poor head, and his activity results in nonsense or evil. To count all these tones is as impossible as counting the differences of countenance: there are as many countenances as there are people, and it is more impossible to find two faces exactly alike than it is to find two exactly similar leaves of a tree. When you are in love with a woman do not say that you are captivated by the excellent qualities of her mind and heart; otherwise, if you are shown another with still higher moral qualities, you will be obliged to fall in love again and drop the first object of your love for a new one, as a good book is dropped for a better one. One cannot deny the influence of moral qualities on the affections, but in loving a person you love him all, not as an idea but as a living personality; you love particularly that in him which does not lend itself to definition or description. Indeed, how would you define and describe, for example, that elusive expression, that mysterious play of feature and voice, in a word, all that which constitutes his peculiarity, which makes him unlike anybody else, and precisely for which —take my word—you most love him? Otherwise why would you sob in despair over the coffin of a beloved creature? For has not that which was best and noblest in him, that which you called his spiritual and moral aspect survived his death which was merely the dissolution of the grossly material and casual? ... But it is this casual you are bitterly lamenting, because the memory of a person's fine qualities will not supplant the man, as the memory of a recent feast will not satiate the starving. I will readily concur with the spiritualists that my comparison is crude, but at least it is true, and that is my chief concern. Derzhavin said:

> All of me shall not die, but most of me,
> Escaping decay, shall in posterity live.

We have nothing to say against the validity of such immortality, though it will be little comfort to the poet's friends and near ones; but what does the poet pass on to posterity in his creations if not his personality? Were he not a personality transcending others, a personality par excellence, his creations would be colourless and pale. Because of this the creations of every

great poet constitute an utterly different and original world, and the only thing in common between Homer, Shakespeare, Byron, Cervantes, Walter Scott, Goethe and George Sand is that all of them are great poets....

But what is that personality which imparts reality to feeling, mind, will and genius, and without which everything is either a fantastic dream or logical abstraction? I could say a lot about this, readers, but prefer to candidly confess to you that the more vividly I perceive the essence of personality within myself the less capable am I of defining it in words. It is a mystery the same as life is: we all see it, perceive ourselves in its sphere, but no one will tell you what it is. So the scientists, familiar though they are with the operation and power of nature's agents such as electricity, galvanism and magnetism, and therefore not for a moment doubting their existence, are nevertheless not able to tell you what they are. Strangest of all, the only thing we can say of personality is that it is nugatory before feeling, reason, will, virtue, beauty and similar eternal and intransient ideas; but without it, this transient and casual phenomenon, there would be neither feeling, nor reason, nor will, nor virtue, nor beauty, as there would be, too, no insensibility, no stupidity, no characterlessness, no vice and no ugliness....

What *personality* is in relation to the *idea* of man, *nationality* is in relation to the *idea* of humanity. In other words, nationalities are the personalities of humanity. Without nationalities humanity would be a dead logical abstraction, a word without meaning, a sound without tenor. On this subject I am rather inclined to side with the Slavophiles than to remain on the side of the humanistic cosmopolitans, for if the former do err they err as living human beings, whereas the latter, if they speak the truth, sound like a book of logic....[6] But, fortunately, I hope to remain where I am without passing over to anybody....

Man is human because he is man; but humanity manifests itself in him not otherwise than, firstly, on the basis of his own personality and to the extent to which it is able to encompass him, and secondly, on the basis of his nationality. A man's personality is the exclusion of other personalities, and is, for that reason, a limitation of the human substance: no man, however great his genius, will ever fully encompass a single aspect of

life, leave alone all its spheres. No single man can substitute all men (that is, render their existence superfluous) or even one man, no matter how inferior the latter may be to him mentally and morally; each and all are indispensable to all and each. This forms the foundation of the unity and fraternity of the human race. Man is strong and secure only in society; but in order that society in its turn might be strong and secure it needs an inner, immediate, organic link—*nationality*. The latter is the spontaneous result of the human association, but is not its product: no single nation has created its nationality any more than it has created itself. This is an indication of the consanguineous origin of all nationalities. The nearer a man (or a nation) is to his original source, the nearer is he to nature, and the more is he her slave; he is then not a man but a child; not a nation but a tribe. In both the human element develops in proportion as they divest themselves of natural immediacy. This emancipation is frequently contributed to by various extraneous causes; but the human element comes to a nation not from without but from within itself and always manifests itself nationally.

Strictly speaking, the conflict of the human with the national is nothing more than a rhetorical figure, and in reality it does not exist. Even when the progress of one nation is effected through borrowing from another it is nevertheless effected nationally. Otherwise there is no progress. When a nation succumbs to the press of foreign ideas and customs without the capacity of transforming them by the power of its own nationality into its own essence, it then perishes politically. The world knows many people who answer to the epithet "inane": they are wise with the wisdom of others, possess no opinions of their own, yet study and follow everything on earth. Their inanity consists precisely in the fact that they borrow entirely alien thoughts which their own brain does not assimilate but which it conveys through the medium of the tongue exactly in the form in which they were received. These people are impersonal, since the more personal a man is the more able is he to transform alien ideas into his own, *i.e.*, to place upon them the stamp of his own personality. A nation without nationality is like a man without personality. This is evidenced by the fact that all nations which have been playing leading roles in history have been distinguished for their most

salient nationality. Remember the Jews, the Greeks and the Romans; look at the French, the English and the Germans. In our times national feuds and antipathies have entirely died out. The Frenchman no longer bears a hatred of the Englishman merely because he is an Englishman, and vice versa. On the contrary, in our time every new day sees a growing sympathy and affection of nation for nation. This comforting, humane phenomenon is the result of education. But this does not at all mean that education effaces nationality and makes all nations as like each other as two peas. On the contrary, our day is pre-eminently a day of vigorous development of nationalities. The Frenchman wishes to be a Frenchman and wants the German to be a German, and only on that ground is he interested in him. All the European nations now maintain exactly the same attitude to each other. Yet this does not prevent them from borrowing unstintingly from each other without the slightest fear of damaging their nationality. History says that such apprehensions are justified only in the case of nations which are morally impotent and insignificant. Ancient Hellas was heiress to the whole ancient world that preceded her. She incorporated elements of the Egyptian and Phoenician in addition to the main Pelasgic element. The Romans absorbed, as it were, the whole of the ancient world, yet they never ceased to be Romans, and their fall was due not to external borrowings but to the fact that they were the last representatives of the outlived world of antiquity which was destined to be renovated through Christianity and the Teutonic barbarians. French literature was for a long time servilely imitative of Greek and Latin which it naively pirated while still remaining nationally French. The whole negative movement of French literature in the eighteenth century originated in England; but the French showed such an aptitude at assimilating it and placing upon it the seal of their own nationality that nobody would think of questioning the honour of their literature's original development. German philosophy was begotten by the Frenchman Descartes without in any way becoming French because of that.

The division of a nation into opposed and allegedly hostile majority and minority may be right from the standpoint of logic but decidedly wrong from the point of view of common sense. The minority always expresses the majority in a good or a bad sense.

Still stranger is it to impute only bad qualities to the majority of the nation and only good ones to the minority. The French nation would cut a pretty figure if it were judged only by the depraved noblesse of Louis XV's time! This instance shows that the minority is more apt to be an expression of the bad rather than the good side of a people's nationality, because it lives an artificial life when opposing itself to the majority as something separate from and alien to the latter. We see this in contemporary France, too, in the person of the bourgeoisie, which is the dominant class there. As for the great men—they are pre-eminently the children of their country. A great man is always national, like his nation, for he is great only because he represents his nation. The conflict between genius and nation is not a conflict between the human and the national but merely of the new and the old, of idea and empiricism, of reason and prejudice. The mass always lives by habit, and considers rational, true and useful only that to which it is accustomed. It fiercely defends the *old* which a century or less ago it had as fiercely combated as the new. Opposition of the mass to genius is essential: it is on its part a test of genius: if genius prevails despite everything then genius it truly is, *i.e.*, it bears within itself its title to influence the destinies of its country. Otherwise any moralizer, any dreamer, any philosopher, any little great man would treat the nation as a horse whom he could steer at his own sweet whim and fancy in any direction he chooses....[7]

There is no necessity for the nation to divide itself in order to procure for itself a source of new ideas. The source of all the new is the old; at least, the old paves the way for the new. The striking thing in genius is not so much its ability to perceive the new as its boldness in pitting the new against the old and causing them to lock in mortal combat. The need for innovations in Russia had been realized by Peter's predecessors; it was indicated by contemporary conditions in the state; but it was only Peter who succeeded in carrying out the reform. For that purpose he had no need whatever to presume himself to be opposed to his people; on the contrary, he had to know and love it and be aware of his kinship and unity with it. What is unconsciously latent in a nation as potentiality appears in genius as consummation and reality. The nation bears the same relation to its great men as

the soil to the plants which it breeds. There is unity here, not division and quality. And despite the *syllogists* (a new word!) there is no greater honour for the great poet than to be supremely national, for otherwise he cannot be great. What the moralizers call *human* in contrast to *national* is in fact the *new* directly and logically ensuing from the *old*, even though it may be its sheer negation. When the extreme of a principle is stretched to absurdity its only natural outlet is a transition to the opposite extreme. This is inherent in the nature of men and nations. Hence, the source of all progress and advance lies not in the duality of nations, but in human nature, which also contains the source of digression from truth, stagnation and inertness.

* * *

The importance of theoretical problems depends upon the bearing which they have on reality. What to us, Russians, are still important problems have long ago been solved in Europe, where they have long become the simple truths of life which no one doubts, no one disputes and all are agreed upon. And—best of all—these problems have been solved there by life itself, and if theory did have a hand in their solution it was with the aid of reality. But this should not in any way deter us from tackling these problems, for until we have solved them ourselves it will avail us not that they have been solved in Europe. Transplanted to the soil of our life these problems are the same yet not the same and require a different solution. Europe today is engrossed with new great problems.[8] We can and should take an interest in them, for nothing human should be alien to us if we wish to be humans. But at the same time it would be quite futile for us to treat these problems as our own. They are ours only in so far as they are applicable to our conditions; in all else they are alien to us, and we would act as Don Quixotes if we got excited about them. In this way we would sooner incur the ridicule than win the respect of Europeans. We ourselves, in ourselves and around ourselves—that is where we should seek both the problems and their solution. That trend will be fruitful if it will not be brilliant. And the beginnings of that trend can be seen in contemporary Russian literature, and in them, the imminence of its maturity and adult state. In this respect our literature has

reached a stage when its future successes and further advance depend more upon the volume and number of the subjects accessible to it than upon literature itself. The wider its scope the greater will be the pabulum for its activity and the more rapid and fruitful will its development be. Though it may not yet have attained its maturity, it has already found, so to speak, struck, the straight road leading to it, and that is a great success for it.

A most striking evidence of the maturity of contemporary Russian literature is the role which verse poetry plays in it. There was a time when verses good and bad were the delight and solace of our public. They were read and reread and learned by heart, bought without stint or copied out. A new poem in verse, a fragment of a poem, a new verse published in a magazine or almanac—all enjoyed the privilege of creating a stir, causing discussion, kindling enthusiasm, etc. Poetasters appeared without number, grew like mushrooms after a rain. Not so today. Verse plays a subordinate role in comparison with prose. It is read grudgingly, barely noticed, and good verses are indifferently praised while the mediocre are passed over in silence. The number of versificators has greatly shrunk. Many have drawn from this the conclusion that the age of poetry for Russian literature has passed, that poetry has suffered an almost total eclipse. We, on the contrary, are inclined to regard this as the triumph rather than the decline of Russian poetry. What shook and eventually banished the mania for verse-writing and verse-reading? First of all the appearance of Gogol, then the publication of the posthumous works of Pushkin, and, finally, the appearance of Lermontov. Pushkin's poetical activity can be divided into two periods: in the first it is beautiful, but not yet deep, not settled, still lending itself to copying and imitation; in the second we find it towering on unapproachable heights of artistic maturity, depth and power; here it no longer lends itself to copying and imitation. Lermontov's talent attracted universal attention from its very first debut, and discouraged all attempts at imitation. Thereafter access to poetical fame became very difficult, so that a talent that could have played a brilliant role before was now obliged to put up with a modest position. This meant that the public had cultivated a nicer taste for verse and its demands were more exacting; and this, of course, is an advance and not

a decline in taste. We now need a new Pushkin, a new Lermontov for a book of verse to delight the whole public and cause a stir in literature. But it has already become emphatically impossible for the poetical gentry to attract notice or win fame or repute by as much as a hair's breadth beyond what is due to them by virtue of their talent, notice, fame or repute. Talent now will always be appreciated, and its success no longer depends on either the patronage or persecution of the magazines (if they can do it any harm, it is perhaps only by silence, but no longer by praise or abuse); it will, however, be noticed and appreciated not otherwise than to the extent which its true worth merits—no more and no less.

Last year (1846) saw the publication of the poetry of Messrs. Grigoryev, Polonsky, Lizander, Pleshcheyev, Madame Julia Zhadovskaya, Mr. Weltman's *Trojan and Angelica*—something in the nature of a nursery tale written in a cross between verse and metrical prose; *The Lay of Prince Igor's Regiment* rendered by Mr. Minayev in poem-form after the style neither of the old nor ancient, but of that recent modernity when poems were the fashion. This is in fact no more than a diffusion or dilution in fairly racy verse of the fairly pithy and concise *Lay of Prince Igor's Regiment*. We shall be glad if Mr. Minayev's effort pleases the public; as for ourselves we have such a liking for *The Lay of Prince Igor's Regiment* in its present shape that we cannot but view with distaste any adaptation of it. We think that it needs neither changing, translating nor adapting; it would suffice to merely substitute the most obsolete and unintelligible words by newer and more intelligible ones taken, though, from the same popular source. We have called Mr. Minayev's verses racy; let us add that they are also as high-flown as they are exuberant, and that they contain more rhetoric than poetry. Mr. Minayev is an enthusiastic admirer of *The Lay of Prince Igor's Regiment*; it would appear in his eyes to be the highest thing in Russian poetry, from Lomonosov to Lermontov inclusively. He expounds this view in the postscript to his poetical labour which bears the following title in naive Sunday school style: "For the inquisitive maids and youths."

Madame Julia Zhadovskaya's verses were extolled by nearly all our magazines. Indeed, one cannot deny them something of

poetical talent. It is to be regretted, though, that this talent's fount of inspiration is not life, but dreams, and it therefore has no bearing on life and suffers from poetical paucity. This, by the way, originates from Madame Zhadovskaya's relation to society as a woman. Here is a verse that fully explains this definition:

Possessed by boredom without end,
I languish *in this world,* my friend.
I can no longer gossip bear,
The petty talk that is men's fare,
The foolish chatter of the dames,
The silk and lace that only shames,
The surface beauty, like a rind,
Concealing emptiness of mind.
All vanity I do abhor,
But God's own world I do adore.
Forever dear to me shall be:
The murmur of a leafy tree,
The shining stars in legions grand,
The velvet green of pastureland,
The crystal stream, transparent, pale,
The music of the nightingale.

Too great daring and heroism are required of a woman, who, thus estranged or self-estranged from society, would yet refuse to stay within the narrow circle of dreams but plunge into the maelstrom of life for the sake of its strife if not for the pleasures, which she fails to see in it. Madame Zhadovskaya had preferred to this difficult step the serene contemplation of the starry skies. In almost every verse her gaze is riveted on stars and skies, but she has seen nothing new there. Not so Leverrier, whose star-gazing had discovered for us the hitherto unknown planet of *Neptune.* Leverrier is more the poet than Madame Zhadovskaya, though he does not write verse. We shall readily concur with those who consider the simile out of place and farfetched; but, after all is said and done, it should be conceded that gazing at the skies and seeing there nothing but platitudes in rhyme or without rhyme is bad poetry! And what good can a poet in our time derive from sky-gazing if he be absolutely ignorant of physical and astronomical notions, and does not know that the blue cupola of the heavens which charms his sight does not exist in reality but is

the product of his own vision in which is focussed the spherical convexity that he sees; that there, at the altitudes he so yearns for, is a cold and breathless void, and that the distance from star to star cannot be covered in a thousand years of flying on the best air balloon.... No, give us the earth with its light and warm, where everything is ours, simple and comprehensible, for here we live, here is the poetry of our life.... He who turns away from it without understanding it can never be a poet, and is but fit to chase cold and empty phrases in the cold heights....[9]

Of the aforementioned books of poetry published last year the most noteworthy is the collection of verses by Appolon Grigoryev. They, at least, show flashes of *sensible* poetry, *i.e.*, the kind of poetry one need not feel ashamed of writing. It is a pity these flashes are so few; Mr. Grigoryev owes them to the influence of Lermontov; but this influence is disappearing more and more in him and giving way to originality, the sum and substance of which is expressed in mystical obscurities, on reading which one is involuntarily reminded of the old epigram:

> Verily sang Bibroos with voice of the gods,
> For his gist was intelligible to no mortal clods.

That is an originality that is not even worth imitation!

But a veritable acquisition for Russian literature was the book of Koltsov's poetry published last year. Though these verses had all been previously published and read in almanacs and magazines, they produce the impression of novelty precisely because they have been collected together and give the reader a complete idea of Koltsov's poetical activity as a whole. This book is a capital, classical acquisition of Russian literature, having nothing in common with those ephemeral phenomena, which, though not devoid of relative merits, are thumbed over as a novelty to be thereafter forgotten. Poetical talent in our days is no great shakes—quite an ordinary thing; to be worth anything it must be more than mere talent; it must be great talent armed with original ideas, with an ardent sympathy for life and a deep capacity for understanding it. Thanks to the magazines some little talents have put their own construction on this and have begun to inscribe epigraphs, such as the following, on the title pages of their books as evidence of their poetry's *modern trend: Homo*

sum, et nihil humani a me alienum puto. But neither erudition, nor Latin epigraphs, nor an actual knowledge of Latin will give a man what nature has denied him, and the so-called "modern trend" of a certain class of poets will always be merely "a product of the stimulation of captive thought."

That is why the semi-literate cattle dealer Koltsov, without science or education found a way of becoming an uncommon and original poet. He became a poet without himself knowing how, and he died sincerely convinced that although he had managed to write two or three decent plays he was nevertheless a mediocre and sorry poet.... The admiration and praises of friends but little affected his vanity.... Were he living today he would taste for the first time the joy of belief in his own merit; but fate had denied him that legitimate reward for all his pangs and doubts....

Since we can say nothing more of Koltsov's poetry than what has already been said in the article *On the Life and Works of Koltsov* prefacing the collected works of the poet, we would refer to it those who have not read it and who are desirous of learning our opinion regarding Koltsov's talent and his significance in Russian literature.

Of the poetical works not published separately but which appeared in various publications last year the following are worthy of mention: *The Landowner,* a story (published in *Peterburgsky Sbornik*) and *Andrei,* a poem (published in *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*) by Mr. Turgenev; *Mashenka,* a poem by Mr. Maikov (*Peterburgsky Sbornik*); Shakespeare's *Macbeth* translated by Mr. Kroneberg in verse and prose. There were very few noteworthy small verses last year, and generally of late. The best belong to Messrs. Maikov, Turgenev and Nekrasov.

Of the latter's verses we could say more had we not been prevented from so doing by his attitude towards the *Sovremennik*....

A propos of verse translations of the classics. G.A. Grigoryev has translated Sophocles' *Antigone* (*The Readers' Library* No. 8). Many of our literati are addicted to speaking of things that are as familiar as household words with an air of mysterious gravity, and tackling things that are not their business with much self-assurance. G. Grigoryev announces in a short foreword to his

translation that he intends, in due season, to "expound a view on Greek tragedy," a view "whose special principle, *by the way*, is its direct bearing on the teaching of the ancient mysteries." Why, every child in the lower classes of the secondary school knows that! Take, for example, the idea that *Antigone* is the embodiment of the conflict between two principles of human life—*private* right and duty against *common* right and duty, and that, consequently, behind the ancient forms of *Antigone* there hovers an augury of some other life—that idea belongs exclusively to Mr. Grigoryev and we willingly leave it to him. As regards *Antigone* itself, we doubt whether the "Attic Bee"—Sophocles—would recognize himself in this hasty, pretentious and utterly garbled translation. The majestic ancient senary (the six feet iambic) has been converted into a kind of pebbly, rugged prose reminiscent of the modern "dramatic performances" of our homebred playwrights; the melodious choruses are full of sound and fury signifying nothing, while of the ancient colouring, the characteristic traits of all the personages there is not a trace left.* One asks: for what and for whom has Mr. Grigoryev gone to all this trouble? Is it to utterly discourage our not too keen interest in the ancient classics whom he has treated with such discourtesy? . . .

As regards prose fiction only two works were published last year in separate editions: Mr. Zagoskin's novel *Brynsk Forest, an Episode of the Early Years of Peter the Great's Reign*, and the second volume of Mr. Butkov's *St. Petersburg Heights*.

Mr. Zagoskin's new novel is distinguished by all the good and bad traits of his previous novels. In part this is one of Mr. Zagoskin's current imitations—we forget which in succession—of his first novel *Yuri Miloslavsky*. The hero of the latest novel, however, is even more colourless and lacking in personality than that of the first. As for his heroine, this goes without saying: she is no woman at all, still less a Russian woman of the late seventeenth century. The plot of *Brynsk Forest* is reminiscent of the sentimental novels and stories of last century. Levshin, a *sotnik*[10] of the *Streltzi*[11] troops falls *romantically* in love with a celestial maiden with whom fate brings him together at an inn. You have learnt from the opening chapters of the book that the boyar

* It goes without saying that there are innumerable blunders besides; Mr. Grigoryev thinks that Ares (Mars) should be pronounced Arés, and so on.

Buinosov had lost his little daughter in the Brynsk forest where he had made a halt to rest while travelling with his retinue of household serfs numbering some fifty men. Knowing this you immediately guess that the ideal maiden who captivated Levshin is the boyar's daughter, and knowing this you know how the plot will develop and what the end will be. The love of the two doves is described in the trite phraseology of the common run of novels of a century ago—phraseology that could never possibly have entered the mind of a Russian of the latter half of the seventeenth century, when there had not even yet appeared the famous tome *Instructions on How to Pay Diverse Compliments, etc.* Another of the novel's weak points is its author's tendency to go into ecstasies over old customs and manners, even the most absurd, ignorant and barbaric, which he in and out of place and season casts into the teeth of modern customs and manners. That defect, however, is of no consequence, for wherever the author depicts antiquity inaccurately, implausibly and ineptly he makes no impression on the reader other than that of boredom, and wherever he depicts the *good old days* in their true light as a writer of talent he always achieves an end exactly opposite to what he had intended, *i.e.*, he dissuades the reader where he had meant to persuade him and vice versa. These indeed are the best pages of the novel, written with admirable talent and full of interest, as for example the scene at the *Zemsky Prikaz* and the worthy government clerk Anufri Trifonich; the story of Buinosov's steward relating the loss of his master's daughter under the eyes of half a hundred menials and seven nurses, and chiefly, the court of arbitration scene conducted in the Tatar manner, where, in the person of boyar Kurodavlev and the two muzhiks who had come to him to settle their grievance we are given a charming picture of some of the old customs. One of the good points of Mr. Zagoskin's new novel is his character studies of the *Raskolniki*, executed on the whole not badly and in places excellently—Andrei Pomoryanin, the venerable Pafnuti, Father Philip and the Hairy Ancient and boyar Kurodavlev, the voluntary martyr of arrogant *mestnichestvo*. The best-drawn portrait is that of Andrei Pomoryanin. It is regrettable that Mr. Zagoskin occupies the reader's attention more with the uninteresting and tiresome love story of his hero than with scenes of the customs and historical

events of that interesting epoch. The narrative, as all Mr. Zagoskin's previous books, is written throughout in a lucid, simple and flowing style, marked here and there by spirit and animation.

The second volume of Mr. Butkov's *St. Petersburg Heights* appeared to us to be much better than the first, though the latter could not be said to be bad. In our opinion Mr. Butkov lacks the talent for novels and stories, and he does well to confine himself to the specific daguerreotypic style of tales and sketches of which he is the originator. This is neither creativeness nor poetry, but it is marked by creativeness and poetry of a kind. Mr. Butkov's tales and sketches bear the same relation to the novel and the story as statistics to history, as the realities to poetry. He shows in them little imagination, but a good deal of mind and feeling; little humour, but plenty of irony and wit traceable to a sympathetic soul. Mr. Butkov's talent may possibly be one-sided and not particularly voluminous; but then one may possess a more versatile and greater talent than Mr. Butkov's which will nevertheless be reminiscent of one or another still greater talent; whereas Mr. Butkov's talent is reminiscent of no one's—it stands entirely by itself. He imitates no one and no one could imitate him with impunity. That is why we particularly admire the talent of Mr. Butkov and respect him. His tales, sketches, anecdotes—call them what you will—represent a peculiar and entirely novel genre in literature.

We have noticed with much satisfaction that in this his second volume Mr. Butkov is less given to caricature, less frequently employs odd words, that his diction is more precise and definite and the treatment still more imbued with thought and truth than in his first volume. That signifies progress. We wholeheartedly wish the third volume of *St. Petersburg Heights* to come out as soon as possible.

Turning to the remarkable works of prose fiction that have appeared in story-magazines and periodicals during last year, our eye is at once caught by *Poor Folk*, a novel that brought sudden fame to a name hitherto unknown in literature. So much has already been said of this work in all the magazines that further details would hardly be of interest to the public. We shall therefore not dwell too much on this subject. There has never yet been an example in Russian literature of fame so swiftly won as

that of Dostoyevsky. The power, depth and originality of Mr. Dostoyevsky's talent were immediately and universally recognized, and, what is more important, the public immediately made such exacting demands on Mr. Dostoyevsky's talent and evinced such exacting intolerance to his shortcomings as are usually only given to uncommon talent to provoke. Almost all unanimously found in Mr. Dostoyevsky's *Poor Folk* a capacity for wearying the reader even while it evoked his admiration, and attributed this, some to prolixity, others to excessive fecundity. Indeed, it must be admitted that if *Poor Folk* had appeared condensed by at least one-tenth and if the author had been judicious enough to expurgate needless repetitions of words and phrases his would have been an impeccably artistic work. In the second issue of *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* Mr. Dostoyevsky offered his second novel to the verdict of an interested public: *The Double. The Adventures of Mr. Golyadkin.* Though the first debut of the young writer had sufficiently smoothed his path to success it must be confessed that *The Double* had no success whatever with the public. While this does not provide grounds for condemning Mr. Dostoyevsky's second work as a failure, still less as having no merits whatever, it does show that the public judgment is not unfounded. In *The Double* the author has displayed immense power of creative genius, and the character of his hero is one of the most profound and daring conceptions which Russian literature can boast of; the work shows a world of truth and intellect, and of artistic skill as well; but at the same time it reveals a signal inability to master and economically handle the overflow of the writer's own powers. All the shortcomings of *Poor Folk* which were pardonable in a first essay have appeared in *The Double* as enormities, all of which boil down to this: the inability of a too copious talent to define the judicious measure and limit for the artistic development of a conceived idea. Let us try to illustrate what we mean by an example. Gogol has so deeply and vividly conceived the idea of Khlestakov's[12] character that he could easily have used him for the hero of another dozen comedies, in which the worthy gentleman would be true to himself though in quite new situations, as fiance, husband, the father of a family, country squire, old man, etc. These comedies would no doubt be as excellent as *Inspector General,* but they would never enjoy the same success

and would bore the public rather than please it. for too much of a good thing is apt to pall. As soon as a poet has expressed an idea in his work, his business is done, and he should leave that idea alone unless he cares to take the risk of being tiresome. Another example on the same score: what can be better than those two scenes which Gogol dropped from his comedy because they retarded the action of the play? They are comparatively not inferior in merit to any of the other scenes; then why did he omit them? Because he possesses to an eminent degree an artistic sense of proportion and tact, and not only knows where to begin and where to leave off, but how to develop the theme neither more nor less than is necessary. We are aware that Mr. Dostoyevsky has omitted a fine scene from his *The Double*, realizing himself that his novel would be too long; and we are convinced that the success of his novel would have been different had he cut it down to at least two-thirds of its present size without being sorry to throw out the good parts. But *The Double* suffers from another important defect: its fantastic setting. In our days the fantastic can have a place only in madhouses, but not in literature, being the business of doctors, not poets. For all these reasons *The Double* has been appreciated only by a few dilettantes of art. for whom literary works are an object of study as well as of pleasure. The public, however, is not made up of dilettantes, but of ordinary readers, who read only what they care for without considering why, and promptly close the book when it begins to bore them without giving themselves the trouble of understanding why it is not to their taste. A work that pleases connoisseurs and is not taken up by the laity may have its merits: but it is a truly good work which pleases both sides, or, at least. if liked by the former is also read by the latter; not everyone likes Gogol, but everyone has read him....

In the tenth issue of *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* there appeared Mr. Dostoyevsky's third work *Mr. Prokharchin*, a work that came as a disagreeable surprise to all the admirers of Mr. Dostoyevsky's talent. We see here the brightly glowing sparks of a great talent, but they glow in such a dense gloom that their light is of little help to the reader.... As far as we can see, it is neither inspiration nor free and naive creativeness that have begotten this strange story, but something in the nature of—how shall we say?—

ostentation and pretension. Perhaps we are mistaken, but in that case why is it so affected, *maniéré* and incomprehensible, as though a sort of real but queer and baffling occurrence and not a poetical creation? In art there should be nothing obscure or incomprehensible; its creations transcend the so-called "real occurrences" in that the poet lights up with the torch of his imagination all the recesses of his heroes' inmost souls and all their secret motives, and unfolds before our eyes the essential core of his story as an inevitable effect of adequate cause, shorn of all the accidental. We say nothing of the author's habit of frequently repeating one or another felicitous expression and thus weakening the effect; this is a defect of minor importance, moreover one that is remediable. We would remark, in passing, that there are no such repetitions in Gogol. Of course, we have no right to demand of Mr. Dostoyevsky's works the perfections of Gogol's; nevertheless we think that a great talent could do worse than follow the example of a greater.

Among the interesting productions of last year's light literature mention should be made of two stories that appeared in *Otechestvenniye Zapiski:* Lugansky's *Nebyvaloye v Bylom ili Byloye v Nebyvalom,*[13] and Grigorovich's *The Village.* Both these works have the common trait of being interesting not as stories but as masterly physiological studies of everyday life. We would not say that Lugansky's story is actually of no interest; we merely want to say that it is much more interesting in its digressions and accessories than in its romantic plot. Thus, for example, the excellent scene of the peasant hut with the wood-carved windows compared to the Malorossian hut is better than the whole story, though it is merely an episode and has no direct bearing upon the main theme. Generally speaking, Lugansky's stories are chiefly interesting for their detail, and *Nebyvaloye v Bylom* is especially rich in interesting particulars, apart from the general interest of the story, which serves here merely as a frame and not the picture, a means and not an end. More could be said on this score, but as we shall shortly have an opportunity of giving our opinion on this writer's whole literary activity, we shall here confine ourselves to these few lines.

Of Mr. Grigorovich we shall say right now that he does not possess the slightest talent for story writing, but has an admi-

rable talent for those studies of public life which have now become known in literature under the name of *physiological* sketches. He, however, intended his *The Village* to be a story, and hence all the defects of his work, which he could easily have avoided by confining himself to separate rustic scenes outwardly unrelated but imbued by a single idea. He failed too in his attempt to glimpse into the inner world of his heroine, and, generally, his Akulina has turned out a rather colourless and indistinct character, precisely because he has tried to make it a specially interesting one. Another defect of the narrative is an occasionally overwrought, laboured and ornate description of nature. But as far as the sketches of peasant life are concerned, these constitute the bright side of Mr. Grigorovich's works. He has revealed here a great deal of observation and competence and has succeeded in making both these qualities apparent in simple, true and faithful images wrought with admirable talent. His *The Village* is one of the best productions of *belles-lettres* of the year.

Lugansky's article *The Russian Muzhik*, published in the third part of *Novoselye*, full as it is of deep significance, is conspicuous for its masterly exposition and generally belongs to this writer's finest physiological sketches, a genre in which his uncommon talent has no equals.

Mr. Weltman's novel *Adventures Drawn from the Sea of Life* is still dragging on from the sixth issue of *The Readers' Library* and was not concluded in the last issue of this magazine for last year. Mr. Weltman's new novel probably reveals even more talent than his previous works, though it is conspicuous for the same failure on the author's part to cope with his talent. His *Adventures* teem with characters, many of which are drawn with uncommon skill; there are many astonishingly faithful pictures of modern Russian life; but at the same time there are unnatural characters and artificial situations, and the tangled skein of events is often unravelled by means of *deus ex machina*. Everything that is fine in this novel belongs to Mr. Weltman's talent, which is undeniably one of the most remarkable of our day; but everything that is weak in the *Adventures* is the result of Mr. Weltman deliberately setting out to prove the superiority of the old over modern ways. A strange tendency! We are certainly no dogmatic admirers of modern ways in Russian society, and no less clearly

than others do we perceive their oddities and defects and wish to see them mended. Like the Slavophiles we have our own ideal of morals in the name of which we would wish them mended; but our ideal is not in the past, it is in the future based on the present. We may go forwards, but not backwards, and whatever may appeal to us in the past, the past has gone never to return. We are ready to agree that the young bloods of the merchantry who are sowing their wild oats after a new fashion and show more aptitude for squandering their fathers' fortunes than for acquiring their own, are more quaint and preposterous than their fathers who cling to the old ways. But we cannot agree that their fathers are not quaint and preposterous. The young generations even of the merchantry represent the transitional state of their class, a transition from worse to better, but the better will prove to be good only as a result of the transition, whereas as a process of transition it will, of course, be worse rather than better than the old. Effect the moral reformation by satire, or—better than any satire—by their faithful portrayal; but do not do it in the name of the old, but in the name of reason and common sense, not for the sake of visionary and impossible appeals to the past, but for the sake of a possible evolution of the future out of the present. Partiality, whether to the old or new, always hinders attainment because it willy-nilly leads a man into error, no matter how passionate his love of truth and how noble the motives of his actions may be. That is what has happened to Mr. Weltman in his new novel. He has depicted the immoral characters of his novel in such a light as if they were immoral by virtue of the new ways, whereas had they lived, say, in the Koshikhin days, they would to all intents and purposes have been excellent people. At any rate we feel justified in drawing such a conclusion from the fact that the author nowhere attempts to conceal his sympathy for the old and his antipathy towards the new. Thus, obedient to the dictates of truth, he impartially shows the natural ways by which the merchant Zakholustyev acquired his immense riches; at the same time he deems it necessary to show us in contrast Selifont Mikheich whose fortune was amassed by fair and honest means, chiefly because he "lived according to old Russian tradition." We would like to know what our merchants would have to say of this utopia of honestly-acquired riches.... According to Mr. Weltman, a

Russian who has the misfortune to know French, is a lost wretch.... Fancy the prejudices some men of intellect and talent are addicted to!...

The hero of the novel, *Dmitritsky*, is a sort of modern Vanka Cain, or what the French call *chevalier d'industrie*, a most probable character skilfully drawn by the author. On the other hand the heroine, Salome Petrovna, to whose lot fell the thankless role of representative and victim of modern morals and a knowledge of French, is an utterly fantastic personage. At first she is shown as an affected creature, a cold hypocrite, an actress maladroit to the point of vulgarity, and then as the most passionate woman it is conceivable to imagine. The plot is extremely complicated; it has as many episodes as it has characters—the latter, as we have said, in profusion. As soon as a new person comes upon the scene the author unceremoniously drops his hero and heroine and begins to tell the reader his story from the day he was born, and sometimes from the day his parents were born, up to the time of his appearance in the novel. For the most part these incidental characters are delineated or sketched with great skill. The drift of the novel is very interesting and there is much truth in the events but also many improbabilities. When the author fails to devise a natural denouement for an episode or naturally introduce a new one, he promptly resorts to *deus ex machina*. Such, for instance, is the abduction of Salome Petrovna by the serfs of Philip Savich, a landowner of the Kiev gubernia—the most extravagant stretch of romantic imagination that ever a writer of talent has ventured upon. The events of Dmitritsky's life are especially rich in these miraculous improbabilities; he succeeds in everything, overrides all obstacles and emerges triumphant through all difficulties and adversities. He arrives in Moscow without any documents and with only ten rubles in his pocket, puts up at an hotel, eats and drinks handsomely, when suddenly fate sends him a businessman of literature who, mistaking him for a writer who had occupied the same room on the previous day, carries him off to his home, invites him to be his guest and gives him money. This is all accomplished by the wave of a magic wand, and shows Mr. Weltman to have more talent for differentia and details than for creating something integral, a greater predilection for the fairy tale

than the novel, and that systems and theories are playing havoc with his admirable talent....

Mentioning lastly the *Hungarians*, a physiological sketch published in the *Finsky Vestnik*, we shall have exhausted the list of all that is noteworthy in last year's polite literature. The list has not proved to be a very long one;* but there is a good deal we do not care to mention, not because there is nothing good in what we have passed over, but because we considered it necessary only to deal with what was especially noteworthy.

Similar to the *Peterburgsky Sbornik* a *Moscow Literary and Scientific Symposium* was published in Moscow, which despite its Slavophile trend, contains several interesting contributions, notable among which for its wit and masterly exposition is the article *Tarantass* signed with the initials M.Z.K.[14]

The Reminiscences of Faddei Bulgarin (fragments of things heard, witnessed and experienced in life), though not strictly belonging either to scientific, or poetical but to so-called light literature, is in many ways an interesting and remarkable book. We shall deal further on with the recently published third volume of this work, and here merely confine ourselves to mentioning it.

We would classify under the same genre Mr. Malinovsky's *Notes of a Doctor* were these notes more faithful to their excellent intention and more akin to notes than to a melodrama in the form of an abortive novel written without talent, ability or tact.

In passing from the purely literary to the scientific works of a serious tenor we shall deal first with what has been accomplished during the past year in the field of Russian history. Let us mention here, by the way, that the *Sovremennik* will devote particular attention to that subject. Apart from articles dealing with Russian history our magazine, while not promising its readers a complete bibliography on other subjects, will publish reviews of everything of note on Russian history.

The history of Russian literature, chiefly ancient—33 public lectures by Mr. Sheviryev (so far two volumes have appeared),

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* Partly this is due to the fact that numerous admirable belletristic works, especially stories, were to have appeared last year in a giant collection. However, in view of the appearance of the *Sovremennik*, the *littérateur* who undertook this edition found it expedient to give up the undertaking and turn the material he had gathered over to the *Sovremennik*.

is an outstanding work of scientific Russian literature of the past year. In this work the author has revealed an intimate knowledge of sources and extensive information, in short, an erudition that would do credit to the most punctilious German *Gelehrter*. It is at the same time distinguished for profound and sincere conviction and extremely naive conscientiousness which, nevertheless, did not prevent the industrious and worthy professor from presenting the facts in an utterly false light. This odd phenomenon becomes quite comprehensible when we take into consideration the terrific spell which is cast on common sense by the spirit of system and the charm of a cut and dried idea accepted as gospel before the facts have been investigated. That accounts for Mr. Sheviryev's propensity for regarding the ecclesiastical writings of old and ancient Rūs as nothing short of the works of Russian folk literature, and the Russian fairy-tale knight Ilya Muromets as a sort of counterpart of the Cid, the chivalrous hero of national Spanish romance.... Did not the learned and industrious Venelin claim that Attila was a Slav? This goes to prove that messieurs the scientists, in paying tribute to human foibles, are susceptible to the same eccentricities as ordinary and entirely illiterate men.... Perhaps this is due to the fact that they have, as the common folk say, "been doing too much reading" and have got a bit muddled in the head; perhaps it is due to other reasons—we do not know; but we do know that the spirit of system and doctrine has an astonishing power of befuddling the clearest of minds and imbuing them with fantastic ideas.... Mr. Sheviryev's book, however, considered apart from its Slavophile trend, possesses many merits as a monument of exemplary industry and conscientious, albeit one-sided, learning. Most important of all is the glossary to which the author has relegated the most interesting facts which most stubbornly refuse to testify in favour of his pet ideas. Another remarkable feature of Mr. Sheviryev's book is the fact that it elicited four excellent critical articles (in the *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* Nos. 5 and 12, in *The Readers' Library* and the *Finsky Vestnik*).

One of the most splendid acquisitions of Russian educational literature in general, and not merely of last year, is the second section of part two of Professor Lorentz's *Handbook on General History*, published last year. This book brings us to the close of

medieval history. We look forward with impatience to the continuation and conclusion of this excellent work.

Thiers' *Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire* has appeared in two translations. The sixth part of Becker's *Universal History* has been published.

The Manners, Customs and Monuments of All Nations of the Globe published by Messrs. Semen and Stoikovich, magnificently illustrated with colour-plates and woodcuts and elegantly printed, throws into the shade all that has heretofore appeared in Russia in the way of so-called *de luxe* editions. The contents of the book correspond to its appearance, and—what is especially important—it is not a translation, but almost an original work of two Russian writers who, though using foreign sources, have succeeded in endowing the book with the merits of a work imbued with a unifying idea. The present volume contains a description of Hindustan by Mr. Tyutchev and Indo-China by Mr. Stoikovich. The publishers promise in the second volume a description of China and Japan.

Last year's magazines contained very many interesting articles of a scientific nature, both originals and translations. Of the former special mention should be made of the following: the seventh and eighth *Letters on the Study of Nature* by Iskander; *The Nomadic and Settled Aborigines of the Astrakhan Gubernia* by Baron F. A. Buler: *European Railways in Their Historical, Geographical and Statistical Aspects* (in the *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*); *The Human Leg and Arm* by S. S. Kutorga (in *The Readers' Library*), *The Life and Ways of Snakes; The Life and Ways of Spiders* by Mr. Ushakov (in the *Finsky Vestnik*). The most interesting of the translated articles is *Oliver Cromwell* (in the *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*). Humboldt's famous scientific work was published in the *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* under the title of *Kosmos*, and in *The Readers' Library* under the title of *Kozmos*. One cannot but give both magazines their due for the haste they displayed in acquainting the Russian public with the work of the great scientist on a subject of such importance and written in popular style; but we doubt whether either magazine has achieved its object. The popularity of Humboldt's style is sheerly German, consequently, only within the reach of men who make a special study of the natural sciences and astronomy. In this respect the

article *Alexander Humboldt and His Universe (Kosmos)* published in the *Severnàya Pchela* (Nos. 175-180) was much more useful than the translations of both these magazines. We do not know from what it has been translated or by whom it was written, but it acquaints the uninitiated with Humboldt's book better than the above-mentioned two translations in the magazines. The *Finsky Vestnik* is publishing the translation of Thierry's famous work: *Histoire de la Conquête de l'Angleterre par les Normands.* This work, of course, is a novelty nowhere except in Russia, and hence the idea of the *Finsky Vestnik* in having it translated merits praise and gratitude.

Numerous books, pamphlets and articles have recently been appearing on special subjects. Of course, there are still few really good works among them, but they are all important as evidence of a sound trend in literature. Thus, for example, last year saw the publication of some noteworthy books which we shall merely list here, since they have been adequately discussed in the magazines: the first volume of *Reports of the Russian Geographical Society;* part three of Mr. Buturlin's *History of the Troublous Times*; Mr. Zhuravsky's *On the Sources and Use of Statistical Data;* Mr. Melnikov's *The Nizhni Novgorod Fair in 1843, 1844 and 1845,* and so on. It is especially pleasing to observe that many books, pamphlets and articles are appearing dealing not only with the technical side of agriculture but with the life of that numerous class of people which plays such a great part in agriculture as a live and sensible producing power. Special mention should be made of the splendid article by S. A. Maslov, *Harvesting Time* (*summer notes in the Moscow gubernia*) in No. 103 of the *Moskovskiye Vedomosti.*[15] This fine article, for which every friend of mankind will be grateful to its worthy author, was reprinted in almost all the official departmental publications.

We have not mentioned several admirable books which appeared at the close of last year, as we intend to deal with them in opening the criticism and bibliography section of the *Sovremennik.* But first we would say a few words about this section of our magazine. In almost all the other magazines criticism and bibliography are dealt with in separate sections. The writer of this article has had seven years' painful experience of this division.[16] By criticism we understand a sizeable article written even in a

specific tone as compared with a review. The number of good books calling for serious criticism is so small with us that the duty of writing criticism every month becomes something in the nature of wearisome purveying, since so many admirable things are published in magazines. Hence, in presenting to the public our accounts of the more or less noteworthy phenomena of Russian literature we shall not mind whether the result of our analysis turns out to be a criticism or a review. Let the readers settle this point themselves, each according to his own taste and mind. We thereby hope to render them a service, by ridding our magazine of the ballast of verbiage and padding which is sometimes inevitable when criticism is partitioned into greater or criticism proper, and smaller or review. Our criticism, as we have said above, will deal with all works of any note on Russian history; next it will pay most attention to purely literary works; but even here we do not promise a complete bibliography, since we are of the mind that trivial works are not worth the trouble of writing or reading about. We shall even consider it our duty, out of respect for the public and ourselves, to pass over in silence the mediocre works of hack-writers who have contrived already to acquire disgraceful notoriety and who, thinking to give a faithful picture of life as it really is, give instead a faithful picture of themselves as they really are, that is, in all the grandeur of their pretensions, shallowness, hebetude, vulgarity and imbecility. On the other hand, making no claim to encyclopedic versatility, we shall not deal with special works, however admirable, that are beyond the scope of our knowledge. Light and unimportant books will be dealt with in the *Sovremennik* feuilleton, in the Miscellany Column, and supplements will be issued from time to time giving complete lists of all books published in Russia in the Russian language with an indication of printers, size, number of pages and, if possible, price.

A VIEW ON RUSSIAN LITERATURE IN 1847[1]

ARTICLE ONE

Time and Progress.—Feuilleton Writers—Enemies of Progress.—Use of Foreign Words in the Russian Language.—Annual Reviews of Russian Literature in Almanacs of the 'Twenties.—Mr. Grech's Review of Russian Literature in the Year 1814.—Present-day Reviews.—The Natural School.—Its Origin.—Gogol.—Attacks on the Natural School.—An Examination of These Attacks.

WHEN for a long time none of those remarkable events occur which in some way effect a sweeping change in the ordinary course of affairs and turn it abruptly in another direction, all the years seem very much alike. The new year is celebrated as a conventional holiday in the calendar, and people believe that the only change, the only new thing that the past year had brought is the fact that each of them has grown a year older—

"And our grandmas chant in chorus
How the years do fly past for us."

Yet if one looks back and casts a mental eye over several such years, one sees that everything is somehow different from what it used to be. Of course, each person has his own calendar, his *lustra*, olympiads, decades, years, epochs and periods, determined and fixed by the events of his own life. That is why one person says, "How everything has changed in the last twenty years!"; for another, the change has come about in ten years; for a third, in five. It is not everybody that can determine exactly what this change is, but everyone feels that from such-and-such a time a definite change has taken place; that he does not seem the same, and neither do others; that the order and tenor of the most ordinary things in the world are not quite the same. And so, some complain that everything has become worse; others are delighted

to find things getting better. Of course good and bad here are determined for the most part by one's personal position, and every man places his own person in the centre of events, to which he attributes everything in the world; things have become worse for him, and so he believes that everything has become worse for everybody, and vice versa. However, that is how the majority, the mass, understand things; observant and thinking people, on the contrary, regard a change in the current of affairs not merely as an improvement or deterioration in their own status, but as a change in the concepts and manners of society, and, consequently, a development of social life. For them development means advance, and therefore improvement, success, *progress.*

Feuilleton writers, who have multiplied with us in such great numbers, and who, because it is their duty to hold forth weekly in their newspapers about the constant bad weather that prevails in St. Petersburg, consider themselves profound thinkers and the announcers of great truths,—our feuilleton writers have taken strong aversion to the word "progress," and pursue it with that kind of wit the indisputable and refulgent credit for which they share only with our vaudeville writers. Why is it that the word "progress" has brought upon itself the dire persecution of these witty gentlemen? The reasons are varied and manifold. One dislikes the word because it had never been heard of when he was young and when he might have been able in some manner to understand it; another, because the word was introduced not by him, but by others, by people who write neither feuilletons nor vaudevilles, but yet enjoy such influence in literature that they can introduce new words. To a third, the word is repugnant because it has become current without his cognizance, permission or advice, when he is convinced that nothing important should take place in the realm of literature without his participation. There are among these gentlemen many who are keenly desirous of inventing something new, but who never succeed in doing so. They do, indeed, invent, but inappropriately, and their innovations all smack of *charomutiye,*[2] and evoke laughter. But no sooner does someone express a new idea or employ a new word than they all believe that they would have certainly thought of this very idea or this very word had they not been anticipated, and thus had the chance of distinguishing themselves by some innovation snatched away

from them. There are also among these gentlemen such who have not yet outlived the age when a person is still capable of learning, and are of an age when a man might be expected to understand the word "progress," but cannot grasp it for reasons "beyond their control." With all our respect for messieurs the feuilleton and vaudeville writers and for their proved and brilliant wit, we shall not, however, enter into an argument with them, for fear lest the contest prove unequal... of course, for us. There is another special kind of enemies of "progress"—people whose hatred of this word is all the greater because they better understand its sense and meaning. This is hatred not really of the word, but of the idea which it expresses, and the word is merely the innocent scapegoat of these people's vexation. These men would assure themselves and others that stagnation is better than movement, that the old is always better than the new and that living in the past is real, genuine life, replete with happiness and moral excellence. They acknowledge, albeit with a pang, that the world has always changed and never remained for long in a state of moral hibernation; but it is precisely in this that they descry the reason for all the evils in the world. Instead of disputing with these gentlemen, instead of bringing any proofs and arguments against them, we shall merely say that they are ... Chinamen.... This appellation settles the matter better than any studies or speculations....

It is natural that the word "progress" should have been met with particular animosity by purists of the Russian language, who look askance at any foreign word, regarding it as rank heresy or schism in the orthodoxy of the Russian language. Such purism has its legitimate and reasonable cause, but it is, nevertheless, one-sidedness running to an extreme. Some of the old writers, who do not care for contemporary Russian literature (since it has outstripped them and left them far behind, thus depriving them of any possibility of playing a more or less important part in it), cloak themselves in purism, and continually assert that in our days the beautiful Russian language is being distorted and mutilated in every way, especially by the introduction into it of foreign words. But who does not know that the purists said the same of the epoch of Karamzin? It follows therefore that *our day* is reproached without reason, and that if the imputations

levelled against it are true, it is culpable no more than any preceding day. Even if the use of foreign words in Russian were an evil, it is a necessary evil the roots of which lie deep in the reforms of Peter the Great, which acquainted us with a multitude of hitherto utterly alien ideas for the expression of which we did not possess words of our own. It became necessary, therefore, to express foreign ideas by means of foreign words that were ready to hand. Some of these words have remained untranslated and unsubstituted, having become part and parcel of the Russian vocabulary. All have grown used to them and understand them, so why banish them? Common folk, of course, will not understand the words "instinct" and "egoism," not because they are foreign words, but because the ideas which they express are alien to their minds, and the words *pobudka* and *yachestvo*[3] will be no clearer to them than "instinct" and "egoism." Common folk do not understand many purely Russian words the meaning of which lies beyond the narrow compass of their ordinary, everyday concepts, as, for instance, "event," "modernity," "inception," but understand very well foreign words expressing ideas pertaining to their ordinary life or not alien to them, as *pachport, bilet, assignatsiya, kvitantsiya*[4] and the like. As for people of education, the word *instinct*, say what you will, is clearer and more intelligible to them than *pobudka, egoism* than *yachestvo, facts* than *byti*. Whereas some foreign words have survived and become current in the Russian language, others have, with the passage of time, been effectually replaced by Russian words, most of them newly coined. Thus, it is said, Tredyakovsky introduced the word *predmet*, and Karamzin, the word *promyshlennost*.[5] There are numerous such Russian words which have felicitously replaced foreign words. We shall be the first to say that to use a foreign word when an equivalent Russian word exists is to offend both common sense and good taste. Thus, for instance, nothing can be more absurd and extravagant than the use of the word *utrirovat* instead of *preuvelichivat*.[6] Every period of Russian literature has been marked by an influx of foreign words; so has our own time. This is something that will not end very soon; acquaintance with new ideas that have developed on foreign soil will always bring us new words too. However, this will become less noticeable with the passage of time, because till

now we had acquainted ourselves with a whole set of hitherto alien ideas at a single sudden stroke. In proportion as we succeed in drawing closer to Europe, the scope of ideas that are new to us will grow ever narrower, and what will be new to us will also be what is new to Europe. It will then be natural for borrowings to come into the language more smoothly and gradually, since we shall not be catching up with Europe, but marching abreast with her; not to mention the fact that the Russian language too, in the course of time, will develop and evolve, grow more flexible and precise.

There can be no doubt that a propensity for interspersing Russian speech with foreign words without need or adequate reason is contrary to common sense and good taste; however, this predilection is harmful neither to the Russian language nor to Russian literature, but only to those who are obsessed by it. But the opposite extreme, that is to say, inordinate purism, leads to similar consequences, since extremes always meet. The fate of a language cannot depend on the arbitrary whim of this or that person. A language has a reliable and trusty guardian—its own *esprit*, its genius. That is why, of the multitude of foreign words introduced, only a few survive, while the rest disappear of their own accord. By the same token newly coined Russian words will meet the same fate: some of them obtain currency, the others vanish. An infelicitous Russian word coined to express a foreign concept is positively worse than the foreign word, and not an improvement on it. It is said that there is no necessity to coin a new word for the word "progress" since it is satisfactorily expressed by the words *uspekh, postupatelnoye dvizheniye*[1] and the like. This cannot be agreed with. Progress pertains to that which develops from within itself. Even that which comprises neither success, acquisition, nor even advance may still be progress; and, vice versa, failure, decline, or retrogression may sometimes be progress. This particularly applies to historical development. In the life of nations and mankind unhappy periods may arise in which entire generations seem to be sacrificed for the benefit of following generations. The time of tribulation passes, and good is born of evil. The word "progress" possesses the accuracy and explicitness of a scientific term, and of late has come into wide circulation; it is employed by all, even by those who deprecate

its use. We shall, therefore, use the word "progress" until a Russian word appears fully capable of replacing it.

It is through progress that all organic development is effected, and only that develops organically which has its history; only that has its history in which each phenomenon is the necessary outcome of, and is explained by, what has gone before. If one might imagine a literature in which outstanding works appear from time to time, works which have no organic connection or relation to each other, but are the product of extraneous influences, of mere imitativeness, it would be a literature without a history of its own. Its history is a catalogue of books. The word "progress" cannot be applied to such a literature, and the appearance in it of a new book that is in any way remarkable does not represent progress, since such a work has no roots in the past and will yield no fruit in the future. Here time and years mean nothing; they may go on without changing anything. Not so in the case of a literature that develops historically; here every year brings something with it, and this something is progress. It is not every year, however, that this progress can be clearly discerned and defined; it frequently makes itself evident later. At all events, it is very useful at definite intervals, for instance at the end of each year, to review the general progress of literature, its achievements, its wealth or its poverty. Such reviews are not devoid of use for the present, and can serve as an important guide for the future historian of literature. The practice of reviewing literary activities for the past year has become a regular vogue with us since 1823. The example was set by Marlinsky in a celebrated almanac of the time, since when annual reviews of literature were published in almanacs almost uninterruptedly during a decade. They rarely appeared in magazines, but of late have been regularly published in a well-known journal over a space of seven years.[8] The criticism section of last year's *Sovremennik* opened with a review of Russian literature in 1846; the first issue for each year will contain a similar review of literary activities for the past year.

Such reviews in the course of time become veritable annals of literature, and important aids to the historian of literature. To us the almanac reviews just mentioned present interest only as relics of bygone days, although they were inaugurated only 24 years ago! So rapid is the advance of our literature! What

an impression of remote antiquity is produced by the "Review of Russian Literature in 1814" written by Mr. Grech and presented in the 1815 issue of *Syn Otechestva*! All the scientific and literary acquisitions and achievements of 1814 are recounted in a few meagre pages. That year was really conspicuous for several outstanding and serious books, as, for instance, *A Collection of Russian State Papers and Treaties*, indebted for its publication to Count N. P. Rumyantsev; *The History of Medicine in Russia* by Richter, and Destunis' translation of *Plutarch's Lives*. But what appalling paucity in the domain of *belles-lettres* proper! A translation of Delille's poem *Les Jardins* by Mr. Palitsin; *The Village Dweller*, a descriptive poem by Prince Shikhmatov; *Christ*, a poem by Derzhavin; *A Night for Reflection* by Prince Shikhmatov, and *Reflections on Fate* by Prince Dolgoruky. All these are poems of a didactic genre, which were then very much in vogue, but which have long since been set down as anti-poetical and been completely forgotten. Mr. Grech's review goes on to mention the publication of Alexander Izmailov's tales and fables, as well as the fables of a Mr. Agafi, adding in conclusion that Krylov's fables appeared in some magazines. And that is the sum total! The reviewer remarks that, during the opening five years of the nineteenth century, more works appeared than in the preceding ten years, but that, owing to political conditions, the literary movement had come to an almost complete standstill between 1806 and 1814. During the latter half of 1812 and the first half of 1813, not a single page was written that did not deal with the events of the times. "Finally, in the year 1814," the reviewer says, "which crowned the efforts and labours of the preceding years, Russian literature, in dedicating its poetry and eloquence to the honour and glory of its great monarch, returned once more to the paths of peace, rendered forever smooth and safe. In the course of that year many works and translations appeared, which will remain unforgettable in the annals of our literature." This is partly true, but not with regard to poetical works.... It is noteworthy that while the author admits the poverty of certain categories of his review, he acclaims as a success of Russian literature the fact that in 1814 St. Petersburg and Moscow could each boast of one novel published (both translated from the German) and two historical stories! Little did he think

then that the novel and the short story would soon top the list of all genres of poetry, and that he would himself one day write *A Visit to Germany* and *The Black Woman!* But there is another characteristic feature of our literature, or rather, of our public—a trait of which it unfortunately cannot be said that it savours of bygone days. According to the reviewer, the two books: Krusenstern's famous voyage round the world, published in 1809-1813 in Russian and German, and Lisyansky's voyage round the world, published in 1812 in Russian and English barely achieved a sale of two hundred copies each in Russia, whereas three editions of Krusenstern's voyage were brought out in Germany and half of the copies of Lisyansky's book were sold out in a fortnight in London.

Annual reviews appeared in our almanacs as a consequence of the critical spirit that was arising in our country. In beginning a review of the literature of a certain year, the critic would sometimes launch out with a survey of the entire history of Russian literature. At that time, it was both very easy and very difficult to write such reviews. Easy because it was all limited to airy opinions which expressed only the personal taste of the reviewer; difficult, or rather dull, because it was a piecemeal and minute task, calling for the enumeration of positively everything, both original and translated, that had been published separately in almanacs and magazines during the year under review. And what did the almanacs and magazines of the time publish in the field of polite literature? In the main, tiny fragments of short poems, of novels, stories, dramas and the like. As a rule, complete works did not even exist: a fragment was written without the slightest intention of writing the whole. Each such trifle had to be mentioned and judgment passed on it, since at that time, in the early stages of romanticism, everything was novel and interesting, everything was considered an important event, whether it was a twenty-verse fragment of a non-existent poem, or an elegy, or a hundredth imitation of a Lamartine play, or a Walter Scott novel, or the translation of a novel by a Van der Velde.

In this respect, it is much easier nowadays to write reviews. Not everything that comes off the printing press is now considered to be literature. Much experience has been gained, we have become casehardened and inured. Of course the translation of a novel like *Dombey and Son* is even today a noteworthy event in

literature, and the reviewer has no right to pass it by; on the other hand, translations of novels by Sue, Dumas and other French novelists, which are now appearing by the dozen, cannot always be considered literary events. They are written slap-dash with a view to profitable sale; the pleasure they afford a certain category of lovers of this type of literature, is, of course, a matter of taste, certainly not of aesthetics, of the kind that some gratify by the smoking of a cigar, and others, by the cracking of nuts.... The public today is not what it used to be. Wanton criticism can no longer kill a good book, or create a market for a bad one. French novels are filling our magazines and are being published in separate editions; in both cases they find many readers. But this should not induce us to draw hasty conclusions about the taste of our public. Many people take up a Dumas novel as they would a fairy tale, knowing beforehand what it is; they read it to beguile the hour with an amusing narration of uncommon adventures, which are then forgotten forever. There is, of course, nothing reprehensible in this. Some people like seesawing, some horseback riding, some swimming, others smoking, while many besides like to read silly stories well-told. That is why translated novels and stories no longer stand in the way of original works; on the contrary, the general taste gives decided preference to the latter, so that it is only when reduced to an extremity, that is, when there is a dearth of original works of this genre, that publishers are constrained to publish mostly translated novels and stories in their magazines. This tendency in the public taste is becoming more noticeable and distinct year by year. As regards original works the spell of names has completely vanished; of course, even today, a celebrated name is sufficient to create a demand for a new work, but nobody today will fall into raptures over a book whose only merit is the name of its author. Mediocre and poor works attract no attention, and die their own deaths without the aid of the critics. Literary criticism too should keep pace with this trend in literature, so different from what it was some twenty years ago. When writing an annual review of literature, the critic is no longer bound to take note of the number of works published, or to trouble to give an evaluation of each and every event for fear lest the public, without the critic's guidance, should not know what to consider good,

and what bad. There is even no need to dwell on each tolerable work and embark on a detailed analysis of all its beauties and defects. Such attention is now the privilege only of works that are particularly outstanding in a positive or negative sense. The principal purpose here is to show the predominant trend, the general character of literature at a given time, and to trace the idea that gives life to, and motivates its manifestations. It is only in this way that some indication can be given, if a definition cannot be made, of the degree in which the past year has advanced literature and what progress literature has made in this period.

Strictly speaking, the year 1847 has nothing new to show in the realm of literature. Certain old periodicals appeared in a new guise, and even a new sheet made an appearance. Compared with the preceding years, last year was particularly rich in outstanding works of belles-lettres. Several new names, new talents and protagonists in various fields of literature made their appearance. But not one vividly remarkable work appeared such as make an epoch in the history of literature, and give it a new trend. That is why we say that the literature of last year had nothing new to show. It pursued its former path, which could not be called new because it had already given indication of itself, nor be called old, because it had only too recently opened up to literature, to be precise, a little before the time the word "natural school"[9] was first pronounced by somebody. Since then the progress of Russian literature with each new year has consisted in its firmer stride in this direction. In this respect, last year was remarkable compared with the preceding years, both for the number and importance of works that were faithful to this trend, and the greater definiteness, awareness and force of the trend itself, its greater credit with the public.

The natural school now stands in the forefront of Russian literature. On the one hand, we can say, without falling into exaggeration as a consequence of bias or prejudice, that the public, that is to say, the majority of readers, stand for it; this is not conjecture, but a fact. Today all literary activity is concentrated in the magazines, and which magazines enjoy the greatest popularity, have the largest number of readers, and exercise the greatest influence on public opinion, if not those which publish the works of the natural school? Which novels and stories are read by the

public with particular interest, if not those that belong to the natural school—rather should we say: does the public read novels and stories that do not belong to the natural school? What critics wield a greater influence on public opinion, or rather, what critics are more in touch with the opinion and tastes of the public, than those who stand for the natural, against the rhetorical school? On the other hand, who is the constant topic, who is the target of constant and vehement attacks, if not the natural school? Factions that have nothing in common with each other act in full accord and unanimity when they fall upon the natural school, attribute to it views which are alien to it and intentions which it never had; put a false interpretation on its every word and every act, now, forgetful of the proprieties, heaping the most violent abuse on it, now complaining of it almost plaintively. What is there in common between Gogol's inveterate enemies, the representatives of the vanquished rhetorical school, and the so-called Slavophiles? Nothing at all! Yet the latter, accepting Gogol as the founder of the natural school, attack that school in full accord with the former, using the very same words and the same arguments; they have found it necessary to differ from their new allies only in logical inconsistency, as a result of which they have placed to Gogol's credit the very qualities for which his school is persecuted, on the grounds that he wrote out of a sort of "urge of self-purification." To this it should be added that the anti-natural schools have not been able to produce a single work of any merit that would prove by deeds the possibility of doing good writing on precepts opposed to those professed by the natural school. All their strivings in this direction have contributed to the triumph of naturalism and the defeat of rhetoricism. Seeing this, certain of the opponents of the natural school have tried to pit its own writers against it. Thus, a certain newspaper attempted to destroy the authority of Gogol himself through the agency of Mr. Butkov.[10]

All this represents nothing new in our literature; it has happened before and will happen again. It was Karamzin who first brought about the parting of the way in Russian literature, which was then just arising. Before him there was full accord on all questions of literature, and if there were differences and arguments, they did not derive from opinions or convictions, but were

born of the petty and turbulent vanities of Tredyakovsky and Sumarokov. This accord, however, was merely proof of the lifelessness of the so-called Russian literature of the time. It was Karamzin who first breathed life into it, because he translated it from books into life, from schools into society. Then, naturally, parties sprang up, a war of pens commenced, and a clamour was raised that Karamzin and his school would be the death of the Russian language, and the ruin of the good old Russian ways. It seemed as though, in his opponents, obstinate Russian tradition which had so convulsively and all the more fruitlessly resisted the reforms of Peter the Great, was again rearing its head. But the majority stood for right, that is to say, talent and the moral needs of the times, and the outcry raised by opponents was drowned in the chorus of praise from the Karamzin admirers. Everything clustered around him, and everything derived its meaning and importance from him, everything—even his opponents. He was the hero, the Achilles of the literature of his time. But what was this ado in comparison with the storm that broke when Pushkin appeared on the literary scene? It is so fresh in the memory that there is no need to go over it again. We shall only say that Pushkin's opponents saw in his works a distortion of the Russian language and of Russian poetry, a decided threat not only to the aesthetic tastes of the public, but—who will believe it today?—also to public morals!! Not wishing to rake up old quarrels, we shall refrain from all references, but if they are demanded of us, we are always prepared to supply printed proof. In a criticism of *Count Nulin*, Pushkin was accused of indecency bordering on cynicism. When one rereads this criticism today, one involuntarily forgets when and on what it was written, so strong is the impression that it has been written but recently against some work of the present natural school: we have the same language, the same arguments, the same approach as those used today in attacks on the natural school.

Why is it that in all periods of our literature those who are opposed to any advance have said one and the same thing in almost the selfsame words?

The reason lies in that same source where the origin of the natural school should be sought—in the history of our literature. It began with naturalism: the first secular writer was old Can-

temir. Despite his imitation of the Latin satirists and Boileau, he was able to remain original, because he was true to nature and wrote from nature. Unfortunately, the monotony of his chosen genre, crude and rugged diction, and a syllabic metre that was foreign to our poetry, prevented Cantemir from becoming the model and lawgiver of Russian poetry. It was to Lomonosov that this role fell. Since Cantemir, however, remains a man of rare talent, he cannot, as its first poet in order of time, be excluded from the history of Russian literature. We are therefore entitled to say, without any distortion of the facts and without stretching any points, that at the very outset Russian poetry flowed, as it were, in two parallel streams, which, as time went on, more and more frequently merged into a single torrent to separate again, until in our time they united to form a single current. In the person of Cantemir, Russian poetry revealed a striving towards reality, to life as it really is, and based its power on fidelity to nature. In the person of Lomonosov, it revealed a striving towards the ideal, conceived itself as the oracle of a sublime and exalted life, the herald of all that was great and noble. Both these trends were legitimate, but they both sprang not from life, but from theory, from books, from schools. However, the manner in which Cantemir approached his task gave to the first trend the advantage of truth and reality. In Derzhavin, as the higher talent, both these trends frequently met, and his odes *To Felitza*, *The Grandee* and *Happiness* are probably among his finest works; at least, they are undoubtedly more original and Russian than his solemn odes. The fables of Khemnitzer and Fon-Vizin's comedies are a reflection of the trend whose representative, in point of time, was Cantemir. Their satire is less prone to degenerate into exaggeration and caricature and becomes more natural in proportion as it grows more poetical. In Krylov's fables satire becomes fully artistic, and naturalism becomes the distinctive characteristic feature of his poetry. He was the first great naturalist in our poetry. He was also the first to be reproached for representing "base nature" especially in his fable *The Pig*. Look how natural his animals are: they are real people with sharply defined characters, and definitely Russian people at that. What of his fables in which the actors are Russian muzhiks? Are they not the acme of naturalness? Yet nobody to-

day will reproach Krylov either for his swine which "pitying not its own snout, rooted all the backyard out," or for his fables depicting the muzhiks and making them speak muzhik-fashion. It will be said: these are fables, this is a specific genre of poetry. But are not the laws of the beautiful the same for all its genres? Dmitriev too wrote fables and sometimes, episodically, introduced peasants into them. His fables, however, despite their indisputable merits, are in no way conspicuous for naturalness, and his peasants speak a general sort of language peculiar to no particular social estate. The reason for this difference lies in the fact that Dmitriev's poetry, in both his fables and his odes, sprang from Lomonosov, not from Cantemir, and adhered to the ideal and not to reality. Lomonosov's theory was based on the ancients as they were then understood in Europe. Karamzin and Dmitriev, especially the latter, regarded art through the eyes of the French of the eighteenth century, and it is common knowledge that the French of those days understood art as the expression of the life of society, indeed of the higher and court society and not of the people, while *decorum* was considered the principal and primary condition of poetry. Hence their Greek and Roman heroes wore wigs and addressed the heroines as *Madame*! This theory deeply permeated Russian literature and, as we shall see later, traces of its influence have not been quite effaced to this day....

The trend given to our poetry by Lomonosov was continued by Ozerov, Zhukovsky and Batyushkov. They were true to the ideal, but with them this ideal became less and less abstract and rhetorical, and drew closer and closer to reality, or at least strove to do so. In the works of these writers, particularly of the latter two, the language of poetry was used to give voice not only to enthusiasm of the official brand, but also to passions, feelings and aspirations derived not from abstract ideals but born of the human heart, of the human soul. And then Pushkin appeared, Pushkin, whose poetry bears the same relation to the poetry of his predecessors as achievement bears to aspiration. In his poetry were united in a single sweeping torrent the two streams of Russian poetry which had until then run in separate channels. The Russian ear could catch also purely Russian sounds in its complex chord. Despite the pre-eminently ideal and lyrical character of Pushkin's early poems, they contained the elements of real life;

this is borne out by his boldness, a boldness which amazed everybody at the time, in introducing into his poem not the classical Italian or Spanish *banditti*, but Russian robbers, armed not with stilettos and pistols but with broad knives and heavy bludgeons and making one of these robbers whilst in a delirium speak of the knout and the dread hangman.[11] The Gipsy camp with its ragged tents set up between the wheels of the carts, with its dancing bears and naked children in donkey-borne panniers, was also a hitherto unheard-of scene for a sanguinary and tragic event. In *Eugene Onegin*, however, ideals gave way still more to real life, or, at least they both so merged into something that was new, something that was a cross between one and the other, that the poem can justly be considered a work that laid the foundations of our present-day poetry. Here naturalness is no longer presented as satire or comicality, but is a faithful reflection of reality, with all its good and its evil, and its everyday squabbles; around two or three persons, who are poetized or somewhat idealized, ordinary people are delineated not as a laughingstock, as oddities, as exceptions to the general rule, but as people who form the majority of society. And all this in a novel written in verse!

What was the novel in prose doing at this time?

It was striving with all its might towards a closer approach to real life, to naturalness. Remember the novels and stories of Narezhny, Bulgarin, Marlinsky, Zagoskin, Lazhechnikov, Ushakov, Weltman, Polevoy and Pogodin. This is not the place to speculate which of them did most, whose talent was the greatest; we are speaking of a striving common to them all—to bring the novel closer to real life, make it a faithful mirror of that life. Some of these efforts were notable, but all of them bore the imprint of the transitional period, strove towards the new without abandoning the old rut. Their success lay solely in the fact that, despite the outcry raised by the Old Believers, people of every estate began to appear in the novel, and the authors tried to imitate the language peculiar to each of their characters. This was then called *narodnost*. But this *narodnost* savoured too much of the masquerade; Russian people of the lower estates looked like gentlefolk in disguise, and the gentlefolk were distinguishable from foreigners only in name. Russian poetry depicting Russian customs and Russian life required a talent of genius to emancipate it once for all from

alien influences. Pushkin did very much towards this end, but it fell to another talent to finish, to complete, this process. The *Severniye Tsvety* for 1829 published an extract from Pushkin's novel *The Arab of Peter the Great* under the title of "Chapter IV of a Historical Novel." This fragment was the acme of naturalness! What a sweeping picture of life in the times of Peter the Great in so small a frame! It is to be regretted that only six chapters of this work and the beginning of the seventh were written (it was only after Pushkin's death that they were published in full).

It was with the appearance of *Mirgorod* and *Arabesques* (in 1835) and of the *Inspector General* (in 1836) that Gogol's full fame began, as did his strong influence on Russian literature. Of all the opinions about this writer expressed by admirers of his talent, the most remarkable and closest to the truth seem to belong to a man who is not at all one of his admirers and who, in a moment of some sudden inspiration, and without realizing how it came about, emerged for a minute from the rut he had been faithful to all his life, and uttered the following in praise of Gogol:

"All Gogol's works reveal him to possess self-confidence, a striving to do things his own way, a sort of deliberate and mocking disdain of previous knowledge, experience and standards; *he reads only the book of nature, studies only the world of realities;* hence his ideals are natural and simple to the point of nakedness; to use the expression of Ivan Nikiforovich, one of his characters, they appear before the reader in a state of nature. The beauty of his creations is always new, fresh and striking; *his errors are almost repellent (?); seeming to have forgotten history, he, like the ancients, begins a new world of the arts,* invoking it from the limbo of nihility into an *undisguised (?), chaotic (?!)* state; that is why his art does not know, does not understand, what modesty is; he is a great artist who knows no history and has seen no models of art."[12]

In this lyrically confused eulogy, the author has, despite himself, expressed the most characteristic feature of Gogol's talent —originality and independence, which distinguishes him from all Russian writers. That this is unpremeditated impulse is proved by the parallel which the author draws between Gogol and—whom do you think?—Mr. Kukolnik!!—as well as by the strange and contradictory words and expressions of the eulogy itself, which

show that it is beyond the power of man, even for a minute and in a burst of inspiration to break away from the customary rut of his life. It should be added that the author is a theorist, who has spent all his life compiling and teaching all kinds of rhetorics and poetics, which, like all books of this class, have never taught anybody the art of good writing, but have succeeded in confusing many minds. That is why he was amazed by the complete freedom and independence of Gogol's works from all school rules and traditions, and while, on the one hand, he could not but place this to Gogol's credit, he could not, on the other, but reproach the writer with these qualities. Hence he discerned in Gogol's works "errors almost repellent" and "an undisguised, chaotic state of art." Ask him what these errors are, and we are sure he will first of all mention the watchman (in *Dead Souls*) putting vermin to death by the aid of his fingernails, and will use this fact to assert with finality that "Gogol knows no history and has seen no models of art." Yet Gogol is probably more aware than his critic that one of the most famous art galleries in Europe prides itself on the possession of a priceless treasure—a picture by the great Murillo, depicting a boy engaged in doing assiduously and raptly what the watchman did sleepily and perfunctorily.

Be that as it may, the influence of theories and schools was really one of the principal reasons why so many people at first calmly, without enmity, sincerely and conscientiously regarded Gogol merely as an amusing, though trivial and unimportant writer, and got worked up as a consequence of the rapturous praises that were showered on him by the other side, and the great importance which he so rapidly acquired in the public opinion. Indeed, however new the trend given by Karamzin may have been in its time, it was justified by the standards supplied by French literature. However strangely all readers were affected by the ballads of Zhukovsky, with their sombre colours, their cemeteries and corpses, they had behind them names that loomed large in German literature. Pushkin himself was prepared on the one hand by the poets who had gone before him, and his first essays bore light traces of their influence; on the other, all his innovations were justified by a movement common to all the literatures of Europe, and also by the influence of Byron—a great authority. But Gogol had no models to follow, no predecessors either in Russian or in foreign liter-

atures. All theories, all literary traditions were against him, because he was against them. To understand him one had to get them all out of one's head, to forget their existence—and that for many would have meant being born again—dying and arising from the dead. To make our idea clearer, let us see in what relation Gogol stands to the other Russian poets. Of course, even in those of Pushkin's works that represent pictures foreign to the Russian world there are, without doubt, Russian elements, but who will point them out? How prove that such poems as *Mozart and Salieri, The Stone Guest, The Covetous Knight* and *Galub* could have been written only by a Russian poet and that no poet of another nation could have written them? The same can be said of Lermontov. All Gogol's works deal exclusively with the world of Russian life and he has no rivals in the art of portraying it in all its truth. He tones down and embellishes nothing for the sake of ideals or any preconceived ideas, or some habitual bias, as for example Pushkin did in his *Eugene Onegin* where he idealized the life of the landowners. Of course, the predominant feature of his works is negation; to be valid and poetical, every kind of negation must be made in the name of an ideal—and this ideal, with Gogol, as with all other Russian poets, was not his own, that is to say, not native, since our social life had not yet taken form or established itself sufficiently to be able to supply literature with this idea. But one must agree that, as far as Gogol's works are concerned, it is entirely out of the question to ask: how prove that they could have been written only by a Russian poet, that they could not have been written by a poet of another nation? Obviously only a Russian poet could have depicted Russian life with such amazing fidelity and truth. And in the main it is in this that, for the time being, the national character of our literature lies.

Our literature was the fruit of conscious thought, it appeared as an innovation, began as imitation. However, it did not stop at this, but strove constantly to originality and nationality; from a rhetorical literature it strove to become a *natural* literature. It is this striving, attended as it is by noticeable and constant successes, that constitutes the sense and soul of the history of our literature. We shall assert without prevarication that in no other Russian writer was this striving so successful as it was in Gogol. This could be achieved only by making art base itself exclusively on real life,

eschewing all ideals. To do this it was necessary to make an exclusive study of the crowd, the mass, to depict ordinary people, and not only pleasant exceptions to the general rule which always lead poets to idealization and bear an alien stamp. Herein lies the great service rendered by Gogol, and this is what men of the old school impute to him as a great crime against the laws of art. In this way he completely changed the prevailing view on art itself. The old and threadbare definition of poetry as "nature beautified" may be applied at a stretch to the works of any of the Russian poets; but this cannot be done in regard to the works of Gogol. Another definition of art fits them—art as the representation of reality in all its fidelity. Here the crux of the matter is *types*, the *ideal* being understood not as an adornment (consequently a falsehood) but as the relations in which the author places the types he creates in conformity with the idea which his work is intended to develop.

Art in our days has outstripped theory. The old theories have lost all their prestige; even people reared on these theories follow not them, but an odd mixture of old and new ideas. Thus, for instance, some of these people, rejecting the old French theory in favour of romanticism, were the first to give the infectious example of portraying in the novel people of the lower orders, even scoundrels, who bore fitting names like *Vorovatin* and *Nozhov*, but then vindicated themselves for depicting immoral characters by portraying moral characters as well under names like *Pravdolyubov* and *Blagotvorov*.[13] In the former case was revealed the influence of the new ideas, in the latter, of the old, since according to the old canons of poetical treatises several simpletons had to be counterbalanced by at least one clever man, and several villains by at least one virtuous person.* In both cases, however, these misguided people entirely overlooked the principal thing, *viz.*, art, because it did not occur to them that their virtuous and vicious persons were not people, not characters, but rhetorical personifications of abstract virtues and vices. This best explains why theory and rules are more important for them than deed and essence; the latter are beyond their comprehension. Besides, even talent, though marked by genius, does not always escape the influence of theory. Gogol is one of the few who

* In those days the word *resoneur* belonged to the nomenclature of comedy in the same manner as *jeune premier*, lover, or *prima donna* belonged to the realm of opera.

completely avoided the influence of any theory whatsoever. Though able to understand art and admire it in the works of other poets, Gogol nevertheless went his own way, following the profound and true artistic instinct with which nature had so richly endowed him, and refusing to be lured by other men's successes into the net of imitation. This, of course, did not give him originality, but it enabled him to preserve and give full expression to the originality which was an attribute and quality of his personality, and, consequently, like talent, a gift of nature. Because of this he seemed to many to have entered Russian literature from without, whereas he was really an essential fact in this literature, a prerequisite of the entire trend of its development.

Gogol's influence on Russian literature was tremendous. Not only all the young talents hastened along the path he had indicated, but some writers of repute abandoned the path which they had hitherto trodden to follow the new one. Hence the appearance of a school which its opponents thought to belittle by calling it the natural school. Gogol has written nothing since *Dead Souls*. His school alone now holds the literary scene. All the reproaches and accusations which had been previously aimed at him are now directed against the natural school, and if he is still criticized, it is on account of this school. What is it accused of? The accusations are not many but they are always the same. At first it was impugned for its constant attacks on government officials. In its representation of the daily life of this class some men sincerely, others intentionally read malicious caricature. Of late these accusations are no longer heard. Writers of the natural school are now accused of a predilection for portraying the lower orders, for making muzhiks, house porters, and izvozchiks the heroes of their stories, for describing the lodgings of the poor, the haunts of starving poverty and frequently the pits of immorality.[14] To put the new writers to shame, the accusers triumphantly point to the memorable days of Russian literature, refer to the names of Karamzin and Dmitriev who chose lofty and noble subjects for their works and cite as an example the sentimental song, of a grace now forgotten, "Of all the flowers I best love the rose." We would remind them that the first outstanding Russian narrative was written by Karamzin and its heroine was *poor Liza*, a peasant girl seduced by a fop.... But there, they will say, everything is clean and pure and the peasant girl from the Moscow coun-

tryside does not yield the palm to the most well-bred *young lady*. This brings us to the gist of the argument: here, as you see, the fault lies with the old poetics, which permitted even muzhiks to be portrayed, so long as they were clad in theatrical costumes, displayed emotions and ideas that were alien to their mode of life, position and education, and spoke in a language that nobody else used, least of all peasants, a literary language garnished with a miscellany of archaic expressions. What could be better—the shepherds and shepherdesses of the French eighteenth century writers present a ready-made and excellent model for the portrayal of Russian peasants of both sexes; take them *in toto*, and you have your straw bonnets with blue and pink ribbons, powder, *mouches*, farthingales, stays, and shoes with high red heels. But in your speech keep to your domestic literary usage because the French never liked to preen themselves on obsolete words that are not used in conversation. This is a purely Russian habit; even our first-class talents profess a weakness for archaic words which are supposed to be attributes of a "lofty style." In brief, the old poetics permitted you to portray anything you pleased, but only stipulated that the object described should be so decked as to make it impossible to recognize what you wanted to portray. By strictly observing these tenets the poet may go further than the house painter Efrem made famous by Dmitriev, who painted Arkhip to resemble Sidor, and Luka to resemble Kuzma; he may paint such a portrait of Arkhip as will be not only nothing like Sidor, but like nothing on earth, not even a daub. The natural school follows an exactly opposite rule —the closest possible resemblance of the persons described with their models in real life is not all that is required; it is, however, its primary demand, without fulfillment of which a work can contain nothing that is good. This is an onerous condition realizable only by talent! How, after this, can writers who were once able without talent to make a successful career in poetry, be expected not to love and revere the old poetics? How is it possible for these people not to consider the natural school their direst enemy, when it has introduced a style of writing that is beyond their capacity to cope with? This, of course, applies only to people whose *amour propre* is involved; but there are many people who dislike naturalness in art through sincere conviction, as a result of their having fallen under the influence of the old poetics. These

people also complain with especial bitterness that art today has lost its former designation. "Poetry," they say, "used to instruct and amuse, made the reader forget the trials and tribulations of life, presented to him only pictures that were pleasant and smiling. The former poets drew pictures of poverty, too, but of a poverty that was clean, washed, and modestly and nobly expressed; and usually, at the end of the story, there appeared a sensitive young lady or maid, the daughter of rich and noble parents, or perhaps a chivalrous young man, who, for the sake of his or her beloved, brought contentment and happiness where there had been poverty and misery, and tears of gratitude wetted the benefactor's hand, while the reader was moved to dab an eye with a cambric handkerchief, and feel a glow of good and virtuous emotions.... And now?—see what they write now! Peasants in homespun and bast boots, often reeking of cheap brandy, their womenfolk looking for all the world like centaurs, their sex at first glance unguessable from their clothes; and the haunts of poverty, despair, and vice, which have to be reached through back yards knee-deep in mud; some drunken scrivener or seminary-trained teacher who has been driven out of employment—all this is copied from nature in the nakedness of the awful truth, so that after reading it you may expect bad dreams...." This, or something almost like this, is what the venerable fosterlings of the old poetical canons say. In effect their complaints consist in the query—why has poetry ceased to be a shameless lie, why has it changed from fairy tales, into reality, and not always a pleasant reality; why has it stopped being a child's rattle which it was pleasant to dance or fall asleep to. Strange people, happy people! They have succeeded in remaining children all their lives, and minors, green youths even in their old age—and now they want everybody else to resemble them! Go on reading your old fairy tales, no one is interfering with you; but let others occupy themselves with things worthy of grownups. You keep falsehood, we shall keep truth; let us share without argument, seeing you do not need our dole and we would not have yours for nothing. However, there is another reason why this amicable division cannot take place, and that is egoism which regards itself as virtue. Indeed, picture to yourself a man in comfortable circumstances, perhaps even wealthy, who has just enjoyed an excellent dinner (he has a splendid cook),

settled himself into a cozy Voltairian armchair to enjoy a cup of coffee before a blazing fire, feels snug and contented, cheered by a sense of well-being, and he takes up a book and lazily turns its pages; a frown puckers his brow, the smile vanishes from his red lips and he becomes agitated, alarmed, vexed.... And he has every reason to be! The book tells him that not all people on this earth live as well as he does, that there are the haunts of the poor in which whole families live in corners shivering with cold under scanty rags of clothing, families which had perhaps recently enjoyed the comforts of life—that there are people on this earth who are doomed by birth or fate to poverty, and it is from despair and not always through indolence and laziness that the last kopek is spent on liquor. And our fortunate reader feels awkward, as though he were ashamed of the comfort he enjoys. And it is all the fault of that wretched book: he took it to be amused, and was bored and sickened instead. Away with it! "A book must be entertaining—I know myself that there are many painful and dismal things in life, and if I take up a book to read, I do so in order to forget it!"—he exclaims. And so, dear kind sybarite, for your peace of mind books too must lie, and the poor must forget their misery, the starving their hunger, and the groans of suffering must be wafted to your ears in musical tones so that your appetite may not be spoiled or your sleep disturbed.... Let us imagine another lover of pleasant reading in a similar position. He was to have given a ball, the day was drawing near, but he had no money, since Nikita Fedorovich, his steward, had delayed the remittance. But today the money had arrived and the ball could be given. Well-pleased with himself, he lolls on the sofa with a cigar in his mouth, and to beguile the time he lazily reaches out for a book. The same thing happens. The accursed book tells him about the exploits of his Nikita Fedorovich, the base slave accustomed from childhood to pander servilely to the whims and passions of others, and who is married to a former mistress of his master's father. And it is to this person, for whom all human feelings are a closed book, that the lives and fates of all the Antons have been entrusted.[15] Throw it aside, this wretched book! And now picture to yourself another person in similar comfortable circumstances, who in his childhood ran about barefoot, ran on errands, and now, approaching the age of fifty, has somehow

risen to rank and put away a "tidy sum." All people read, why should he not read? But what does he find in the book? His own life story, told with the greatest veracity, though the skeleton in his cupboard is a secret to all but himself and no *writing man* could possibly have learnt of it.... And this person, not simply agitated but fuming, finds relief in arguing with a sense of worth and dignity as follows: "So this is how they write these days! So this is what freethinking has brought us to! They never wrote like that in the past. They had a smooth steady style and wrote on tender and lofty subjects which it was a pleasure to read and hurt nobody's feelings!"

There is a special type of reader who by virtue of a sense of aristocratism, does not like to meet, even in books, people of the lower orders, who usually lack decorum and *bon ton;* a reader who does not like squalor or poverty because they form such a contrast to luxurious *salons,* boudoirs and private studies. These speak of the natural school with proud contempt and a sneer.... Who are they, these feudal barons, who disdain the "common herd" which they rate lower than a good horse? Do not hasten to inquire about them in books of heraldry or at the courts of Europe; you will not discover their armorial bearings and they have never attended court, and have seen high society, if they have seen it at all, only from the street, by peeping through the curtains and blinds of brilliantly lit windows.... They cannot boast of their ancestors, who were usually officials or members of the new nobility, rich only in plebeian legends of a grandfather steward, a tax-farming uncle, and sometimes of a grandmother who was a wafer-baker or an aunt who was a costermonger. At this stage, the author of the present article deems it his duty to inform his readers that to reproach his fellow men with parentage is not in his habits and is positively contrary to all his convictions, and that he himself cannot boast of noble birth and is not at all ashamed to admit this. But he is of the opinion, and his readers will probably agree with him, that nothing is more enjoyable than plucking the peacock's feathers off the crow and proving to that bird that it belongs to the very breed that it wished to despise. A person of low estate is not a crow simply because he belongs to that estate. It is not rank but nature which makes a crow, and there are crows in all ranks just as there are eagles in all ranks; but

of course it is only crows that try to strut about in peacock's feathers. So why should we not tell the crow that it is a crow? Contempt of the lower orders is, in our time, not a vice of the upper classes; on the contrary it is a disease of parvenues, the brood of ignorance, coarseness of feelings and ideas. A clever and educated person, even were he afflicted with this disease, would never show it, because it is not in the spirit of the times and because to show it would mean to give himself away by a full-throated crowish utterance. It is our opinion that however abhorrent hypocrisy may be, it is even preferable in this case to the crow's frankness, since it is evidence of intelligence. The peacock which proudly spreads its magnificent tail before the other birds is reputed to be beautiful, but not clever. What can be said of the crow which arrogantly flaunts its borrowed feathers? Such arrogance has nothing to do with intelligence and is pre-eminently a plebeian vice. Where can more posing and strutting be met with than in those sections of society that stand just above the very lowest. And this is because there is more ignorance here than anywhere else. Look what a profound contempt the lackey has for the muzhik who is in every way better, nobler and more human than he! Whence this pride in the lackey? He has aped the vices of his master and therefore considers himself far more educated than the muzhik. Crude natures always take external gloss for culture.

"Why should there be an inundation of muzhiks in literature?" aristocrats of a certain kind exclaim. To their mind a writer is an artisan who does what he is told to do. It does not occur to them that in his choice of subject matter a writer cannot be guided by the will of another, nor even by his own whim, since art has its own laws, without the observation of which good writing is impossible. First and foremost it demands that the writer should be true to his own nature, talent, and imagination. How, otherwise than by the nature, character and talent of the poet can you explain why some have a penchant for describing gay subjects, while others prefer the sombre? What one loves and feels an interest in he knows better and what one knows better he can the better depict. This is the poet's best justification when he is reproached for his choice of subject; it is unsatisfactory only for people who understand nothing about art and grossly confuse it with craft. Nature is art's eternal model, and the greatest and no-

blest object in nature is man. And is not the muzhik a man?—But what is there of interest in a coarse and uneducated person?—Why, his soul, his mind, his heart, passions and inclinations—in a word the same as those in a man of education. Assuming that the latter stands higher than the former,—but is a botanist interested only in garden plants, improved by the aid of art, and does he scorn the original species that grow in the wild state? Is the organism of the savage Australian not as interesting for the anatomist and the physiologist as that of the civilized European? Why must art then differ in this respect from science? And then, you say that a man of education stands higher than a man with none. We cannot but agree with you in this, but not unconditionally. Of course the most frivolous man of society stands incomparably higher than the peasant, but in what respect? Only in society refinement, but this in no measure prevents some muzhiks from standing above him in intelligence, sentiments and character. Education merely develops the moral powers of a man, but does not supply them; it is nature that supplies man with these. And in this distribution of its most precious gifts, nature acts blindly, without regard for social rank.... If more remarkable persons come from the educated classes of society, it is because they dispose of greater facilities for development, and not at all because nature has been more sparing in its bounties to people of the lower classes. "What can you learn from a book which describes a poor wretch of a drunkard?" ask these second-rate aristocrats. Why, not society manners and *bon ton* of course, but knowledge of a man in a certain situation. Some take to drink because of idleness, bad upbringing or weakness of character; others from unfortunate circumstances for which they perhaps are not at all to blame. Both cases are instructive and will repay observation. Of course it is easier to turn away with contempt from a man who has fallen than to stretch out one's hand to him in comfort and assistance, just as it is easier to judge him harshly in the name of morality than to sympathize with him, to fathom the reason for his fall, and to pity him as a man, even if he himself is largely to blame for his fall. The Redeemer of mankind came into the world for all men. It was not the wise and educated that he called upon to be "fishers of men" but those who were simple in mind and heart, fishermen; it was not the rich and hap-

py but the poor, the suffering and the fallen that he sought, some to comfort, others to cheer and restore. His loving and merciful glance was not offended by the sight of festering sores on a body barely covered by filthy rags. He, the Son of God, loved people with a human love and commiserated their poverty and squalor, their shame, wickedness, vices and sins; he permitted the first stone to be thrown at the fornicatress only by those whose consciences were pure; he put the hard-hearted judges to shame, and spoke words of comfort to the fallen woman; and the robber expiring on the instrument of his merited punishment heard from Him the word of forgiveness and peace as a reward for a single minute of repentance....[16] And we, who are sons of men, we wish to love only those of our brethren who are our equals, and we turn away from our inferiors as from pariahs, from the fallen as though they were lepers.... By what virtues and merits do we claim this right? Is it not the absence of any virtues and merits? But the divine message of love and brotherhood did not sound throughout the world in vain. What was formerly the duty of men called upon to serve at the altar, or the virtue of a few chosen natures, has today become the duty of societies, and is a sign not of virtue alone, but of the education of private persons. Look how everyone in our age is interested in the fate of the lower classes, how private charity is more and more yielding place to public charity, how everywhere well-organized and richly financed societies are being founded to spread enlightenment among the lower classes, to aid those who suffer and are in need, to prevent and preclude poverty and its inevitable consequences, vice and immorality. This general movement, so noble, so human, so Christian, has met with critics in the person of admirers of the obtuse and stagnant patriarchal mode of life. They say that the underlying motive is fashion, interest, vanity, but not philanthropy. Let that be so, but when and where were such petty motives absent in the finest human acts? But how can it be said that only such motives can be the cause of such phenomena? Why should it be thought that the people mainly responsible for such phenomena, who infect the crowd by their example, are not inspired by more noble and lofty impulses? There is, of course, no reason to admire the virtue of people who go in for charitable works not because of their love for their fellow men, but because of the fashion,

the desire to imitate, out of vanity; but it stands to the credit of a society inspired by such a spirit that it can direct even the activities of vain people toward doing good. Is this not a supremely gratifying fact of our modern civilization, of the progress of intellect, enlightenment and education?

Was it possible that this new social movement should not be reflected in literature, which is always an expression of society? In this respect, literature has done perhaps even more: it facilitated the appearance in society of this movement rather than merely reflected it; it anticipated it rather than merely succeeded in keeping abreast of it. There can be no doubt but that such a role is a meritorious and grateful one, but it is for this very reason that literature is attacked by the crestless aristocracy. We believe that we have shown in sufficient degree from what sources these attacks come, and what their worth is....

There remains to be mentioned the attacks launched against present-day literature and naturalism in general from the aesthetic point of view, in the name of pure art, which is an aim in itself and recognizes no aims outside itself. There is some foundation for this idea, but its overstatement is seen at a first glance. This idea is of a purely German origin; it could be born only among a contemplative, cogitative and dreamful people, and could not possibly have appeared among a practical people, whose public life offers to all and sundry a wide field for lively activity. Even its votaries do not fully understand what pure art is, hence it is a sort of ideal with them and does not exist in reality. It is in effect the bad extreme of another bad extreme, that is to say, of an art that is didactic, instructive, cold, dry, and dead, of an art whose works are merely rhetoric exercises on a given theme. Art undoubtedly must first be art as such, and only afterwards can it be an expression of the spirit and drift of society in a given epoch. With whatever beautiful ideas a poem is filled and however much it deals with contemporary problems, if it has no poetry in it it can neither contain beautiful ideas or any problems, and all that can be traced in it is merely a good intention badly executed. When a novel or a story, however faithfully and meticulously copied from nature its narrative may be, contains no images and persons, no characters, nothing *typical*, the reader will not find naturalness in it, will not perceive the effects of either

keen observation or happy description. The characters will all seem to merge into one, and the narrative will strike him as a tangled skein of baffling events. The laws of art cannot be infringed with impunity. To copy faithfully from nature it is not sufficient to be merely able to write, that is, to command the art of the copyist or scribe; one must be able to pass the facts of reality through one's imagination and endow them with new life. A well-written and veracious report on a judicial case of romantic interest is not a novel and can serve merely as material for a novel, that is to say, provide the poet with an occasion for writing a novel. But for this he must probe to the core of the matter, unravel the secret spiritual motives which have prompted the actions of the characters, grasp the angle of the case which forms the centre of these events and gives them the sense of something whole, complete, united and self-contained. And this only a poet can do. Nothing would seem easier than making a faithful portrait of a man. Some men have practised this genre all their lives and are still incapable of painting a familiar face in such a manner that others should recognize whose portrait it is. The ability to paint a faithful portrait is a talent of its kind, but that is not all. An ordinary painter has made a fairly lifelike portrait of your friend; the resemblance is indubitable in the sense that you cannot but instantly recognize whose portrait it is, but you are nevertheless not quite satisfied; it seems to you that the portrait does and yet does not resemble the original. But were the portrait to be painted by Tyranov or Bryullov, it will seem to you that no mirror so faithfully reflects the image of your friend as does this portrait, because it will be not merely a portrait, but a work of art which has caught not only the outward resemblance but the soul of the original. And so, only talent can render a faithful copy of actual life; and however negligible the work may be in other respects, the more it strikes us as being true to nature the more indubious is the talent of the author. That fidelity to nature is not the be all and end all of art, especially in poetry, is another matter. In painting, by virtue of this art's essential character, the ability alone to copy faithfully from nature may often be a sign of unusual talent. In poetry this is not quite so. A man cannot be a poet unless he is able to copy nature faithfully, but this ability alone is insufficient to make a poet, at least an admirable poet.

It is usually said that the faithful copying from nature of the ghastly (for instance, murders, executions and the like), without ideas and artistic treatment, evokes repugnance but not enjoyment. This is more than unjust; it is false. The spectacle of a murder or an execution is not a subject that can afford pleasure, and in the work of a great poet the reader enjoys not the murder or the execution but the skill with which the poet handles them; consequently, this enjoyment is aesthetic and not psychological, it is combined with involuntary horror and repugnance, whereas the picture of a noble feat or the joy of love affords a pleasure that is more complex, hence complete, being as aesthetic as it is psychological. A man with no talent will never be able to give a faithful picture of a murder or a scene of execution though he might have a thousand opportunities of studying this subject in actual life; the best that he can do is to give a more or less faithful description, but he will never be able to present a faithful picture. His description may evoke strong curiosity but not enjoyment. If, without having talent, this person has undertaken to paint the picture of such an event, this picture will always arouse only disgust, not because it has been faithfully copied from nature, but for an opposite reason—because melodrama is not a dramatic picture, and theatrical effects are not emotional expression.

But while fully admitting that art must first of all be art, we nevertheless are of the opinion that the idea of a pure abstract art, living in its own sphere and having nothing in common with other aspects of life, is a dreamy abstraction. Such art has never existed anywhere. Undoubtedly life is divided and sub-divided into numerous aspects which have an independence of their own; but these aspects merge vitally with one another, and there are no sharp dividing lines between them. However much you may split up life, it is always a united whole. It is said that science requires mind and reason, and creative work, imagination; people think that by so saying the matter had been effectually disposed of and can be shelved. And are not mind and reason required in art? Can the scientist do without an imagination? The truth is that imagination in art plays the most active, the leading role; in science this role belongs to mind and reason. There are, of course, poetical works which display nothing besides a powerful and brilliant imagination, but this is by no means a general rule for works

of art. One does not know what to marvel at more in the works of Shakespeare—the wealth of his creative imagination or the richness of his all-embracing mind. There are certain kinds of erudition which not only have no need for imagination, but which this faculty would only cause harm; but this cannot be said of erudition in general. Art is the representation of reality, the reduplicated or, as it were, newly created world. Can it be an isolated activity cut off from all alien influences? Can the poet but be mirrored in his work as a man, as a character, as a nature—in a word as a personality? Of course not, because the very ability to present the facts of reality without any relation to oneself is but another expression of the poet's nature. But this ability too has its limits. The personality of Shakespeare is reflected in his works, although he may seem as indifferent to the world he depicts as is the fate, which saves or dooms his heroes. In the works of Walter Scott, it is impossible not to see in the author a man more remarkable in talent than in a consciously broad understanding of life, a Tory, a Conservative and aristocrat by convictions and habits. The poet's individuality is not something absolute, standing apart, beyond all extraneous influence. The poet is first of all a man and then a citizen of his land and a son of his times. The spirit of the nation and the age cannot affect him less than it does others. Shakespeare was the poet of a *merry old* England, which in the space of a few years suddenly grew grave, severe and fanatical. Puritanism exerted a strong influence on his latter works, upon which it placed the seal of a sombre melancholy. Manifestly, had he been born two decades later, his genius would have remained the same, but the character of his works would have been different. The poetry of Milton is obviously the product of his age: he himself, without suspecting the fact, depicted in the person of his proud and sombre Satan an apotheosis of rebellion against authority, though his intention had been quite different. So powerfully does the historical movement of societies influence poetry! That is why today criticism which is exclusively aesthetic, which wishes to have dealings only with the poet and his works, disregarding place and time, where and when the poet wrote and the circumstances which paved the way for his poetical career and influenced his poetical activities—such criticism has now fallen into discredit, and has become inconceivable. It is said

that the spirit of partisanship, sectarianism, are harmful to talent and spoil its works. That is true. That is why talent must be the mouthpiece not of this or that party or sect, doomed perhaps to an ephemeral existence, destined to disappear without leaving any trace, but of the treasured thoughts of the whole of society, of its perhaps still indiscernible aspirations. In other words, the poet must express not the particular or accidental, but the general and the necessary, that lend colour and meaning to his whole epoch. How can he distinguish in this chaos of contradictory opinions and aspirations that which actually expresses the spirit of his time? In this his only true guide, in most cases, may be his instinct, a dark unconscious feeling which frequently constitutes the entire power of genius; it might seem that such a genius proceeds at random, in the teeth of general opinion, against all accepted conceptions and common sense, yet it goes straight to where it has to go, and soon the very voices that were raised loudest against him, follow him *nolens-volens*, and do not understand how it was possible not to have followed the present path. That is why there are poets whose influence is potent, who give a new trend to a whole literature so long as they simply, instinctively and unconsciously follow the impulses of their talent; but no sooner do they begin to reason and philosophize than they stumble, and stumble with a vengeance! And the giant suddenly loses his strength like Samson shorn of his locks, and he who marched at the head now loiters in the rear, amid the crowd of his former opponents, now his new allies, and together with them takes up arms against his own cause. But it is too late. Not by his volition was this cause created, not by his will it fall; it is higher than he and more necessary to society than he himself.... And how painful, pitiful and ridiculous is the spectacle of a gifted poet who wished to become a poor moralizer.[17]

Art and literature in our day have more than ever before become the expression of social problems, because in our day these problems have become more general, more accessible, and clearer, have become for all an interest of the first degree, have taken precedence over all other problems. This, of course, could not but affect the whole trend of art to the latter's detriment. Thus, most gifted poets who are immersed in social problems now sometimes surprise the public with works whose artistic merits are in no

way equal to their talent, or which, at any rate, are revealed only in part, while the work as a whole is weak, drawn out, vapid and dull. Remember the novels of George Sand *Le Meunier d'Angibault, Le Péché de Monsieur Antoine, Isidore.* But here, too, the trouble lies not in the influence of contemporary social problems, but in that the author tried to substitute existing reality by a Utopia and, in consequence, made art represent a world which existed only in his imagination. Thus, together with feasible characters and persons familiar to all, the author depicted fantastic characters, and incredible persons, and his work was a mixture of novel and fairy tale, the natural was eclipsed by the unnatural, and poetry mingled with rhetoric. But this is not yet a reason for bewailing the decline of art. The same George Sand after *Le Meunier d'Angibault* gave us *Teuquirino,* and *Isidore* and *Le Péché de Monsieur Antoine* were succeeded by *Lucrezia Floriani.* The vitiation of art by the influence of contemporary social problems could sooner affect talents of lesser degree, but here too it is manifested only in an inability to distinguish between the real and the unreal, the credible and the incredible, and, still more, in a passion for melodrama and farfetched effects. What is particularly attractive in the novels of Eugène Sue? His faithful pictures of contemporary society, in which the influence of contemporary problems is most in evidence. And what is the weak side of his works, which spoils them to such a degree that one loses all desire to read them? His exaggerations, melodrama, stage effects, his unreal characters like Prince Rodolphe[18]—in a word everything that is false, unnatural, untrue to life; and all this is a result not of the influence of contemporary problems, but of a lack of talent, which suffices only for details, but never for an entire work. On the other hand, we can point to the novels of Dickens which are so deeply permeated with the sincere sympathies of our time but which nevertheless represent excellent works of art.

We have said that pure, abstract, and unconditional or, as the philosophers say *absolute* art, never existed anywhere. If there is anything answering to this description it might conceivably be the works of art of those epochs when art was the chief interest exclusively of the most educated part of society. Such, for instance, are the works of the Italian schools of painting of the sixteenth century. Their subject matter is apparently chiefly reli-

gious; that, however, is for the most part a mirage; actually, the subject of these paintings was beauty as such, more in the plastic or classical sense of this word than in the romantic. Take for example Raphael's Madonna, this *chef-d'œuvre* of Italian sixteenth century painting. Who does not remember Zhukovsky's article about this superb work, who has not since his youth formed an idea of this picture from this article? Who, therefore, was not convinced, who did not believe as an incontrovertible truth, that this work was eminently romantic, that the face of the Madonna was the highest ideal of that unearthly beauty, the mystery of which is revealed only to the inner contemplation, and that only at rare moments of pure inspiration? . . . The author of the present article recently saw this picture. Since he is not a judge of painting, he would not venture to speak about this remarkable picture with the purpose of determining its significance and the degree of its merits; in so far as it is a matter only of his personal impression and of the romantic or non-romantic character of the picture, he considers that he may be allowed to say a few words on the subject. He had not read Zhukovsky's article for a long time, perhaps over ten years. However, since prior to that he had read and re-read it with passionate ardour, with all the faith of youth, and knew it almost by heart, he approached the famous picture with the anticipation of a familiar impression. He gazed at it for a long time, left it to examine other pictures and came back again to the masterpiece. However little he may know about painting, his first impression was definite and unmistakable in one respect: he felt immediately that after this picture it was difficult to understand the merits of other paintings and become interested in them. He paid two visits to the Dresden Gallery and both times he saw only this picture, even when he was looking at others or looking at nothing at all. And now, whenever he recollects it, it seems to be standing before his eyes, and memory almost replaces reality. But the longer and the more intently he gazed at this picture, the more did he think then, and the more convinced did he become afterwards, that the Madonna of Raphael and the Madonna described by Zhukovsky as that of Raphael are two entirely different pictures which have nothing in common, no points of resemblance. Raphael's Madonna is a severely classical figure, and in no wise romantic. Her face is

expressive of that beauty which exists independently, without deriving its charm from any moral expression of countenance. On the contrary, nothing can be read on that face. The face of the Madonna, as that of her whole figure, possesses an air of inexpressible nobility and dignity. It is the daughter of a king, alive to both her exalted rank and personal dignity. In her gaze there is something severe and restrained; it does not show clemency or kindness, but neither does it show pride or contempt; there is instead a sort of condescension that is not forgetful of its owner's majesty. One might call it the *idéal sublime du comme il faut.* But there is not even the shadow of the illusive, the mysterious, the misty and the glimmering—in a word nothing of the romantic; on the contrary in everything there is a distinct lucid definiteness, a completeness, a severe regularity and certainty of features and at the same time such a fine and noble brush. In this picture religious contemplation is expressed only in the face of the divine child, but a contemplation peculiar only to the Catholicism of that day. In the child's posture, in the hands stretched out to those in front (meaning the spectators), in the dilated pupils of the eyes are expressed anger and a threat and in the raised lower lip a proud contempt. This is not the God of mercy and forgiveness, not the lamb sent to expiate the sins of the world; this is a God that judges and punishes.... From all this it can be seen that there is nothing romantic in the figure of the infant; on the contrary its expression is so simple and definite, so tangible, that you immediately understand clearly what you see. Perhaps it is only in the faces of the angels, marked by an unusual expression of intelligence and dreamily contemplating the appearance of the Deity that one can find something of the romantic.[19]

It is most natural to seek so-called art among the Greeks. Indeed beauty, which forms the essential element of art, was perhaps the predominant element in the life of this people. That is why their art is closer than any other to the ideal of so-called pure art. Nevertheless, in their art beauty was more an essential form of any matter than the matter itself. This matter was supplied by their religion and civic life, but always under the obvious supremacy of beauty. It follows therefore that Greek art itself approached closer than others to the ideal of absolute art, but it cannot be called absolute, that is, independent of other

aspects of the national life. Shakespeare and especially Goethe are usually referred to as representatives of free, pure art; that is a most unfortunate reference however. That Shakespeare is the greatest of creative geniuses, a poet *par excellence* there is not the slightest doubt; but those poorly know him who fail to see through his poetry the rich content, the inexhaustible mine of lessons and factors for the psychologist, the philosopher, the historian, the statesman and so on. Shakespeare conveys everything through poetry, but what he conveys is far from belonging to poetry alone. Generally speaking, the character of modern art consists in the predominance of the importance of substance over the importance of form, whilst the character of ancient art consisted in a balance between substance and form. The reference to Goethe is even less grounded than that to Shakespeare. We shall prove this with two examples. The *Sovremennik* for last year published a translation of Goethe's *Wahlverwandtschaften*, which in Russia, too, was sometimes discussed in the press. In Germany this novel enjoys a tremendous reputation and has been the subject of a deluge of articles and entire books. We do not know to what extent it pleased the Russian public or whether it even pleased them: our task was to acquaint the public with a remarkable work of a great poet. We even think that our public was more surprised than pleased. Indeed it gives considerable cause for surprise! A girl is engaged in copying reports on the stewardship of an estate; the hero of the novel notices that the more she writes, the closer her handwriting resembles his own. "You love me," he exclaims, and falls on her neck. We repeat: this is a feature which cannot but strike any public and not only ours, as strange. For the Germans, however, it is not at all strange, since it is a trait of German life, one that has been very faithfully recorded. The novel contains a fairly large number of such traits; many may even consider the whole novel to be nothing but such a trait.... Does this not mean that Goethe's novel has been written so much under the influence of German social life that outside Germany it seems uncommonly strange?[20] *Faust*, however, is certainly considered to be a great work everywhere. It is frequently referred to as a model of pure art, subordinate to nothing but its own specific laws. However, the worthy champions of pure art should not take offence if we say that *Faust* is

a complete mirror of contemporary German society. In it is expressed the whole philosophical movement in Germany at the close of the last century and the beginning of the present. No wonder verses from *Faust* were constantly quoted by the followers of Hegel's school in their lectures and philosophical treatises. No wonder, too, that in the second part of *Faust* Goethe constantly lapsed into allegory, often vague and unintelligible because of the abstract character of its idea. Is this pure art?

We have seen that Greek art, too, is nearest the ideal of so-called pure art, but did not fully achieve it; as for modern art, it was always remote from this ideal and has today become still more remote; but that precisely is its strength. Artistic interest as such could not but yield to other more important human interests, and art nobly undertook to serve these interests as their mouthpiece. Art has not thereby ceased to be art, but has merely acquired a new character. To deny art the right of serving public interests means debasing it, not raising it, for that would mean depriving it of its most vital force, *i.e.*, idea, making it an object of sybaritic pleasure, the plaything of lazy idlers. This would even mean killing it, as is evidenced today by the wretched plight of the art of painting. This art, seemingly oblivious of the seething life around it, with eyes closed to everything that is alive, modern and valid, seeks inspiration in the outlived past and derives therefrom ready-made ideals to which people have long ago grown cold, which are no longer of interest to anybody and give no warmth to or evoke lively sympathy in anyone.

Plato considered the application of geometry to the crafts a degradation and profanation of science. This is understandable in such a fervent idealist and romanticist, a citizen of a small republic where social life was so direct and simple; but in our days it does not even possess the originality of vagary. It is said that Dickens' novels were responsible for improving the educational system in England where everything was based on merciless floggings and the barbarous maltreatment of children. What is wrong, we ask, if Dickens in this case acted as a poet? Are his novels any the worse aesthetically? This is an obvious misunderstanding: people see that art and science are not one and the same thing, but they do not see that the difference between them is not at all subject matter, but merely the way in which that

matter is treated. The philosopher speaks in syllogisms, the poet in images and pictures, but both say the same thing. Armed with his statistics, the political economist by appealing to the minds of his readers or listeners, *proves* that the condition of such-and-such a class in society has greatly improved or greatly deteriorated as a consequence of such-and-such causes. Armed with a lively and vivid representation of reality the poet, by appealing to the imagination of his readers *shows* in a faithful picture that the condition of such-and-such a class of society has really greatly improved or greatly deteriorated as a consequence of such-and-such causes. One *proves* and the other *shows*, but they both *convince*, the one by logic, the other by pictures. However, the former is listened to and understood by the few, the latter by all. The highest and most sacred interest of society is its own welfare, equally extended to each of its members. The road to this welfare is consciousness, and art can promote consciousness no less than science. Here art and science are equally indispensable, and neither science can replace art, nor art replace science.

A wrong and false understanding of the truth does not destroy the truth. If we sometimes see people, even clever and well-meaning people, who venture to treat social problems in a poetical form without being endowed by nature with even a spark of poetical gift, it by no means ensues that such problems are foreign to art and ruin it. Were these people to take it into their heads to serve pure art, their fall would be even more striking. For instance, the now forgotten novel *Pan Podstolitch*, published over ten years ago and written with the praiseworthy purpose of rendering a picture of the conditions of the Byelorussian peasants, was a poor book, but not an entirely useless one; though it was terribly boring there were people who read it.[21] Of course the author would have better achieved his noble aim if he had rendered his narrative in the form of notes or sketches by an observer, without encroaching on the poetical; but had he undertaken to write a purely poetical novel he would have achieved his aim in even less measure. Many people today are lured by the magic word "tendency" which is believed to be the crux of the matter; they fail to understand, first of all, that in the domain of art "tendency" is not worth a brass farthing unless it is backed by talent, and secondly, that tendency itself must

be located not in the head alone, but primarily in the heart, in the blood of the writer; that it must first of all be a feeling, an instinct and only thereafter perhaps a conscious thought; that it, this tendency, must be born as art is born. An idea that has been read or heard somewhere and even properly understood but not assimilated by one's nature, that has not received the imprint of one's personality, is dead capital not only for poetical but for any literary activity. No matter how you copy from nature, or season your copy with cut-and-dried ideas and well-meant "tendencies," your copies, if you have no poetical talent, will remind nobody of their originals and their ideas and tendencies will remain rhetorical commonplaces.[22]

Today it is one of the two: either the pictures of certain aspects of social life depicted by writers of the natural school are imbued with the truth and a faithful rendering of reality, in which case they are born of talent and bear the stamp of creative work; or, if the contrary be true, they can attract and convince nobody, and nobody will perceive in them the slightest resemblance to reality. That is exactly what the opponents of this school say of them; but then the question arises: why is it that, on the one hand, these works are so popular with the greater part of the reading public, and on the other, are capable of irritating so strongly the opponents of the natural school? It is only golden mediocrity that possesses the enviable privilege of irritating nobody and having no enemies and opponents.

Some say that the natural school traduces society and deliberately debases it; others today add that in this respect it is particularly culpable in regard to the common folk. The latter accusation sounds somehow contradictory in the mouth of the detractors of the natural school: some of them, with a philistine aristocratism worthy of Molière's celebrated Monsieur Jourdain, reproach this school for its excessive sympathy for people of lowly estate; others, for a concealed enmity towards them. We have already had occasion to answer this accusation in full detail and to prove its groundlessness and impropriety,[23] so that we have nothing new to add until our well-wishers invent something new in support of this accusation, which does them particular honour. Therefore we shall say a few words about another accusation. Some say (quite justifiably this time) that the natural

school was founded by Gogol; others, while partly agreeing with this, add that it was the French *littérature enragée* (which died in its early childhood about ten years ago) that played an even greater part than Gogol in the birth of the natural school. Such an accusation is sheer nonsense, and has all the facts against it. It can be said, on consulting its genealogy, that it was begotten either by improper causes which decorum forbids to mention, or by the utter failure to understand what literature is. The latter is the more probable. Although these gentlemen declaim loudly for art, this does not prevent them from being entirely ignorant of art. Which works of French literature have for some reason or other been attributed in Russia to the *école enragée*? Hugo's early novels (and particularly his celebrated *Notre Dame de Paris)*, Sue, Dumas, and Jules Janin's *L'âne mort et la femme guillotinée.* Is that not so? Who remembers them today, when their own authors have long ago accepted the new trend? And what was the main feature of these works, which incidentally were not without merits of a sort? Exaggeration, melodrama, claptrap. The only representative of this trend in our country was Marlinsky, and the influence of Gogol effectively put an end to that trend. What has it in common with the natural school? Today not even rare attempts are made to write works with such a tendency, with the possible exception of dramas replete with Hispanic passions that frequenters of the Alexandrinsky Theatre so greatly admire. And if mediocrity and incompetence sometimes attempt, albeit very rarely, to achieve success by imitating French novels, they choose the latest models, more ridiculous and absurd than *enragée.* One such attempt was the recently published novel *The Speculators*, filled with incredible villains or rather scoundrels, and impossible adventures, from which, at the end, the purest morality is drawn. But what has the natural school to do with such works? Nothing at all.

Far truer than all these accusations is the fact that in writers of the natural school Russian literature followed a path that was real and genuine, turned to its own, original sources of inspiration and ideals, and thereby became both contemporary and Russian. I think that it will not leave this path, because it is the straight road to originality and emancipation from all foreign and extraneous influences. By this we do not at all wish to say that it

will always remain in the same state as it is today; no, it will advance and change, but it will never cease to be true to reality and nature. We are not in the least deluded by its successes and do not at all wish to exaggerate them. We see very well that our literature today is still on the road of aspiration and not of achievement, that it is only finding itself and has not yet found itself. Its success lies, for the time being, in the fact that it has already found its own real road and no longer seeks it, that every year sees it following this road with firmer and firmer step. Today it has no leader,[24] and it can boast no talents of the first magnitude, but nevertheless it has its own character, and can proceed without leading strings along the real path, which it clearly sees for itself. We cannot help recollecting the words of the editor of the *Sovremennik* in the first issue for last year: "In place of the forceful talents which our contemporary literature lacks, it has evolved within itself, so to speak, the matured and vital elements of further growth and activity. It is, as we have already said, a phenomenon of a definite kind; it is conscious of its independence and its significance. It is already a force properly organized and active, organically linked up with various social needs and interests, not a meteor which has dropped down on us from an alien sphere to the amazement of the crowd, not a flash of the sequestered mind of genius which has accidentally burst in upon the minds of men and shaken them for a minute with new and unfamiliar sensations. In the field of our literature there are today no especially remarkable lights, but we have an entire literature. Only recently it resembled the variegated expanses of our fields first freed from their icy covering of winter. Here and there on the hills the first blades of grass have appeared, but in the gullies lies blackened snow mixed with mud. It can now be compared with these same fields in their spring array: although the verdure is not very brilliant. and in places pale and languid, it is a carpet that covers everything: the finest season of the year is approaching."

It is our opinion that herein lies progress....

The justice of the words we have quoted will become more evident if we turn our attention to other aspects of the Russian literature of our times. There we shall observe a phenomenon corresponding to what in poetry is called naturalism, that is to

say, the same striving towards actual life, reality and truth, and the same aversion to the fantastic and the ghostly. In science abstract theories, *a priori* postulates, and faith in systems are day by day falling into discredit and yielding place to practical tendencies based on a knowledge of facts. Of course, science has not yet struck deep roots in our country, but one can already observe in it a turn towards originality, and this in a sphere in which originality must first of all begin for Russian science—in the study of Russian history. Its events, which have hitherto been interpreted under the influence of the study of Western history, are today being based on vital principles peculiar only to Russian history and today Russian history is being interpreted in Russian. We see the same references to problems which have a closer relation to our Russian life, and the same desire to settle these problems our own way is also to be seen in the study of the contemporary life of Russia. To prove this, we shall examine everything in any way remarkable that appeared last year. This examination, however, will form the subject of a special and longer article in the next issue of the *Sovremennik*.

ARTICLE TWO

The Significance of the Novel and the Story Today.—Remarkable Novels and Stories of Last Year and a Characteristic of Contemporary Russian Authors of Belles-Lettres: Iskander, Goncharov, Turgenev, Dahl, Grigorovich, Druzhinin.—Mr. Dostoyevsky's New Work—"The Mistress."—Mrs. T. Ch.'s "Travel Notes."—Mr. Nebolsin's Stories of the Siberian Gold Fields.—Mr. Botkin's Spanish Letters.—Remarkable Scientific Articles of Last Year.—Remarkable Critical Articles.—Mr. Sheviryev.—A. Smirdin's Complete Edition of Russian Authors.

The novel and the story now stand in the lead of all other genres of poetry. They now constitute the whole of our *belles-lettres*, so that, compared with them, any other work appears to be exceptional and accidental. The reasons for this lie in the very essence of the novel and the story as genres of poetry. In them, in finer and more convenient fashion than in any other genre of poetry, fiction mingles with reality and artistic invention with simple, if only it be faithful, copying from nature. The

novel and the story, even when they depict the most ordinary and hackneyed prose of everyday life, can be representative of the *Ultima Thule* of art, of the highest creative endeavour; on the other hand, in reflecting only the choice and sublime moments of life they may contain no poetry at all, no art.... This is the widest and most universal genre of poetry; in it talent feels itself to be infinitely free. It unites in itself all the other genres of poetry —the lyrical, as an emotional effusion of the author in connection with the event which he describes, and the dramatic as the most vivid and salient device for making the characters speak their thoughts. Digressions, disquisitions, and didactics which are intolerable in other branches of poetry, have their legitimate place in the novel and the story. The novel and the story enable the writer to give full scope to the predominant peculiarities of his talents, character, tastes, tendency and so on. That is why so many novelists and story writers have appeared of late. For the same reason the range of the novel and the story has been extended: besides the "tale" which has already been in existence a long time as a lower and lighter form of the narrative, full recognition has recently been granted to the so-called "physiologies," character sketches of various aspects of social life, and finally memoirs eschewing all fiction and valued only inasmuch as they render a faithful and precise picture of actual events—memoirs which, if skillfully written, also pertain to the domain of the novel, forming, as it were, the concluding link in the chain we have just discussed. What is there in common between the inventions of the imagination and the strictly historical presentation of actual events? Why, artistic exposition, of course! It is not for nothing that historians are called artists. Might it not seem that art, as such, has no place in the case of a writer who is tied down to sources and facts, and whose only concern is to present these facts as faithfully as he can? But that is just the point—a faithful presentation of facts is impossible with the aid of erudition alone; imagination too is required. The historical facts contained in sources are no more than stones and bricks; it is only an artist who can build up a beautiful edifice out of these materials. In our first article we asserted that without creative talent it is just as impossible faithfully to copy nature as it is to create fiction that resembles nature. The proximity of art to

life, and fiction to reality, has in our day particularly manifested itself in the historical novel. From here it is only a step to a true conception of memoirs in which character studies and personal sketches play such an important part. If these sketches are lively and interesting, it means they are not copies, not imitations, which are always bloodless and expressionless, but an artistic portrayal of persons and events. It is thus that we set a value on the portraits of artists like Van Dyck, Titian and Velasquez, caring not to know who their sitters were: they are valued as pictures, as works of art. Such is the power of art: a face which in itself is in no way remarkable receives through art a universal significance, of equal interest for all, and a person who in his lifetime attracted no attention is gazed upon by the centuries through the grace of the artist whose brush has given this person new life! The same applies to memoirs, and narratives and all kinds of copies from nature. Here the degree of a work's merits depends on the degree of the writer's talent. In a book you may admire a man you would not like to meet anywhere, whom perhaps you have always known as an inane and boring creature. Belated aesthetes aver that "poetry should not be a pictorial art, because in the latter the faithful representation of an object seen at a given moment is all-important." But if poetry undertakes to portray persons, characters and events, in a word, pictures of life, it goes without saying that in doing so it takes upon itself the same duty as pictorial art, which is to be faithful to the reality it purports to reproduce. And this fidelity is the primary demand presented to poetry, its primary task. The poetical talent of an author may be judged in the first place by the extent to which he meets this demand, solves this task. If he is no pictorial artist, it is patent that neither is he a poet, that he has no talent. It is another matter that poetry must not be *only* pictorial art: that stands to reason. The pictures drawn by the poet should contain thought; the impressions they produce should appeal to the reader's mind, should give a certain direction to his view on certain aspects of life. For this purpose the novel and the story, together with works similar to them, are the most convenient genre of poetry. It is mainly to its lot that the task has fallen of representing social pictures, of the poetical analysis of social life.

Last year, 1847, was particularly rich in outstanding novels, stories and other narratives. Of these works, the first place, measured in terms of their tremendous success with the public, is beyond doubt held by two novels, *Who is to Blame?* and *An Ordinary Story;* therefore we shall begin our review of last year's *belles-lettres* with these books.

Mr. Iskander has long been known to the public as the author of various articles, noteworthy as the products of remarkable intellect, talent, wit, the originality of their views and their originality of expression. As a novelist, however, he is a new talent who has won the special interest of the Russian public only since last year. True, the *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* published two of his essays in the art of story telling: *Notes of a Young Man* (1840) and *More From Notes of a Young Man* (1841), which, judging by the faithfulness and vivacity of these light studies, bore the earmarks of a future gifted novelist. Mr. Goncharov, the author of *An Ordinary Story,* is a newcomer in our literature, but one who has already gained therein a most prominent place for himself. Whether it is due to the fact that both these novels, *Who is to Blame?* and *An Ordinary Story,* appeared almost at the same time and shared the glory of unprecedented success, but they are generally mentioned together, and even compared, as though they were phenomena of the same kind. One magazine, which recently proclaimed Iskander's novel to be a work of supreme artistic merit, expressed dissatisfaction with Mr. Goncharov's novel on the grounds that it did not find in the latter the merits of the former. We, too, intend to examine these novels together, but not in order to show their similarity, of which, being works utterly dissimilar in essence, there is not the slightest trace, but in order to use their very oppositeness as a means of tracing their respective peculiarities and showing their merits and faults.

To regard the author of *Who is to Blame?* as an uncommon artist signifies an utter failure to understand his talent. True, he possesses to a remarkable degree the ability of rendering a faithful picture of reality; his sketches are definite and clear-cut, his pictures are vivid and immediately catch the eye. But these very qualities prove that his forte lies not in creativeness or artistic treatment, but in thought, profoundly cogitated, fully conscious and developed thought. It is in the power of mind that the main

strength of his talent lies; the artistic manner of faithfully portraying phenomena of actual life is a secondary, an auxiliary, force of his talent. Deprive him of the former, and the latter will prove incapable of original activity.

A talent of this kind is not something special, exceptional or fortuitous. No, such talents are just as natural as talents that are purely artistic. Their activities form a special sphere of art, in which imagination stands in the background and mind in the foreground. Little notice is taken of this distinction, whence great confusion ensues in the theory of art. There is an inclination to regard art as a sort of intellectual China, cleanly walled off by precise boundaries from everything that is not art in the strict sense of the word. Such border lines, however, exist more conjecturally than in actual fact; at any rate, one cannot point them out as one could a country's borders on the map. Art, in proportion as it approaches one or another of its borders, gradually loses something of its essence, and assumes something of the essence of that with which it borders, so that instead of a line of demarcation there appears a region which brings both sides together.

The artist-poet is more of a pictorial artist than people think. A sense of form—in this his whole nature lies. An eternal competition with nature in the ability to create—such is his greatest delight. To grasp a given subject in all its truth and to infuse into it, as it were, the breath of life—in this lies his strength, his triumph, satisfaction and pride. But poetry is superior to pictorial art, its borders are wider than those of any other art; and therefore the poet cannot, of course, confine himself to pictorial art alone—which is something we have already discussed. Whatever other excellent qualities his work may possess, qualities that evoke admiration and amazement, his main power lies nevertheless in his poetical pictorial art. He possesses the ability rapidly to comprehend all forms of life, to personate any character, any individuality, and for this he needs neither experience nor study; a single hint or swift glance sometimes suffices. Give him two or three facts and his imagination reconstructs a complete, separate, self-contained world, with all its conditions and relations, with the colour and shades peculiar to it. Thus it was that Cuvier through science achieved the art of mentally reconstructing the entire organism of an animal from a single fossilized bone belonging

to that animal. But that was the operation of genius, developed and aided by science; the poet, however, pre-eminently depends upon his senses, his poetical instinct.

Another category of poets which we have begun to speak of and which includes the author of the novel *Who is to Blame?* is able to render faithfully only those aspects of life which for some reason or other have particularly impressed themselves on their minds and are especially familiar to them. They do not understand the delight of faithfully portraying a fact of reality for the mere sake of faithfully portraying it. They lack both the desire and patience for what, in their opinion, is a useless labour. It is not the subject they prize, but its underlying drift, and with them inspiration flares up only in order that by faithfully presenting a subject, they may render its meaning obvious and tangible to the sight of all. It follows then that with them a definite and clearly realized aim comes before all else, and that poetry is only a means to the achievement of this aim. Hence the world of life accessible to their talent is determined by their cherished thought, by their view of life; this is a magic circle from which they cannot emerge with impunity, that is to say, without suddenly losing the ability to depict reality with poetical fidelity. Deprive them of this thought which inspires them, make them give up their view of things and their talent is gone; whereas the talent of the artist-poet always remains with him so long as life, *such as it may be*, moves on around him.

What is the cherished idea of Iskander, which serves as the source of his inspiration and, in his faithful depiction of the facts of social life, sometimes raises him almost to the height of art. It is the idea of human dignity debased by prejudices and ignorance, debased by the injustice of man to his fellow men, or by his own voluntary distortion of himself. The hero of all Iskander's novels and stories, however many he may write, will always be one and the same—man as a general and generic concept, man in all the fullness of this word, in all the sanctity of its meaning. Iskander is pre-eminently a poet of *humanity*. That is why his novel abounds in characters, most of them portrayed in masterly fashion, but there is no hero, no heroine. In the first part, after winning our interest in the Negrov couple, he presents Krutsifersky as the hero of the novel and Lyubonka as the heroine. The hero of the episode

written to link both parts together is Beltov, but Beltov's mother and his Swiss tutor interest the reader perhaps more than does he himself. In the second part the heroes are Beltov and Krutsiferskaya, and it is only here that the underlying idea of the novel, at first so puzzling in the title *Who is to Blame?* fully unfolds itself. We must confess, however, that this idea least of all interests us in the novel, just as Beltov, the hero of the novel, is in our opinion the least convincing personage of the whole novel. When Krutsifersky became Lyubonka's fiance, Dr. Krupov said to him, "that girl is no mate for you, say what you like—those eyes, that complexion, the tremor that sometimes passes over her face—*she's a tiger cub* that is not yet *conscious of its strength*; and you, what are you? You are the bride; you, brother, are like a German woman; you will be the wife—and that won't do." These words contain the plot of the novel which, according to the author's intention, should have only begun with the wedding instead of ending with it. After acquainting us with Beltov, the author conducts us into the peaceful abode of the young couple who for already four years had been enjoying the halcyon bliss of matrimony; however, recollecting the gloomy prediction of the oracle in the person of the skeptical doctor the reader expects the author to show him in this very scene of the Krutsiferskys' matrimonial bliss the embryo and precursor of future troubles. Indeed, Krutsifersky did not marry, he was married. His wife was far too superior to him, and, consequently, far too unsuited to him. It is natural that he was quite happy with her, but it is not natural that she should be serenely happy, should not have disturbing dreams, and perturbed thoughts in her waking hours. She could respect and even love her husband for his childlike purity and nobility, for his having, moreover, saved her from the hell of her parental home; but could such a love satisfy such a woman, gratify the requirements and strivings of her nature which were all the more tormenting for being indefinite and unconscious? Her acquaintance with Beltov, which soon grew into love, could only open her eyes to her condition, arouse in her the realization that she could not be happy with a man like Krutsifersky. This the author did not do.

The idea was a splendid one, full of a profoundly tragical significance. It was this idea that attracted most readers and prevented them from seeing that the whole story of the tragic love

of Beltov and Krutsiferskaya had been told cleverly, very cleverly, even adroitly, but in no wise artistically. It is a masterly narrative, but without a trace of live poetical imagery. It was the idea that helped and saved the author: his mind helped him to understand correctly the position of his heroes, but he depicted this position only as a clever man with a good understanding of the matter might have done, but not as a poet. Thus sometimes a gifted actor, who has taken upon himself a role that is beyond his abilities and talent, will nevertheless avoid spoiling it, but will perform it cleverly and adroitly instead of acting it. The idea of the role is not lost, and the tragical sense of the play makes up for the shortcomings in the performance of the leading role, and it is not immediately that the audience realizes that it has only been carried away, but not satisfied.

This, by the way, is proved by the fact that, in the second part of the novel, Beltov's character is arbitrarily changed by the author. In the beginning, he was a man thirsting for useful activity and finding it nowhere, because of the wrong education which the noble dreamer from Geneva had given him. Beltov knew a good deal and had a general conception of everything, but he was completely ignorant of the social milieu which was the only one in which he could make himself useful. All this is both said and shown by the author in masterly fashion. We think that the author, while he was about it, might also have hinted at the nature of his hero, which was most unpractical and badly spoilt by wealth no less than by education. He who is born rich must be endowed by nature with a special propensity for some kind of activity if he is not to lead an idle life and be bored by inactivity. This propensity is not at all to be seen in Beltov's nature. His nature was extremely rich and versatile, but in this richness and versatility there was nothing which had deep roots. He was endowed with intellect, but an intellect that was contemplative and theoretical, and not so much probed into things as glided over them. He was able to understand much, almost everything, but this very universality of sympathy and understanding prevents people like him from concentrating on one object and bending all their will to it. Such men have a constant urge for activity, endeavouring to find their path, but, of course, they do not find it.

Thus Beltov was doomed to languish in a craving for activ-

ity that was never satisfied, in a dejection born of inactivity. The author has given a masterly description of all his unsuccessful attempts to work in the civil service and later to become first a doctor, then an actor. If it cannot be said that he has fully depicted and explained this character, he has nevertheless given us a well-drawn, intelligible and natural picture of the man. In the last part of the novel, however, Beltov suddenly appears before us as a sort of superior nature, a genius, to whom life does not furnish a worthy career. This is quite a different man from the one whose acquaintance we had already made; this is no longer Beltov but something in the nature of Pechorin. Needless to say, the former Beltov was much better, like any man who plays his own role. The resemblance to Pechorin is decidedly not in his favour. We cannot understand why the author had to leave his own path and follow another! ... Can it be that he wished in this way to raise Beltov to the level of Krutsiferskaya? A vain desire, because she would have found him as interesting in his former aspect, and even then he would have dwarfed poor Krutsifersky, beside whom he was a veritable giant. He was a grownup, a man in his majority, at least in mind and in his views on life; whereas Krutsifersky, with his noble dreams in lieu of a real understanding of people and life, would even beside the former Beltov have seemed a child whose development had been retarded by some illness.

Krutsiferskaya, for her part, is of far more interest in the first part of the novel than in the last. It cannot be said that her character there was sharply drawn, but then her position in Negrov's house was sharply drawn. There she is a convincing figure, despite her silence and absence of any activity. The reader senses her although he hardly hears a single word from her. In describing her position the author has displayed an unusual mastery. It is only in passages from her diary that he makes her speak. We are, however, not entirely satisfied with this confession. Apart from the fact that the device of acquainting the reader with the heroines of novels through their diaries is out-of-date, worn threadbare and false, Lyubonka's diary entries smack somewhat of the spurious; at all events not everybody will believe that they were written by a woman.... Evidently here, too, the author has strayed beyond the limits of his talent. We shall say the

same of the brief snatches of Krutsiferskaya given at the end of the novel. In both cases the author merely skilfully disposed of a task he could not cope with. In general, Lyubonka, when she marries Krutsifersky, ceases to be a character, a personage, and becomes a masterly, cleverly developed idea. She and Beltov are the only two persons the author has not properly coped with. But even in them one cannot but admire the author's adroitness and art in sustaining the interest till the end, and in amazing and moving most readers, where any other writer with his talent, but without his intelligence and correct view of things, would only have been ridiculous.

And so it is not in the picture of the tragic love of Beltov and Krutsiferskaya that the merits of Iskander's novel should be sought. We have seen that this is not at all a picture, but a masterly written document. Strictly speaking, *Who is to Blame?* is not really a novel, but a series of biographies, written in masterly fashion and cleverly linked together externally into one whole through the medium of that idea which the author failed to develop poetically. But these biographies also contain an internal link, although the latter has nothing to do with the tragic love of Beltov and Krutsiferskaya. It is the idea which lay deep at their roots, breathed life and soul into each feature, each word of the story, gave it that convincingness and interest which has the same irresistible appeal to both readers that sympathize and readers that do not sympathize with the author, on the educated and the uneducated alike. This idea manifests itself with the author as a sentiment, a passion; in brief his novel shows it to form the pathos of his life as well as of his novel. Whatever he speaks of, in whatever digressions he is drawn, he never forgets it, continually returns to it, and it seems involuntarily to speak for itself. This idea has become welded with his talent; herein his strength lies; if he cooled toward it, rejected it, he would instantly lose his talent. What is this idea? It is suffering, pain at the sight of unrecognized human dignity, spurned with malice aforethought, and still more without; it is what the Germans call *Humanität*.[25] Those to whom the idea contained in this word may seem unintelligible, will find its best interpretation in the works of Iskander. Of the word itself we shall say that the Germans formed it from the Latin word *humanus* which means belonging

to man. Here it is opposed to the word "beast." When a man treats his fellow men, his brothers in nature, as befits a human being he acts humanly; otherwise he acts as befits a beast. Humanity is love of mankind, but a love that is cultivated by the consciousness and education. A man who adopts a poor orphan not for personal gain or boastfulness, but out of a desire to do good, one who brings up such an orphan as though he were his own son, yet at the same time makes the latter feel that he is his benefactor, that he spends money on him, and so on,—such a person, of course, deserves to be called kind, moral and philanthropic, but certainly not humane. He has a good deal of sentiment and love, but they have not been developed by his consciousness and lie under a coarse crust. His crude mind does not even suspect that there are fine and tender fibres in the human heart that must be delicately handled to avoid making a person unhappy despite all external evidences of happiness, or to avoid debasing and brutalizing a person who, with more humane treatment, might become worthy of respect. Yet how many such benefactors are there in the world who torture and often ruin the lives of those upon whom their benefactions are showered, do so without evil design, sometimes feeling the warmest love for their protégés, wishing them well in all humility—and then are ingenuously surprised that instead of devotion and respect they are rewarded with coldness, indifference and ingratitude, even with hatred and animosity, or that their protégés turn out to be scoundrels after having received a most moral upbringing. How many mothers and fathers are there who really love their children in their own way, but consider it their sacred duty to drum in their ears that they are obliged to their parents for their lives and clothing and education! These wretched people do not even suspect that they are depriving themselves of their children, and replacing them with foundlings and orphans whom they have adopted out of charity. They calmly doze on the moral rule that children must love their parents, and later, in their old age, they repeat with a sigh the well-worn truism that nothing but ingratitude can be expected from children. Even this fearful experience does not remove the thick crust of ice from their benumbed minds or make them realize at last that the human heart obeys its own laws, and will not and cannot accept any others, that love from

a sense of duty or obligation is a feeling contrary to human nature, supernatural, phantastic, and incredible, that love is given only for love, that love cannot be demanded as though it were something we are entitled to, but must be won and deserved, no matter who the giver is, whether he be higher than us, or lower, whether it goes from father to son or from son to father. Now take children; it often happens that a child regards its mother with indifference, although the mother suckles it, and this same child will set up a wail if, on awakening, it does not see its nurse nearby, whom it is accustomed to seeing at its side at all times. A child, you see, that complete and perfect expression of nature, gives its love to those that prove their love for it in actual deed, to those that for its sake deny themselves all pleasures and, as it were, have fettered themselves with a chain of iron to its pitiful and weak existence.

The sentiment of humanity in no wise runs counter to respect for high estate and rank, but it is in direct contradiction with contempt for anybody but scoundrels and villains. It willingly acknowledges social superiority, but regards it more from within than from without. Humanity does not oblige one to heap upon a person of lower estate and coarse manners and habits courtesies that he is unaccustomed to; on the contrary, it forbids this, since such treatment would make that person feel embarrassed and suspect mockery or evil design. A humane person will treat his inferior and uncultivated fellow man with that degree of politeness that will not strike the latter as queer or extravagant; but the humane person will not allow the other to debase his human dignity before him, will not allow him to humble himself, will not call him "Vanka" or "Vanyukha" or other similar diminutives, reminiscent of the names dogs are called by, will not pull the other familiarly by the beard in token of his amiable predisposition, while the other with an obsequious smirk says fawningly: "It's very kind of Your Honour! . . ." The sentiment of humanity is outraged when men do not respect in others their human dignity, and is still more outraged and wounded when a man does not respect his own dignity.

It is this feeling of humanity that constitutes, so to say, the soul of Iskander's works. He is its proponent, its advocate. The characters he brings onto the stage are not ill-natured people—

most of them are even good people, who torment and persecute themselves and others, more often with good intentions rather than bad, more from ignorance than from malice. Even those of his personages whose feelings and odious acts repel us are shown by the author more as victims of their own ignorance and the environment in which they live than of their ill-nature. He describes crimes that are not challenged by existing laws and are qualified by most people as rational and moral behaviour. He has few villains; in the three stories so far published it is only in the *Thieving Magpie* that a villain is depicted, but the kind of villain whom even today many would be prepared to consider a most virtuous and moral person. Iskander's chief weapon, one that he wields with such amazing mastery, is irony frequently rising to sarcasm, but more often expressed with a light grace and most good-natured humour. Remember the kind-hearted postmaster, who on two occasions very nearly killed Beltova, first with grief and then with joy, and who so good-naturedly rubbed his hands in anticipation of the surprise he was about to spring, that "there is not in the world a heart so cruel as could reproach him for this joke, and would not invite him to take a snack." Yet, even in this trait, in no way reprehensible, but only amusing, the author remains true to his cherished idea. Everything in the novel *Who is to Blame?* that pertains to this idea is distinguished by its fidelity to actual life and a skill of exposition which is above all praise. It is here, and not in the love of Beltov and Krutsiferskaya, that the novel's brilliance and the triumph of the author's talent lie. We have said above that this novel is a series of biographies linked together by a single idea, but infinitely varied, profoundly truthful and rich in philosophical significance. Here the author is fully in his element. What is there better in that very part of the novel dealing with the tragic love of Beltov and Krutsiferskaya than the biography of the most worthy Karp Kondratich, his lively spouse, and their poor daughter Varvara Karpovna, called Vava for short—a biography included in the book as a mere episode? When are Krutsifersky and Lyubonka interesting in the novel? When they live in the Negrov house and suffer from their surroundings. Such situations lend themselves to the author's talent and he displays unusual mastery in depicting them. When is Beltov himself of

interest? When we read the history of his perverted and improper education, and then the history of his abortive attempts to find his way in life. This too is within the scope of the author's talent. He is pre-eminently a philosopher and a little of a poet besides, and he has availed himself of this to expound his concepts of life in the form of parables. This is best proved by his splendid story, *From the Work of Dr. Krupov "On Mental Ailments in General and Their Epidemic Development in Particular."* Here the author has not, by a single trait or word, overstepped the bounds of his talent, and hence his talent here is more clearly in evidence than in his other works. His idea is the same, but here it has assumed exclusively a tone of irony, for some very gay and amusing and for others sad and painful; and only in the depiction of the squint-eyed Lyovka, a figure that would do honour to any artist, does the author speak seriously. In conception and execution this is positively the best work that appeared last year, although it did not make any particular impression on the public. However, the public is right in this case: in the novel *Who is to Blame?* and certain works by other writers it found more intimate and hence more necessary and useful truths for itself, and the latter work has the same spirit and substance as the former. In general, to reproach the author for being one-sided would mean not understanding him at all. He can represent faithfully only the world that comes within the range of his cherished idea; his splendid sketches are based on an innate power of observation and on the study of certain aspects of actual life. A receptive and impressionable nature, the author has preserved in his memory many images that had struck his imagination as far back as in his childhood. It is not difficult to understand that the characters he draws are not the sheer creatures of imagination, but rather skilfully finished, and sometimes even completely remodelled, materials taken wholly from reality. Have we not already said that the author is more of a philosopher and only a little of a poet?...[26]

In this respect the author of *An Ordinary Story* presents a complete contrast to him. He is a poet, an artist and nothing more. He has neither love nor enmity for the persons he has created; they neither cheer nor anger him, and he gives no moral lessons either to them or to the reader; he thinks, as it were: "As

ye sow, so shall ye reap; I wash my hands of you." Of all present-day writers he, and he alone, approaches the ideal of pure art, while all the others have moved an immeasurable distance away from him—and therefore thrive. All present-day writers possess something else besides talent, and it is this something which is more important than talent itself, that constitutes its strength; Mr. Goncharov has nothing besides talent; more than anybody else today he is a poet-artist. His talent is not of the first magnitude, but it is a strong and notable one. A feature of his talent is an extraordinary skill in depicting feminine characters. He never repeats himself, not one of his women reminds us of another, and all of them are superlative as portraits. What is there in common between the rough and ill-tempered Agraphena who, in her way is capable of tender feelings, and the woman of society with her dreams and bad nerves. Each of these is, in its way, a splendid work of art. The mother of the young Aduyev and the mother of Nadenka are both old women, both very kind-hearted and devoted to their children, and both of them do harm to their children; both are, furthermore, stupid and vulgar. At the same time, these two personages are absolutely different; one of them is a provincial lady of a bygone age, who reads nothing and understands nothing besides the petty cares of her household, in a word a kind-hearted granddaughter of the ill-tempered Madam Prostakova;[27] the other is a lady of the capital who reads French books and understands nothing besides the petty cares of her household—in a word a kind-hearted great-granddaughter of the ill-tempered Madam Prostakova. In representing such insipid and vulgar personages, devoid of any independence and originality of character, talent is sometimes at its best, because it is all the more difficult to endow these characters with any individuality. What is there in common between the vivacious, scatter-brained, wayward and somewhat artful Nadenka and Liza, outwardly calm but consumed by an inner fire? The aunt of the hero of the novel is an incidental character, cursorily drawn, but what a splendid feminine type! How wonderful she is in the concluding scene of the first part of the novel! We shall not dwell on the mastery with which the masculine characters have been drawn; we could not but mention feminine characters, because until now even our first-class talents have rarely been able to cope

with them; with our writers woman has been either a cloyingly sentimental creature, or a seminarist in a skirt, full of sentences from books. The women of Mr. Goncharov are living creatures, true to actual life. This is a novelty in our literature.

Let us now turn to the two chief masculine personages of the novel, the young Aduyev and his uncle Pyotr Ivanich: in speaking of the former at least a few words must be said about the latter, who by sheer force of contrast succeeds in bringing out the hero of the novel in still greater relief. It is said that the type of young Aduyev is out-of-date, that such characters no longer exist in Russia. No, such characters have not disappeared and will never disappear, because they are produced not always by circumstances but sometimes by nature itself. Their forerunner in Russia was Vladimir Lensky, himself directly descended from Goethe's Werther. It was Pushkin who first noticed that such natures exist in our society and pointed them out. They will undergo changes in the course of time but their essence will always be the same.... Young Aduyev, on arriving in St. Petersburg, dreams of the joy with which he will embrace his adored uncle and his uncle's delight at seeing him. He puts up at a tavern and is afraid that his uncle will be angry with him for not having come direct to his house. The cold reception given him by his uncle destroys his provincial dreams. So far young Aduyev is more of a provincial than a romanticist. He was even disagreeably shocked when his uncle called Zayezhalov a fool, and used the same epithet for the village aunt. with her yellow flower, both of whom had sent him most stupid letters. Provincials are often highly ridiculous in their attitude towards their relations and acquaintances. Life in small towns is monotonous, shallow and petty: everybody knows each other, and, if they are not at daggers drawn, are sure to be on terms of the most tender friendship; there are almost no intermediate relations. So a young man sets out from his little town to seek his fortune in the capital; he is the object of general interest, all see him off, wish him good luck and ask him not to forget them. He has now grown elderly in the capital, his native town is now a dim memory: under the influence of new impressions, new acquaintances, relations, and interests, he has long ago forgotten both the names and faces of the people he knew so intimately in childhood; he

recollects only his closest kith and kin, and he pictures them just as they were when he left them, but they too have changed since then. From their letters he sees that he has nothing in common with them. When he replies to them, he tries to strike in with their mood and ideas; it is not surprising that he writes to them more and more rarely, and finally stops writing altogether. The thought of a relative or acquaintance coming to the capital scares him in the same way as the inhabitants of a border town are scared in war time by the thought that the enemy may march their way. In the capital, love at a distance is not understood; people here think that love, friendship, attachment and acquaintance are sustained by personal relationships, and are cooled and destroyed by parting and absence. In the provinces, people think the opposite; owing to the monotony of life, an inclination towards love and friendship is surprisingly developed there. People there are glad of anybody, and it is held to be a most sacred duty to interfere with one another and give people no peace. If relatives and friends cease bothering you, you consider yourself the most unfortunate, the most offended person in the world. When a provincial living in a small town is suddenly visited by a horde of relatives who turn his little house into a barrel packed with sardines, he, to all intents and purposes, is overcome with joy; his face wreathed with smiles, he dashes about, fusses the whole time, and feeds the whole crowd while inwardly he heartily curses them. Yet if these same people did not put up at his house next time he would never forgive them. Such is the patriarchal logic of the provinces! And it is with this kind of logic that the provincial sometimes comes to the capital on business with all his family. He has a relative in the capital who left his home town some twenty years before and has long forgotten all his relations and friends. Our provincial flies to him with open arms, with dear children who have to be fixed up at schools, and with his adored spouse, who has come to admire the fashionable shops of the capital. Oh's and Ah's, shouts, screams and squeaks fill the air. "Now, we have come straight to you, we wouldn't think of putting up at a tavern!" The city kinsman turns pale, and he does not know what to do, what to say; he resembles an inhabitant of a town captured by the enemy, into whose house a band of looting soldiers has broken. Meantime, he has been

listening to a lengthy account of how much he is loved, how much he is remembered, how much talked about and depended on, and how all are confident that he will assuredly help to place Kostya, Petya, Fedya and Mitya in the cadet corps, and Mashenka, Sashenka, Lyubochka and Tanechka in the ladies' institute. The city kinsman sees that his ruin or his salvation is the question of a minute; he nerves himself and explains to the invading foe in tones of frigid civility that he cannot possibly put them up, that his apartment is too small for his own family, that children are enrolled at corps and institutes by examination and in accordance with the regulations, that no patronage will help if vacancies are not available, or if the children are below or above the reception age, or fail to pass the examinations, all the more so the patronage of such an unimportant man as he is, and one who, moreover, is employed in quite a different department, and is not acquainted with any of the educational officers. The disappointed provincials retire in a fury, upbraiding the selfishness and depravity of dwellers in the capital, and regarding their relative as a monster. Yet the latter may be a most estimable person, whose only fault was that he did not wish to turn his apartment into a disgusting Gipsy camp, deprive himself of privacy in his own home, of any possibility of devoting himself to his official affairs in the quiet of his study, receiving at his home of an evening people of his acquaintance or men who were officially useful or necessary to him, and thus discommode himself, and undergo privations for the sake of utter strangers with whom he would not wish to keep up even an ordinary acquaintance. Yet these provincials, too, are, in their own way, kind-hearted and not at all stupid people; their only fault is, that in setting out for the capital, they had expected to find there, besides its hugeness, splendour and fashionable shops, their own little town, with the same customs, habits and concepts. In their own way, they love luxury and splendour and, if they have the means, they are prepared, albeit without any taste, to adorn their drawing-rooms and reception rooms in every possible way; they have no idea of private studies and do not know what they are meant for; their bedrooms and nurseries are always the dirtiest rooms in the house; they think nothing of cramping or discommoding themselves; the idea of comfort does not exist for them;

they are accustomed to overcrowding and love it, following the popular adage—all the more the merrier. They are at home to everyone, and are ready, in the words of Pyotr Ivanich, to muster a supper even in the dead of night. This trait, it is remarked by the nephew, is a virtue of the Russians, a statement with which Pyotr Ivanich emphatically disagrees. "What kind of virtue is this," he says. "People here welcome any rascal out of sheer boredom; come, make yourself at home, eat your fill, only amuse us in some way, help us to kill time, let us have a good look at you—after all it is something new—and we shall not grudge you the food—it doesn't cost us much anyway.... A disgusting virtue!" Pyotr Ivanich expressed himself rather bluntly but not entirely with injustice. Indeed, provincial heartiness and hospitality are mainly based on inactivity, idleness, boredom and habit. They measure the prestige of dwellers in the capital not by the place they hold, the connections they have nor the influence they enjoy, but by their rank, and our provincials fondly believe that if a man holds the rank of councilor of state, he is sure to be an omnipotent personage, a single word from whom will suffice to settle a lawsuit in your favour that has been dragging on for fifty years, or have your children enrolled at a particular school, or you yourself provided with an advantageous post, rank, and decoration. If you refuse any request of theirs, even though you were eager to fulfill it but powerless to do so, they will say that you are the most immoral person in the world, that you have grown conceited, are giving yourself airs, despise provincials. For with them the prime virtue is never to flaunt their superiority, never to refuse acquaintance with anybody, to be at the service of all and sundry. True, nowhere is there such showing off and posing, such respect for rank, seniority or titles, but there this vice, dangerous to peace and harmony, is mitigated by a virtuous readiness to make one's self small in the presence of a person who stands even one rank higher, and at the same time not to lower one's dignity in the presence of another who is one rank lower. Indeed, this virtue flourishes in the capital as well, although in forms more subtle. In the provinces, however, all this is done with truly Arcadian naiveness. "My dear fellow," says a rich landowner or important official to a poor landowner or official, "what's the matter, have you quite forgotten me, or am

I in your bad books, or do I feed my guests badly; I've always got a plate at my table for you, you silly ass!" And the poor fellow feels abashed, mutters apologies, while he stands in respectful posture before his patron; his eyes, however, shine with pleasure; he knows that where there is anger there can also be kindness, and in the scolding of one man there may be more love than in the soft words of another. "Well, never mind, God will forgive you! Dinner is served, so let's have a bite." Both are pleased, one because he has punctiliously observed the laws of patriarchal hospitality and has shown kindness to a poor fellow; the other because he has been well received and kindly treated by a person of such importance. And this poor fellow will always prefer the society of the aristocrats of this provincial backwoods and even the society of his inferiors to that of his complete equals, since he has a sense of his own dignity only when he humbles himself before those above him, and struts before those beneath him. This cannot be applied to all provincials, of course; there are everywhere people of education, wit and dignity, but they are everywhere in the minority and we speak of the majority. The direct influence of a man's environment is so strong that the best of provincials are not without provincial prejudices, and lose themselves on first arriving in the capital. Everything is so queer, so different from things at home. There life is simple, free and easy; people call on each other at any time and enter unannounced. A neighbour calls on another; there is nobody in the entrance hall unless it be an unshaved lackey or a ragged urchin asleep on a dirty bench; he sleeps for nothing better to do, although the filth and stink all around could provide him with work for two days. And so our guest enters the reception room and finds it empty, walks into the drawing room and finds that empty too; goes into the bedroom where he is greeted with a little feminine shriek—mumbles his apologies in an agreeable flutter of confusion and hastily retreats into the drawing room, where somebody runs out to him, expresses delight at his coming, and both laugh at the amusing adventure. While here in the capital, everything is shut, there are bells everywhere, the inevitable "Whom should I announce, Sir?" is sure to be asked, followed by the reply that the master is either not at home, or is indisposed, regrets that he is engaged; and if the guest is received, he is met

with politeness, of course, but such a frigid and indifferent politeness; no heartiness, no invitation to lunch or dinner.

But let us turn to the hero of *An Ordinary Story*. He possesses a sense of delicacy and decorum; although he was sure of a hearty welcome from his uncle, a sort of intuition made him put up at an inn. Were he in the habit of pondering on things that most concerned him, he would have stopped to think of the intuition that made him go to the inn and not straight to his uncle's house, and he would very soon have realized that there was no reason to expect from his uncle any other kind of reception except one of kindly indifference, that he had no claims on the amenities of his home. Unfortunately, however, he was in the habit of thinking only on matters of love, friendship and other lofty and remote things, and therefore he appeared at his uncle's house a provincial from head to foot. The latter's words, full of wit and common sense, explained nothing to him, and only produced upon him a painful and sad impression, made him suffer romantically. He was thrice a romanticist—by nature, by education and by circumstances; any one of these causes would be enough to throw a steady man off his balance, and make him commit all sorts of follies. Some find that with his material tokens of immaterial relations and his other extremely childish vagaries, our hero is an improbable type, especially in our days. We concede—there may be a particle of truth in this observation, but that is not the point; the full portrayal of young Aduyev's character should be sought not here, but in his love adventures. Here he is himself, here he is representative of a numerous class of people who are as like him as two peas, and really exist in this world. We shall say a few words about this old but still interesting breed to which our romantic little creature belongs.

This is a breed of people whom nature has plentifully endowed with a nervous sensitiveness that frequently verges on morbid susceptibility. They reveal at an early age a fine perspicacity of vague sensations and emotions, which they love to observe and analyse, and call this enjoying an inner life. They are therefore great dreamers, and love either solitude or a select circle of friends with whom they can discuss their sensations, feelings and ideas, although they are as poor in ideas as they are rich in sensations and emotions. In general, nature has bestowed upon them

rich gifts of the soul, but these are of a purely passive kind. Some of these people have a wide understanding, but not one of them is capable of doing or producing anything. He is a bit of a musician, a bit of a painter, a bit of a poet, if need be even a bit of a critic and *littérateur*, but all these talents are such that he not only cannot acquire fame or reputation through them, but earn a moderate livelihood. Of all the mental faculties, imagination and vision are most strongly developed with them, but not the vision by which means the poet creates, but the vision that makes a person prefer the enjoyment of dreams of the blessings of life to the enjoyment of the actual blessings of life. This they call living the life sublime, one that is beyond the reach of the vulgar crowd, soaring on high while the despised crowd crawls in the dust. By nature they are kind-hearted, genial, and capable of generous impulses, but since in them imagination dominates over reason and the heart, they soon achieve a conscious contempt for "vulgar common sense, a quality, which in their opinion pertains to people that are material, coarse and paltry, for whom nothing lofty and beautiful exists"; their heart, continuously violated in its instincts and strivings by their will, under the domination of their imagination soon becomes starved of love, and these people, themselves unaware of it, develop into horrible egoists and despots, fondly believing that they are the most loving and selfless of men. Since they surprised everybody in childhood by their precocity, and exerted, as much through their merits as through their shortcomings, a strong influence on their fellows, many of whom stood higher than they did, it is natural that they should have been bepraised from their early years and conceived a high estimation of their own persons. Nature withal had provided them with a greater measure of vanity than is essential for the equipoise of human life, and it is not to be wondered at that easy and ill-merited successes swell their vanity to extraordinary proportions. This vanity is always so effectively covered up that they honestly do not suspect it in themselves, and sincerely take it to be the strivings of genius towards fame, towards everything that is great, lofty and beautiful. They are frequently obsessed by three cherished ideas—fame, friendship and love. All the rest does not exist for them; it is, in their opinion, the attribute of the contemptible crowd. All species of glory are

equally seductive to them, and at first they hesitate long before choosing the path that will lead them to fame. It does not enter their mind that one who considers himself equally proficient in all fields of fame is proficient in none, that the greatest of men learnt that they were geniuses only after they had performed something really great and worthy of genius, and they learnt this not from their own selves but from the enthusiastic plaudits of the crowd. And so they are enamoured of military glory, and they would fain be Napoleons, but only on condition that they receive, to begin with, command of a small army, say a hundred thousand strong, so they be able immediately to launch on a brilliant career of victories. Or they may be attracted towards civic glory, stipulating that the rank of minister be immediately conferred upon them so they be able immediately to reform the state (they always have ready in their heads splendid projects for all kinds of reforms, which can be committed to paper without delay). But since men's envy has rendered it impossible for such geniuses to rise like meteors, and requires that every one should start his career from the beginning and not from the end, that genius should prove its worth in deed and not merely in words, our geniuses are perforce constrained very soon to seek other paths of glory. Sometimes they seize upon science, but not for long; it is dull and dry stuff that calls for studies and hard work, and provides food neither for the heart nor for the imagination. There remains art, but which branch should they choose? No genius can master architecture, sculpture, painting or music without arduous and long labour, and what is worse and most offensive to the romanticist, a labour whose initial stages are purely material and mechanical. There remains poetry, and they attack it full tilt, to crown themselves in dreams with a flaming halo of poetic glory, without yet having done a single stroke of work. Their chief delusion consists in the absurd conviction that poetry requires merely talent and inspiration, that he who has been born a poet does not need to learn or know anything; he who really possesses great talent will, by the force of that self-same talent, be very soon obliged to realize the absurdity of this idea, and will begin to study everything, to scrutinize and listen to everything with keen attention. No! Their principal and fatal error consists in their having irrevocably convinced themselves

of their poetical calling, that unfortunate idea has grown upon them, so that were they to be disappointed in it they would lose all faith in themselves and in life, and become palsied old men in the heyday of their lives. And so our romanticist begins to write poetry, in which he speaks of things that have long ago been spoken of by poets, great and small, and by men who were not poets at all. He sings of sufferings which he has not known, and speaks of vague hopes which merely show that he does not know himself what he wants. He stretches out to men his brethren arms full of love, and would press all mankind to his bosom, or bitterly complains that the crowd has coldly spurned his brotherly love. The poor fellow does not realize that there is nothing easier than flaring up with a fierce love of humanity in the quiet of one's study; at least it is far easier than spending one sleepless night at the bedside of a very sick person. The romanticists usually set an extremely high value on feelings, thinking that only they have been endowed with the capacity for deep feelings, that others do not possess them since they do not publish the fact. Feeling is, of course, an important aspect of human nature, but people do not always act in life in accordance with their capacity for profound and powerful feeling. There are such that the more they feel, the more impervious they become to sentiment in actual life; such a person will be reduced to tears by verses, music or a vivid presentation of human distress in a novel or a story, but will pass by with indifference actual sufferings which he witnesses with his own eyes. Some landowner's steward, perhaps a German by origin, will read to his Minchen with tears in his eyes Schiller's rapturous epistle to Laura and, on finishing the last verse, will proceed with no less relish to flog muzhiks for having dared to timorously hint to their gracious master that they were not entirely pleased with the paternal solicitude of his steward for their weal, a solicitude from which he grows fat while they grow thin. Our romanticist's verses are smooth and polished, and even do not lack a certain poetical finish; although they have ample rhetorical padding, they do here and there reveal sentiment, sometimes even a spark of idea (an echo of someone else's); in a word one can discern something in the nature of talent. His verses are published in the magazines and evoke praise from many; if they appear at a transitory period

of our literature, they may even acquire a considerable reputation. But transitory periods in literature are particularly fatal to such poets. Their fame, acquired in a short time by *something*, disappears in a very short time simply from *nothing;* at first, people stop praising their verses, then stop reading them, and finally printing them. Young Aduyev, however, did not succeed even for an instant in enjoying even a spurious fame; he was prevented from so doing both by the time in which he brought out his poems and by his clever and outspoken uncle. His misfortunes lay not in the fact that he was untalented, but in his possessing a semi-talent instead of talent, and this in poetry is worse than lack of talent, because it inspires false hopes. Remember how he was affected by disappointment in his poetical calling....

Friendship, too, demands a heavy price from these romanticists. To be genuine, sentiment must above all be natural and simple. Friendship sometimes develops from similarity, and sometimes from oppositeness of natures. It is, however, an involuntary sentiment, because it is free; it is governed by the heart, and not by the mind or the will. A friend cannot be sought as one might seek a contractor to perform a certain piece of work; a friend cannot be chosen; friendship is contracted accidentally and unnoticeably, and is cemented by habit and circumstances. Real friends do not label the feeling that binds them together, do not prate about it without end, demand nothing of each other in the name of friendship, but do whatever they can for each other. There have been instances of one friend not being able to survive the death of another and dying soon afterwards; another, from being a merry person, falls into an incurable melancholy after losing a friend, whilst a third will grieve and mourn for a time, and soon find solace, but if he preserves the memory of the departed, it will always be for him a remembrance both sad and comforting—he was a true friend of the departed. though he not only did not die of his bereavement, did not go mad or fall into melancholy, but found the strength to be happy enough in life without his friend. The degree and character of friendship depend upon the personalities of the friends; the chief thing is that their relations should not in any way be strained, forced, or rapturous, there should be nothing resembling obliga-

tion or duty; there are some people who are prepared to go to any lengths for a friend so as to be able to say to themselves or to others, "that's the sort of friend I am," or "such is the friendship I am capable of!" This is the kind of friendship that romanticists adore. They form friendships on a pre-established plan, where the substance, duties and rights of friendship are exactly specified; the only thing they do not do is to conclude a contract with their friends. They need friendship to amaze the world with and show it how in friendship great natures differ from ordinary people, from the crowd. They feel drawn to friendship not so much by a need for sympathy which is so strong in youth, as by a need for the companionship of a person whom they could ceaselessly talk to about their own precious selves. To use their own high-flown style, a friend to them is a precious vessel into which one can pour his most sacred and cherished sentiments, thoughts, hopes, dreams and the like; whereas in actual fact, a friend for them is simply a dustbin into which the dross of their vanity can be thrown. Such people do not know what friendship is because it soon transpires that their friends are ingrates, recreants and monsters, and they wax wrathful against people who could not and did not want to understand and appreciate them....

Love costs them still dearer, because this feeling itself is stronger and more poignant than others. Love is usually divided into many species and genera, but these divisions are for the most part absurd, because they have been contrived by people who are more capable of dreaming or discoursing about love than actually loving. First of all, they divide love into material or sensual, and platonic or ideal, and despise the former and admire the latter. There are indeed people so coarse that they can give themselves up only to the animal delights of love, without bothering even about beauty or youth; but even this love, however coarse it may be, is to be preferred to the platonic, because it is the more natural; the latter is suited only to the guardians of oriental harems.... Man is neither a brute nor an angel; he must love neither carnally nor platonically, but humanly. However much love may be idealized, it is obvious that nature has endowed people with this wonderful feeling as much for their own happiness as for the multiplication and maintenance of the human race. There are as many kinds of love as there are people on

earth, because each person loves in accordance with his temperament, character, concepts and so on. Every kind of love is genuine and beautiful in its way, if only it has its seat in the heart and not in the head. Romanticists, however, are particularly prone to the love of the head. First, they draw up the plan of their love, and then search for a woman worthy of sharing it, failing which they put up with a temporary expedient; it costs them nothing to bring themselves to love, since it is their head that does it all and not their heart. They need love not for the sake of happiness or delight, but for the sake of vindicating in practice their lofty theory of love. Such people love by the book, and are afraid to depart from a single paragraph of their program. Their main concern is to appear great in love and to resemble ordinary people in nothing. Nevertheless, in young Aduyev's love for Nadenka there was so much sincere and genuine feeling; his romanticism was silenced for a time by nature, but not overcome. He might have enjoyed long happiness, but was happy only for a fleeting moment, and had only himself to blame. Nadenka was cleverer than Aduyev, and, what is more, simpler and more natural. A spoilt and capricious child, she loved him with her heart and not with her head, without theories and without claims to genius; she saw in love only its brighter and gayer side and so seemed to make a happy game of it: she was playful, coquettish and constantly teased Aduyev with her caprices. But his love was "grievous and heavy," gasping for breath, and all in a lather, like a horse dragging a load uphill. Being a romanticist he was also a pedant, and in his eyes lightness and levity were an outrage to the sacred and sublime feeling of love. He wished in love to be a theatrical hero. In his talks with Nadenka, he very soon exhausted the theme of his feelings, and had to repeat what had already been said before, whereas Nadenka wanted to occupy not only her heart but her mind as well, because she was impulsive, and impressionable and craved for everything new; what was customary and monotonous soon palled. But for this Aduyev was the most incapable person in the world, because his mind was virtually wrapped in profound sleep: considering himself a great philosopher, he did not think, but dreamed, and went about with his head in a cloud. Such being his attitude towards the object of his love, any rival was a source of danger to him; this rival

might be worse than Aduyev but so long as he did not resemble him there was even the danger of Nadenka discovering in him the charm of novelty. And suddenly a count appears upon the scene, a brilliant man of the world. Aduyev, intending to conduct himself like a hero toward this man, for this very reason behaved like a stupid, ill-bred boy and thus ruined all his chances. His uncle explained to him, albeit too late and to no purpose, that he had only himself to blame for what had happened. How pitiful is this wretched martyr to his own perversive and narrow nature in his last talk with Nadenka and then in the conversation with his uncle! His sufferings are unbearable. He cannot but agree with what his uncle says, but at the same time he cannot see the affair in its true light. How can he stoop to so-called wiles, he who loved in order to amaze himself and the world by the immensity of his passion, albeit the world had no thought either of him or of his love! According to his theory, fate should have sent him a heroine as great as he was himself, instead of which it had sent him a frivolous minx, a heartless coquette! Nadenka, who but recently had been above all women in his eyes, suddenly fell lower than any of them! All this would have been very funny, had it not been so sad. False reasons cause no less exquisite sufferings than genuine reasons do. And so Aduyev gradually passed from sombre despair to a cold dejection and, true romanticist that he was, began to flaunt his "picturesque gloom." A year elapsed, and he now despised Nadenka, asserting that there had been no heroism or self-sacrifice in her love. When his aunt asked him what sort of love he would demand of a woman, he replied, "I would demand first place in her heart; the woman I love should not notice or see any other men besides me; they must all seem unbearable to her. I alone stand higher, am handsomer (here he drew himself up to his full height), better and nobler than all others. Every moment lived without me should seem to her a moment lost; in my eyes and in my conversation she must find happiness, and know no other; for me she must give up everything—despised advantages and interests, throw off the despotic yoke of mother or husband, fly with me if necessary to the ends of the earth, put up with all privations, and finally despise death itself. That is what I call love!"

How this balderdash reminds one of the words which an oriental

despot addresses to his chief eunuch: "If any of my odalisques utters a man's name in her sleep, and that name is not mine, tie her up in a sack and throw her into the sea!" The poor dreamer is confident that his words express a passion that only demi-gods are capable of, and not ordinary mortals. In actual fact he has merely expressed unbridled vanity, a most disgusting egoïsm. It is not a woman to love that he needs, but a slave to torture with impunity by the caprices of his egoism and vanity. Before demanding such a love from a woman, he should ask himself whether he was able to return it. His feeling assured him that he was capable, but in this neither feeling nor mind can be trusted, but only experience. But for the romanticist feeling is the only infallible authority in the solution of all problems of life. Even had he been capable of such a love, it should have been a reason for him to fear love and flee it, because this love is not human, but savage, a mutual tormenting of each other. Love requires freedom; whilst they belong to each other from time to time, those who love wish to belong to themselves at times. Aduyev demanded an eternal love, without understanding that the more living and passionate love is and the closer it approaches to the ideal of love sung by the poets, the shorter-lived it is, the sooner it cools and passes into indifference, and sometimes into aversion. On the contrary, the calmer and quieter love is, that is to say the more prosaic it is, the longer-lived it is; habit cements love so that it lasts a lifetime. Poetical and passionate love is the flower of our life, of our youth; it is experienced by few and only once in a lifetime, although some may afterwards love again, and several times, but never in the same way, because, as the German poet said, the May of life blossoms but once. It was not for nothing that Shakespeare made Romeo and Juliet die at the end of his tragedy; in this way they remain in the reader's mind as heroes of love, its apotheosis; had he let them live, they would have appeared to us in the role of happy man and wife who, sitting together, might yawn, and even quarrel at times, which is not at all poetical.

Then fate sent our hero just the kind of woman he desired, that is, such as he was himself, spoilt, and with heart and brains turned inside out. At first, he trod on enchanted ground, forgot everything else in the world, spent his time with this woman from

early morning till late at night. What did this bliss consist in? In talks of his love. And this passionate young man, sitting alone with a beautiful young woman who loved him and whom he loved, neither blushed nor paled, nor languished with burning desires, it sufficed him to talk about their mutual love!... This, by the way, is understandable. A strong penchant for idealism and romanticism is nearly always a sign of lack of temperament; such people are sexless, like the cryptogamia of the vegetable kingdom, mushrooms for example. We understand the palpitant, timid adoration of a woman, which does not contain a single audacious desire; but that is not platonic love—it is the first fresh moment of virginal love—it is not the absence of passion, but passion that is still fearful of its own manifestation. One's first love begins with this, but to stop at this stage would be as ridiculous and silly as to wish to remain a child all one's life and ride a hobby horse. Love has its own laws of development, its ages, like flowers or human life. It has its luxuriant spring, its sultry summer, and finally its autumn, which for some is warm, bright and fruitful, for others cold, bleak and barren. But our hero did not wish to know the laws of the heart, of nature, of reality; he invented for them his own laws, and proudly regarded the real world as a figment, and the figment created by his imagination as the world of reality. In defiance of practicability, he stubbornly wished to remain all his life at the first stage of love. However, these effusions of the soul with Tafayeva very soon began to tire him, and he decided to mend matters by a proposal of marriage. If so, he should have hurried; but he only thought that he had made up his mind; what he wanted was merely a subject for new dreams. Meanwhile he was becoming thoroughly sick of Tafayeva's cloying love; he began to tyrannize her in the most rough and repellent manner, because he no longer loved her. He had begun to realize before this that freedom in love was not at all a bad thing, that it was pleasant to visit a beloved woman, but also pleasant to be able to take a walk along the Nevsky Prospect, to dine with one's friends and acquaintances when one feels like it, to spend an evening with them—that in the final analysis, one can be in love and not give up one's pursuits. After most barbarously tormenting the poor woman for an unfortunate situation, for which he was much

more to blame than she, he ends up by telling himself that he does not love her, and that it is time to bring his affair with her to an end. Thus his stupid ideal of love was shattered under the impact of experience. He perceived his own inefficacy in the face of a love of which he had dreamed all his life. He saw clearly that he was no hero, but a very ordinary person, worse than those he had despised, that he was ambitious without worth, exacting without the right to be, presumptuous without the aptitude, proud and puffed up without merit, an ingrate and an egoist. The discovery stunned him like a thunderbolt, but did not induce him to make his peace with life and take the right road. He fell into a dead apathy, and decided to avenge himself upon nature and mankind for his nonentity by associating with the brute Kostyakov, and indulging in empty dissipation without feeling any desire for it. His last love affair was despicable; he intended to ruin a poor passionate girl out of sheer *ennui*, without even the excuse of sensual lust as a possible justification, although this is but a poor excuse, especially when there is a more direct and honest path to this. The girl's father taught him a lesson that was a terrible blow to his pride: he promised to give him a thrashing; our hero, in despair, wanted to throw himself into the Neva, but could not muster the courage to do so. A concert to which his aunt dragged him stirred his former dreams, and brought about a frank talk with his aunt and uncle. Here he accused the latter of being responsible for all his misfortunes. The uncle had indeed, in his way, been mistaken in a number of things, but he had been true to himself, had not lied or pretended, had sincerely said what he had thought and felt; if his words had done more harm than good to his nephew, it was the fault of the narrow, morbid and tainted nature of our hero. He was one of those people who sometimes see the truth, but either do not reach it when they make a dash for it, or jump over it, so that they are only near it but never in it. On leaving St. Petersburg for the country, he got even with it by aid of phrases and verses, quoting Pushkin's poem: "The Barbarian artist wielding his lazy brush".... These gentlemen are never without their monologues and verses, the babblers!...

He arrived in the country a living corpse. His moral life was completely paralyzed, his very appearance had changed so

much that his mother hardly recognized him. The latter he treated respectfully, but coldly, and confided nothing to her. Finally he realized that they had nothing in common between them, that if he tried to explain why his hair had grown so thin, she would understand it just as Yevsei and Agraphena would. His mother's kindness and compliance soon became irksome to him. His surroundings, which had witnessed the years of his childhood, revived his former dreams, and he began to lament their irretrievable loss, asserting that happiness lay only in illusions and phantoms. This is the common conviction of all spineless, futile and deficient natures. Experience would seem to have adequately taught him that all his misfortunes were due to his giving himself up to illusions and dreams, to imagining that he possessed a great poetical talent when he possessed none at all, that he had been created for a kind of heroic and self-sacrificing friendship and stupendous love, when there was nothing in him that was heroic or self-sacrificing. He was an ordinary man, but not in any way vulgar. He was kind-hearted, loving, intelligent, and not without education; all his misfortunes arose from his desire to play the part of an extraordinary man, though he was merely an ordinary man. Who of us in his youth has not dreamed, harboured illusions, and chased mirages, and who has not been disappointed in them? Who has escaped paying for these disappointments with heartburnings, anguish and apathy, and who has not later laughed heartily at all these things? Healthy natures, however, only gain from this practical logic of life and experience; they develop and mature morally. It is the romanticists that perish from it....

We were somehow oddly affected when we first read the letter that our hero wrote to his uncle and aunt after his mother's death, a letter full of spiritual calm and common sense. But we explained it to ourselves as a desire on the author's part to send his hero back to St. Petersburg to complete his quixotic career by the perpetration of fresh follies. This letter concludes the second part of the novel, and the epilogue begins four years after our hero's return to St. Petersburg. Pyotr Ivanich now appears upon the scene. This personage has been introduced into the novel not for its own sake, but for the sake of better showing up the hero by sheer force of contrast. This has given the whole novel a somewhat didactic colouring, for which many, not without reason, have

reproached the author. The latter has nevertheless been able in this case as well to show himself a person of unusual talent. Pyotr Ivanich is not an abstract idea but a living person, a figure depicted in full stature with a bold, sweeping and true brush. As a man he is judged by some too good, by others too bad, and in both cases he is judged erroneously. Some would see in him a sort of ideal, a model to be imitated; these people are of the positive and sensible kind. Others would see in him almost a monster; such people are dreamers. Pyotr Ivanich is a very good man in his way; he is clever, very clever, because he perfectly understands feelings and passions which he himself does not possess and despises; though in no way poetical, he understands poetry a thousand times better than his nephew, who contrived from Pushkin's first works to imbibe ideas and a frame of mind such as he could only have obtained from the works of phrase-mongers and rhetoricians. Pyotr Ivanich is selfish, by nature cold and incapable of generous impulses, but at the same time he is not only without malice, but decidedly good-natured. He is honest, upright, not a hypocrite or a pretender; he is dependable, and will not promise what he cannot or will not do; what he promises, he is sure to fulfill. In a word, he is an honourable man in the full sense of the word—would there were more like him. He drew up for himself a list of unalterable rules of life, in conformity with his nature and common sense. He did not pride himself upon them nor boast of them, but he held them to be infallibly true. Indeed, the mantle of his practical philosophy was made of a strong and durable material which could well protect him from life's inclemencies. What was his amazement and horror when, on reaching the age of grey hairs and lumbago, he suddenly noticed a rent in his mantle, true only one rent, but what a big one. He made no special effort to secure domestic bliss but was sure that he had established it on a firm foundation, only to discover suddenly that his poor wife was the victim of his wisdom, that he had ruined her life, suffocated her in a cold and stifling atmosphere.

What a lesson for sober-minded men, the representatives of common sense! Human beings evidently need a little of something more besides common sense! It is evidently on the borders of extremes that fate most frequently lies in wait for us. Passions

too are evidently essential for human nature to be complete, and it is not always possible with impunity to impose upon another the happiness which can satisfy only us, for a person can be happy only according to his own nature. Pyotr Ivanich had cleverly and subtly calculated that he had to possess himself of his wife's concepts, convictions and inclinations, without letting her notice it, and lead her upon the road of life in a way that would make her believe that she was travelling of her own accord. However, he made one serious blunder in his calculations. For all his cleverness, he did not realize that for this purpose he should have chosen a wife utterly impervious to passion, and the need for love and sympathy, a cold, good-natured, insensible woman, preferably an empty person, and even a little stupid. His vanity, however, would not have allowed him to marry such a woman, so that it would have been better had he not married at all.

The character of Pyotr Ivanich is sustained from beginning to end with amazing faithfulness, but the hero himself in the epilogue is unrecognizable. This is an entirely false and unnatural character. Such a change might have been conceivable had he been an ordinary babbler and phrasemonger who repeats the words of others without understanding them, and assumes feelings, ecstasies and sufferings that he has never felt. But young Aduyev had the ill luck to be frequently over-sincere in his aberrations and absurdities. His romanticism lay in his nature; such romanticists never become sober-minded people. The author would have done better to abandon his hero to his rustic seclusion, leading a life of apathy and idleness, than to give him a profitable post in the civil service in St. Petersburg and make him marry a rich dowry. Still better and more natural would it have been to turn him into a mystic, a fanatic, or sectarian, but the best and most natural thing to do would have been to make him, for example, a Slavophile. Here Aduyev would have remained true to his own nature, would have continued his old mode of life, believing that he had made tremendous strides forward, whilst in actual fact he would have only planted the banners of his old dreams on new soil. He who had formerly dreamed of glory, friendship and love would now have dreamed of nations and tribes, of how fate had endowed the Slavs with love, and the Teutons with enmity, of how in the legendary days of Gostomysl

the Slavs had enjoyed a higher civilization, that served as a model for the whole world, of how modern Russia was rapidly approaching that stage of civilization, and how only the blind and bigoted could not see this, when all those who had eyes and sober imagination had clearly perceived it a long time ago. Our hero would then have been a quite modern romanticist, and it would not have entered anybody's head that men of that stamp no longer exist.

The denouement invented by the author spoils the impression produced by this splendid work, because it is false and unnatural. In the epilogue it is only Pyotr Ivanich and Lizaveta Alexandrovna that are well depicted to the very end; as for the hero of the novel, one might do better not to read the epilogue at all.... How could such a powerful talent fall into such strange error? Was he perhaps unable to cope with his subject? That cannot be said! The author was carried away by a desire to test his strength in a field that was not his—the field of conscious thought—and he ceased to be a poet. It is here that the difference between his talent and that of Iskander most clearly unfolds itself; even in the sphere of a reality that was foreign to his talent, Iskander was able to extricate himself from the situation by the power of mind; the author of *An Ordinary Story* lapsed badly because he relinquished for a moment the guidance of immediate talent. With Iskander thought always goes first, and he knows in advance what and why he is writing; he presents realities with amazing fidelity with the sole purpose of having his say on them, pronouncing his judgment. Mr. Goncharov draws his figures, characters and scenes primarily to satisfy his own requirements and to enjoy his pictorial ability; he must leave it to his readers to pass opinions, pronounce judgment and draw the moral. Iskander's pictures are conspicuous not so much for fidelity of depiction and delicacy of brush as for a profound knowledge of the realities which he describes; they are conspicuous more for their actual than their poetical veracity, entertaining not so much by their poetical style as by a style replete with intelligence, thought, humour and wit, always remarkably original and novel. The principal force of Mr. Goncharov's talent is always in the elegance and delicacy of his brush, the faithfulness of his drawing skill; he unexpectedly relapses into poetry even when depict-

ing trivial and extraneous details, as for instance in the poetical description of the young Aduyev's works burning in the fireplace. In Iskander's talent, poetry is a secondary agent, and thought the primary; in Mr. Goncharov's talent, poetry is the primary, principal and sole agent. . . .

In spite of the weak, or rather the spoilt, epilogue, Mr. Goncharov's novel remains one of the remarkable works of Russian literature. Among its particular merits is its pure, correct, smooth, free and flowing language. In this respect, Mr. Goncharov's narrative is not a printed book, but a living improvisation. Some have complained that the dialogues between uncle and nephew are too long and tiresome. For us these conversations belong to the best part of the book. They contain nothing that is abstract or irrelevant; they are not debates, but lively, passionate and dramatic arguments, in which each of the participants reveals himself as a person and a character, defends, as it were, his moral existence. True, in this kind of dialogues, especially in view of the novel's slightly didactic tone, any talent might easily have stumbled. All the more it is to the credit of Mr. Goncharov that he so happily solved a difficult problem, and remained a poet where he might so easily have dropped into the tone of a moralist.[28]

We next have to deal with Mr. Turgenev's *Papers of a Sportsman*. There is much in common between Mr. Turgenev's talent and that of Lugansky (Mr. Dahl). Both of them are most at home in physiological sketches of various aspects of Russian life and Russian people. Mr. Turgenev began his literary career by writing lyrical poetry; among his shorter verses are three or four noteworthy pieces, as for instance *The Old Landowner*, *A Ballad*, *Fedya*, and *A Man Like Many Others*. However, he came off well with these poems because they either do not contain anything lyrical, or their principal feature is not lyricism but hints at Russian life. Mr. Turgenev's lyrical verses proper reveal a complete absence of independent lyrical talent. He has written several poems. When *Parasha*, the first of them, appeared, it was noted by the public for its facile verse, its gay irony and faithful Russian landscapes, but chiefly for its felicitous physiological sketches depicting in detail the life and manners of the landowners. The poem, however, failed to achieve a lasting success,

because when he penned it the author was concerned not with writing a physiological sketch but a poem of the kind for which he possessed no independent talent. Hence its best features shone forth in sort of casual, haphazard flashes. Next he wrote a poem *A Conversation*. Its verses are powerful and resonant and contain much feeling, thought and intellect; since, however, this thought is borrowed and not his own, the poem, though it might even please at a first reading, evokes no desire for a second reading. Mr. Turgenev's third poem *Andrei* contains much that is good, for it has many faithful sketches of Russian life, but as a whole the poem was a failure, because it is a story of love, the portrayal of which does not lie within the scope of the author's talent. The heroine's letter to the hero is long and prolix, and it contains more sentimentality than pathos. Generally speaking, these efforts of Mr. Turgenev reveal talent, but a talent that is sort of irresolute and indefinite. He also tried his hand at the narrative; his *Andrei Kolossov* contains many splendid sketches of characters and Russian life, but as a story, this work as a whole was so queer, inconsequential and clumsy that very few people noticed the good points it really contained. It was then obvious that Mr. Turgenev was seeking a path of his own and had not yet found it, for this is not a thing that anybody can always easily or quickly find. Finally Mr. Turgenev wrote a story in verse, *The Landowner*, not a poem, but a physiological sketch of the life of the landowning class, a joke if you will, but a joke that somehow turned out to be much superior than any of the author's poems. Its racy epigrammatical verse, its gay irony, the faithfulness of its pictures, and at the same time an integrity sustained throughout the work—all tend to prove that Mr. Turgenev had discovered the real genre of his talent, has found his own element and that there are no reasons why he should give up verses entirely. At the same time there appeared his story in prose, *Three Portraits* which reveal that Mr. Turgenev had found his real road in prose as well. Finally his story *Khor and Kalinych* appeared in the first issue of the *Sovremennik* of last year. The success of this short story, which had been published in the "Miscellany" column, was unexpected for the author, and induced him to continue his sportsman's stories. Here his talent was fully displayed. Evidently he does not possess a talent for pure creative

genius, he cannot create characters and place them in such mutual relationships in which they form themselves of their own accord into novels or stories. He can depict scenes of reality which he has observed or studied, he can, if you wish, create, but only out of material that is ready at hand, provided by actual life. This is not simply copying from real life; the latter does not provide the author with ideas but, as it were, suggests them to him, puts him in their way. He reworks the ready-made substance according to his ideal and gives us a scene, more alive, more eloquent and full of meaning than the actual incident which prompted him to write the scene; this sort of thing requires a certain measure of poetical talent. True, his entire ability sometimes consists only in faithfully describing a familiar person or an event of which he was a witness, since in actual life there are sometimes phenomena which, when faithfully put on paper, have all the features of artistic fiction. This, too, requires talent, and talents of this kind have their degrees. In both cases Mr. Turgenev possesses a highly remarkable talent. The chief characteristic feature of his talent lies in the fact that he would hardly be able faithfully to portray a character whose likeness he had not met in actual life. He must always keep his feet on the soil of reality. For that kind of art he has been endowed by nature with ample means: the gift of observation, the ability swiftly and faithfully to grasp and appreciate any phenomenon, instinctively to divine its causes and effects, and thus through surmise and reflection to complement the store of information that he needs, when mere enquiries explain little.

It is no wonder that the short piece *Khor and Kalinych* met with such success. In it the author approached the people from an angle which no one had ever approached them before. Khor, with his practical sense and practical nature, his crude but strong and clear mind, his profound contempt for womenfolk and his deep-rooted aversion to cleanliness and neatness, is a type of Russian muzhik who has been able to create for himself a position of significance under extremely adverse circumstances. Kalinych, however, is a fresher and fuller type of the Russian muzhik, he is a poetical nature in common folk. With what sympathy and kindliness the author describes his heroes, and how he succeeds in making the readers love them with all their hearts! In all, seven sportsman's stories were published last year in the

Sovremennik. In them the author acquaints his readers with various aspects of provincial life, with people of diverse rank and condition. Not all his stories are of equal merit; some are better, others are worse, but there is not one which is not in some way interesting, entertaining and instructive. So far, *Khor and Kalinych* remains the finest of all these sportsman's tales; next comes *The Agent* and then *The Peasant Proprietor Ovsyanikov* and *The Counting-House*. One can only wish that Mr. Turgenev will write at least entire volumes of such stories.

Although Turgenev's story *Pyotr Petrovich Karatayev*, which appeared in the second issue of the *Sovremennik* for last year, does not belong to his hunting tales, this work is just as masterly a physiological sketch of the purely Russian character, and with a Moscow flavour at that. In this story, the author's talent is as fully expressed as in the finest of his hunting tales.

We cannot but mention Mr. Turgenev's extraordinary skill in describing scenes of Russian nature. He loves nature not as a dilettante but as an artist, and therefore he never tries to present it only in its poetical aspects, but takes it exactly as it appears to him. His pictures are always true, and you never fail to recognize our Russian landscapes in them.[29]

Mr. Grigorovich has devoted his talent exclusively to depicting the life of the lower classes of the people. His talent too has much that is analogous with that of Mr. Dahl. He too keeps to actual life, which he knows well and has thoroughly studied, but his two latest essays, *The Village* (*Otechestvenniye Zapiski*, 1846) and especially *Anton Goremika* (*Sovremennik*, 1847) are much more than physiological sketches. *Anton Goremika* is more than a story; it is a novel in which everything is true to a basic idea, everything refers to it, and the plot and denouement proceed naturally from the very essence of the matter. Although outwardly the whole story revolves on the subject of a peasant losing his miserable horse, although Anton is a common muzhik, not at all of the smart or shrewd kind, he is a tragical figure in the full sense of the word. The story is a moving one, after the reading of which sad and weighty thoughts involuntarily crowd into one's mind. We sincerely hope that Mr. Grigorovich will continue to follow this road, from which so much may be expected of his talent.... Let him not be daunted by the obloquy of

detractors; these gentlemen are useful and necessary for the exact determination of talent's measure; the larger the pack of them that follows on the heels of success, the greater that success is....

The last issue of the *Sovremennik* for last year published *Polinka Saks*, a story by Mr. Druzhinin, a complete newcomer to Russian literature. Much in this story smacks of immaturity of thought and exaggeration, and Saks is a somewhat ideal personality, but despite this, the story contains so much truth, so much warmth of soul and a faithful intelligent understanding of reality, so much originality that it immediately attracted general attention. Especially well sustained is the character of the heroine; apparently the author has a keen understanding of Russian women. Mr. Druzhinin's second story, which appeared this year, confirms the impression created by his first story—that the author possesses an independent talent—and leads us to expect much of him in the future.

Among the most outstanding stories published last year was *Pavel Alexeyevich Igrivy* by Mr. Dahl (*Otechestvenniye Zapiski*). As characters, as types, Karl Ivanich Gonobobel and Captain Shilokhvastov are among the finest sketches from the pen of the author. All the personages in the story have been splendidly depicted, especially Lyubonka's adorable parents, but the young Gonobobel and his friend Shilokhvastov are creations of genius.[30] These are types that are fairly familiar to many in real life, but it is for the first time that art has made use of them and turned them over to the world for its pleasant acquaintance. This story pleases not by its details and particularities alone, like all Mr. Dahl's big stories; it is *almost* sustained as a whole. We say *almost* because an event that forms the tragedy of the hero of the story produces upon the reader the impression of something unexpected and incomprehensible. A woman is deeply loved by a man who does so much for her; she too seems to love him deeply. Her rake of a husband dies, and the hero hastens abroad to join her, full of fond hopes, only to find her married to another. The author, in fact, did not wish to give his story a colouring that would make the reader find such a denouement natural. Igrivy is absurdly shy and reserved, which is why he allowed two scoundrels to snatch from him the woman he loved. Whilst she was suffering in her married life, he bore himself toward her in a most

delicate and noble-hearted manner, but in no wise like a lover. Hence her awed and frightened feeling for him soon developed into gratitude, respect, amazement and finally into veneration. She regarded him as a friend, a brother, the personification of virtue, and for that reason did not regard him as a lover. After this, the denouement is comprehensible, just as is the fact that Igrivy became for the rest of his life a sort of insane clown.

Adventures from the Sea of Life by Mr. Weltman dragged on throughout the *Readers' Library* of last year, ending with the second issue of this journal for the present year. Since this novel began, we think, in 1846, we have already had occasion to speak of it.[31] We shall therefore repeat that in this work romance is mingled with fairy tale, the fabulous with the probable, the credible with the incredible. Thus, for instance, Dmitritsky, the hero of the novel, availing himself of the documents and clothes of a gullible young merchant, who very conveniently bears a striking resemblance to him, presents himself at the house of his victim's father in the capacity of the latter's son. He plays his part so skilfully that neither the father, the mother, nor anybody in the household suspected that the impostor was not the real son. The impostor marries a wealthy bride, and, on learning on the night of his wedding that the real son had put in an appearance, makes away with a huge sheaf of banknotes received as his wife's dowry, and on the very next day begins to play in the Moscow *beau monde* the part of a wealthy Hungarian magnate. Rather farfetched! However, though he places his personages in the most incredible situations, the author describes their adventures in a very entertaining fashion. Wherever the author does not draw the long bow his talent appears in a very favourable light. Thus, for instance, the adventures of the real son, who wishes, but cannot bring himself, to fall at the feet of his "daddy," fearing lest that fond parent might make short work of him, are full of truth and a profound knowledge of life, and hold the reader's interest. There are many such splendid episodes in Mr. Weltman's novel. He is most in his element when he depicts the ways and manners of the merchants, burghers and the common people. His pictures of the life of high society are his weakest point. Thus, for instance, Charov, a young man of the fashionable world plays an important part in the novel, but his only affinity with

high life consists in the fact that he addresses all his friends and acquaintances as "you beastly rotter!" Despite all the oddities and, we might say, absurdities of Mr. Weltman's novel, it is nevertheless a highly outstanding work.

We shall now mention several works of less importance. The *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* published *Sboyev,* a story by Mr. Nestroyev. The inner domestic life of a Moscow civil servant is herein described with great art, the character of Anna Ivanovna, the poor wife of Ivan Kirillovich, being delineated with a special originality and delicacy. The accidental breaking of a big mirror fills the reader with involuntary horror—so masterfully has the author succeeded in conveying a hint of what the poor family could expect from its worthy head.... But this is only the background of the story which revolves around the love of Sboyev for Olga, the daughter of a titular councillor, and in general around the original characters of these two persons. It is, however, just this principal aspect of the story that is its least convincing feature. The personalities of the hero and heroine are somehow unnatural, not that such people do not exist in life, but simply because the author of the story has not been able to do them justice. This is not to be wondered at. In the beginning of the story the author himself says that he was inspired by the work of another author; borrowed thoughts are rarely a success. At the conclusion a second story is promised, which is to be a sequel to the first; such promises too are rarely a success.... The *Sovremennik* published another story by the same author, *Without a Dawn.* The idea of the story is a splendid one and held out for the work greater hopes of success than it actually achieved. The reason, it seems to us, lies in the fact that the secondary figures of the story have been depicted more or less convincingly (the character of the heroine's husband is even a masterly piece of work), whereas the heroine's character is a colourless affair. This woman is a limp and negative creature, helpless in face of the circumstances which oppress her. Could she evoke any sympathy with the reader? Can she be compared with Polinka Saks? Her upbringing had made the latter a child, but experience of life awoke her spiritual forces and made a woman out of her. Dying, she wrote to a woman friend, "It is in vain that your brother sleeps at my feet and watches my eyes to anticipate any wish of mine. I cannot love

him, I cannot understand him, he is not a man but a child. I am too old for his love. But *he* is a person, a man in the full sense of the word; *his* soul is a great and calm one.... I love him and will never cease to love him."[32]

We have yet to mention *Notes of a Man by Sto-Odin*[33] (*Otechestvenniye Zapiski*), *Kiryusha*, a story by an anonymous author, and *The Jew* by Mr. Turgenev, to conclude our critical summary of everything that was in any way remarkable in the way of novels, narratives and stories of last year's publication. We must, however, say a few more words about *The Mistress*, a remarkable story by Mr. Dostoyevsky, but remarkable in a sense different from that we have hitherto used. Had it appeared over any other name we would not have said a word about it. The hero of the story is a certain Ordinov, a man deeply immersed in scientific pursuits, the exact nature of which the author does not specify, although the reader's curiosity on this score is a legitimate one. Science leaves its imprint not only on the opinions of a man, but on his behaviour too. Remember Dr. Krupov. However, there is nothing in Ordinov's speech or behaviour which would show that he was engaged in any kind of science; what they do suggest is that he has gone in a good deal for occultism, necromancy, in a word *charomutiye*.... But this is not science, it is stuff and nonsense; nevertheless it has left its impress on Ordinov, that is to say, has made him resemble a man mentally deranged, a lunatic. Somewhere or other Ordinov meets the beautiful wife of a merchant; we do not remember whether the author mentions the colour of her teeth, but these are probably an exception, being pearl-white, for the sake of greater poetry in the narrative. She was walking arm in arm with an elderly and bearded man in the attire of a merchant. This man's eyes hold so much electricity, galvanism and magnetism that he might have commanded a good price from any physiologist to supply the latter at times if not with his eyes, at least with their lightning-charged crackling glances for scientific observations and experiments. Our hero immediately fell in love with the merchant's lady; despite the magnetic glances and the venomous sneers of the fantastic merchant he not only discovers their address but contrives to foist himself upon them as their lodger and occupies a separate room. Curious scenes follow; the lady talked drivel, of which we can-

not make out a single word, while Ordinov listened to her and constantly fell into fainting fits. The merchant with his fiery glances and sardonic smile frequently intervened. What they said to each other to make them gesticulate so wildly, grimace, swoon and recover we positively do not know because we have not understood a single word in all these long and pathetic monologues. Not merely the idea but the very sense of this perhaps highly interesting story will remain a secret to our understanding until the author publishes the necessary commentaries and connotations to this marvellous riddle of his fantastic imagination. What can this be, abuse or paucity of a talent which wishes to rise higher than it is able to, and is therefore afraid to follow the usual road and seeks a way that is unusual? We do not know. It merely strikes us that the author wished to try to reconcile Marlinsky and Hoffmann, adding to this mixture a little humour in the latest fashion, and thickly covering all this with the varnish of a Russian folk style. No wonder the result is a monstrosity reminiscent of the fantastic stories of Tit Kosmokratov which amused the public in the 'twenties of the present century. Throughout the whole of this story there is not a single simple or living word or expression: everything is farfetched, exaggerated, stilted, spurious and false. What sentences we meet here: Ordinov is *scourged* by some strangely sweet and stubborn feeling; he passes by the *cunning* workshop of a coffinmaker; he calls his beloved his turtledove and asks from what skies she has flown into his heaven. But no more! If we were tempted to quote all the bizarre sentences from this story, we would never end. What in the name of wonder is this? It is mighty strange, a most incomprehensible thing!...

Of the books pertaining to *belles-lettres* that appeared last year in separate editions, only *Travel Notes* by T.Ch. is worthy of note. This is a small, beautifully printed book published in Odessa. The author is a woman, that is obvious in everything, particularly in the point of view. There is much warmth of heart, much feeling and life; life, however, not always understood, or understood in a too feminine way, but life which has not been whitewashed or painted, not exaggerated or distorted; the narrative grips the interest, and the language is splendid. Such are the merits of two stories by Madam T.Ch. Of particular inter-

est is the first story *Three Variations on an Old Theme.* A grown-up girl falls in love with a mere boy. She loses sight of him, and marries a good and honourable man, for whom she does not feel any particular affection. She later meets the boy Lelya, now grown up and become Alexis. A curious kind of relationship springs up, which is resolved by a passionate kiss on both sides, a heart-to-heart talk and Alexis' departure on the firm insistence of the heroine, in whom love has not conquered a sense of duty. She then accompanies her sick husband to a foreign spa. Here she receives a letter from a woman friend in which she learns that Alexis loves her passionately. The letter evokes a profound emotion. Once, whilst rereading the letter and dreaming of Alexis, she suddenly hears a strange noise in the next room, where her sick husband is lying. She runs into the room to find him almost in a swoon, the result of a bad attack of consumption. When he comes to himself, he begins to speak of the approach of death, thanks her for her care and consideration, and expresses satisfaction at leaving her well provided for; he advises her to marry, since she is young, good-looking and there have been no children. As is usual with exalted women, she turns down the latter suggestion with horror. Then her conscience begins to worry her. How can it be otherwise? Her dying husband has thanked her for her love and care, and she thinks of another, loves another. The poor woman is on the point of telling her secret to her dying husband, but fortunately the swoon she falls into prevents this unnecessary and absurd confession, which could only have poisoned the last minutes of a good and noble man. Such is the logic of an exalted woman!... The husband dies. She is thirty-five, when she again meets Alexei Petrovich; he is married, and lives for ambition. Our heroine is hardly able to control her emotions when she sees him, but he treats her with a frigid courtesy. Here she loses all faith in those monsters called men and sheds bitter tears. How could he have forgotten all! Yes, but what did he have to remember? A kiss? The story of a love which ended in nothing, was nipped in the bud, one of those affairs which many men encounter more than once in their lives? A man has many interests in life, and that is why his memory retains only such affairs which are more serious than a mere kiss. Not so in the case of a woman: she lives wholly for love, the more she is obliged to conceal her

emotions the deeper they are. Women are particularly prone to love affairs which end in nothing serious, which call for no risk, no sacrifice; they may betray their husbands in their hearts, and remain formally faithful to their vows, satisfy their need of love and strictly observe the obligations which society imposes upon them. The heroine of the second story is a *governess*, one of those women in whom imagination prevails over the heart, one that must be attacked from the head, that is to say, who must first of all be astonished, amazed, whose curiosity must be aroused by ugliness if not comeliness, by stupidity if not wit, by oddity if not merit, by vice if not virtue. She is courted by a man of ill-favoured appearance who does not love her in the least, and is passionately loved by a noble and handsome man. She knows the worth of both, but is drawn to the former, as a moth is attracted by a flame. The story is well narrated, but the heroine has evidently failed to arouse any particular sympathy, which is why the first story has found greater favour than the second. Both, however, display a talent which promises fair if it develops.[34]

Of foreign novels of outstanding merit published in the *Sovremennik* and the *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*, we would mention the translation of *Lucrezia Floriani* (already dealt with in our magazine) and also the continued translation of *Dombey and Son*. We shall deal with this superb novel, which has surpassed all Dickens' former works, when it appears in full in the Russian translation.[35]

Memoirs or reminiscences of the past also belong to the category of literature. The *Sovremennik* has published two interesting articles of this genre, *From an Artist's Notes* by X, and *Ivan Philippovich Vernet, Swiss-born Russian Writer* by Mr. L.[36] We would also mention a splendid article by Mr. Nebolsin, interesting both in content and style, entitled *Stories of the Siberian Gold Fields* which has been spread over so many issues of the *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*, in its "Miscellany" Section. Mr. Botkin's *Letters About Spain* (in the *Sovremennik*) was an unexpectedly pleasant novelty in Russian literature. With us Spain is *terra incognita*. Political news merely confuse any one who wishes to get an idea of conditions in that country. The chief merit of the author of *Letters About Spain* consists in his having witnessed everything with his own eyes, without being influenced by ready-made judgments about

Spain scattered in books, magazines and newspapers; you feel from his letters that he first examined, listened, questioned and studied, before he formed an opinion of the country. That is why his views are new and original, and everything in them assures the reader that they are correct, that he is reading not about some fantastic country, but one that really exists. The merits of Mr. Botkin's letters are still more enhanced by their attractive style. His *Letters from L'Avenue Marigny* were met by some readers almost with displeasure, although, in the main, this work found only approval. And indeed, the author unwittingly fell into error in his judgment on the state of present-day France as a consequence of his too narrow understanding of the meaning of the word *bourgeoisie*. By this word he understands only the rich capitalists, and has excluded from the term the most numerous, and therefore, the most important, mass of this class. Despite this, the *Letters from L'Avenue Marigny* contain so much that is alive, entertaining, interesting, clever and true that one cannot help reading them with pleasure, though one might not always agree with the author.[37] Among this group of articles of mixed content, but belonging more in form to the category of literature we would include *New Variations on Old Themes* by Iskander (in the *Sovremennik*); *Stories* by Mr. Ferry (*ibid.*); *The Peregrinations of the Portuguese Fernao Mendes Pinto, Described by Himself and Published in 1614*, translated by Mr. Butkov from the Old Portuguese, and Mignet's *Antonio Perez and Philippe II* (in the *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*).

Last year, our magazines were particularly rich in noteworthy scientific articles. We shall here name the chief among these. The *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* published: *Proletarians and Pauperism in England and France* (three articles); *A Physico-Astronomical Review of the Solar System* by D. M. Perevoshchikov; *The United States of America* (three articles); *The Discoveries of Hencke and Leverrier* by D. M. Perevoshchikov; *The Causes of Fluctuations in Grain Prices* by A. P. Zablotsky. The *Sovremennik* published: *A View on the Juridical Life of Ancient Russia* by K. D. Kavelin; *A Research into the Eleusinian Mysteries* by Count S. S. Uvarov; *Daniil Romanovich, King of Galich* by S. M. Solovyov; *The Importance of Physiology and Discoveries in This Field* by Littré; *A Popular Essay on How the New Planet Neptune Was Discovered* by A. Savich; *Constantinople in the Fourth Century; On the Possi-*

bility of Definitive Measures of Confidence in the Result of the Sciences of Observation and Particularly Statistics by Academician Bunyakovsky; *The State Economy Under Peter the Great* (two articles) by Afanasyev; *Malthus and His Opponents* by V. Milyutin; *Alexander von Humboldt and His Cosmos* (two articles) by N. Frolov; *Ireland* by N. Satin. *The Readers' Library* published, in serials lasting more than half a year, a very curious article entitled *The Travels and Discoveries of Lieutenant Zagoskin in Russian America*, which has now appeared in a separate edition under another title.

Mr. Kavelin's article *A View on the Juridical Life of Ancient Russia* and the article by Mr. Zablotsky *The Causes of Fluctuations in Grain Prices in Russia* are indubitably among the most remarkable in our scientific literature of last year. Also highly remarkable in their way are the articles by Mr. Poroshin. published in the *Sankt-Peterburgskiye Vedomosti.*

We do not enumerate here works of different kinds which appeared as separate books last year, since most of them have already been analysed in the critical and bibliographical sections of the *Sovremennik*, and the others have been named in the *Bibliographicheskiye Izvestiya* which appeared as supplements to the seventh and eighth issues of the *Sovremennik* for last year....

Of the critical articles published last year, those written on the following books are noteworthy: *Historico-Critical Excerpts by* Mr. Pogodin; *M. Pogodin's Researches, Remarks and Lectures on Russian History; Lectures in the Imperial Society of History and Russian Antiquities of the University of Moscow; Jewish Religious Sects in Russia* by Mr. Grigoryev; *The Works of Fon-Vizin* published by Smirdin (in the *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*). The two latter articles, apart from their intrinsic and extrinsic merits, are of particular interest as coming from an author who has until now written nothing. Mr. Dudishkin's articles display a knowledge of his field. He makes good use of the historical study of development as a means of interpreting the literary works of a given period. The chief defects of first efforts in this field are usually prolixity and verbosity; such articles sometimes say nothing about the book they deal with, but say very much, sometimes very well, but always out of place, about things that have nothing whatever to do with the book under review. Mr. Dudishkin has

been able to avoid these defects; he has obviously set about his business with the subject matter fully arranged in his head, has full command of his mind, does not allow it to run away with him in one direction or another, keeps it constantly focussed on the subject, and hence begins at the beginning and finishes at the end, speaks in moderation, and therefore fully acquaints the reader with the subject he is writing on. We cannot speak of all the critical articles published in the *Sovremennik* of last year; we are prevented from so doing in view of the close association which exists between the magazine and certain persons who wrote these articles. We shall therefore merely confine ourselves to mentioning the following articles: *The Last Novels of George Sand* by Mr. Kroneberg; *Historical Literature in France and Germany in 1847* by Mr. Granovsky; *An Essay in National Wealth or the Principles of Political Economy*, the work of Mr. Butovsky (three articles by Mr. Milyutin); Mr. Kavelin's article on S. Solovyov's *History of the Relations Between the Princes of the House of Rurik*. We shall observe here that the *Sovremennik* published full reports on all outstanding works on Russian history. At the same time, the *Sovremennik* must acknowledge that, for reasons beyond the control of the editorial board, it did not in other respects fully meet the expectations of the public in the field of criticism. It hopes, however, to give this section greater fullness and development this year.[38]

Russian criticism now stands on a firmer foundation. It is to be met with not only in magazines alone, but among the public, as the consequence of an ever-growing cultivation of taste and education. This should exert an extremely favourable influence on the development of criticism itself. It is a matter which falls under the judgment of public opinion, and is no longer a bookish occupation dissociated from life. It is no longer possible for anyone to be a critic who takes it into his head to be one, and not every opinion is accepted because it appears in print. Party bias can no longer kill a good book or ensure a favourable reception for a bad one. Convictions are frequently heard today in books, and people who have none try at least to feign them. The struggle of opinions as expressed in criticism is evidence of the fact that Russian literature is rapidly moving towards its maturity, but has not yet attained it. Of course, there

are people everywhere whom nature itself seems to have appointed to provoke others, to find fault with everything, to censure everybody and instigate endless quarrels, commotion and abuse. Besides a natural inclination, which nothing can conquer, they are provoked to this both by irritated vanity and petty private interests which have nothing to do with literature. Such people are everywhere an inevitable evil, which may even have its useful side: these people undertake voluntarily the role in society which the Spartans forced the helots to perform for their children.... But it is strange and deplorable that these people's tone is continually adopted by men who would seem to have nothing in common with them, men who would seem to be activated by some deeply cherished convictions, and finally by men whose position in society, years and repute should oblige them to give an example in literature of good taste and respect for decency. Here are some fresh examples.

The first issue of the *Syn Otechestva* for last year published a review of Mr. Sheviryev's lectures. In this article, it was stated and proved that Mr. Sheviryev's work was "a splendid castle built out of clouds; a charming utopia turned towards the past." This refers more to the theoretical side of the lectures; on the factual side the review sees merely a compilation. The author of the review has concealed his name, but has not concealed his erudition and familiarity with Byzantine and Bulgarian sources.[39] His article therefore so powerfully affected Mr. Sheviryev that it was only a year later that he could bring himself to reply. The stronger the attack on Mr. Sheviryev, the greater the dignity to be expected from him in his defence. Did Mr. Sheviryev act in this way? In the first place, he expressed his displeasure at the fact that the critic of the *Syn Otechestva* withheld his name, as though it were a matter of names and not of science, ideas and convictions. It was probably under the influence of his dissatisfaction with this annoying anonymity that Mr. Sheviryev suddenly fell upon Mr. Nadezhdin. He ironically calls the latter "this erudite gentleman," "this most learned philologist," and makes mock of his opinions on Slavic dialects, little suspecting that his Attic Salt tastes for all the world like Slav groats. It is proper and fitting to refute the opinions of others if they seem unjust to you, but this should be done, firstly, in a relevant manner, and sec-

ondly with respect for decency. It would not be a bad thing for Mr. Sheviryev to remember that he is a scientist, that he has a standing of at least twenty years in Russian letters, and that all this obliges him to set a good and not a bad example to our young *littérateurs*. Neither would it do harm for Mr. Sheviryev to remember that Mr. Nadezhdin was once his colleague at the University, a professor like he himself. But Mr. Sheviryev completely lacks that literary serenity which is the strength of men who have been developed by science and experience of life; on the contrary he shows himself in literature to be restless and turbulent, and is therefore continually falling into extremes and blunders peculiar to young men who have plunged into literary activities straight from the school desk. Another instance. In speaking of a former collaborator of the *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* now employed on the *Sovremennik*, Mr. Sheviryev permitted himself to remark of him that he had "betrayed the banners of the *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*"![40] Is not this statement a consequence of the turbulent and irritable condition which we have already mentioned? Does Mr. Sheviryev really believe his own words? No, he simply wished to sting his opponent, forgetting that this is done by the weapon of truth, and not through fabrications. The person he refers to acted in a very natural way: he found it more convenient and better for himself to publish his articles in another magazine, which he was fully entitled to do, since he does not consider himself attached to any particular magazine. Among similar sallies of this gentleman is the idea, continually repeated by many others, that Gogol, in renouncing his former works, has placed us in a predicament, so that we do not know what to do. More than a year has passed since this book appeared, and we have already spoken several times about Gogol's works in the same spirit as we did before this book came out. In general, we have always praised Gogol's works and not Gogol himself, praised them for their own sake and not for the sake of the author. His former works still remain for us what they were before. and we are not concerned with what Gogol thinks of his former works. Mr. Sheviryev's most unpleasant sally has been directed against Iskander. Mr. Sheviryev's extremely nervous attitude towards this author has made him adopt a tone which is anything but literary. He has copied out of the novel *Who is to Blame?*

all the phrases and words which he chooses to regard as a distortion of the Russian language. Some of these words and phrases may indeed be censurable, but the greater part only prove Mr. Sheviryev's dislike of Iskander. We do not understand how Mr. Sheviryev finds the time to engage in such trivialities worthy only of the industry of a well-known quondam professor of eloquence and prosodic cunnings![41] What if it occurred to somebody to copy from Mr. Sheviryev's articles entire periods like the following: "that which today to some Russian soul that comprehends not the real sense of ancient Russian life seems exclusively Byzantine and a sort of mystical and theoretical philosophizing, and 'even a trivial contemplation,' *that which* contains in itself the simplest and highest truths, *then that means nothing else than that that* Russian soul has broken the union with the basic foundations of the life of Russian people and has retired into its abstract individuality from the close confines of which it sees its own illusions and not real affairs." A period of this kind we do not regard as a distortion of the Russian language, but rather as a distortion of Mr. Sheviryev's language, and of course we must be more exacting in this respect to Iskander, who is a writer of influence. Nevertheless, to find fault with such trifles means to display more dislike for one's opponents than love of the Russian language and literature, means threatening one's opponent from afar with a hatpin when it is impossible to reach him with a spear.

Last year the attention of critics was chiefly occupied with Gogol's *Correspondence with Friends*. It may be said that the memory of this book is today sustained only by the articles that deal with it. The best article against it has come from the pen of N. F. Pavlov. In his letters to Gogol, he has assumed the latter's standpoint in order to prove his unfaithfulness to his own principles. A fine wit and dialectical skill combined with a supreme elegance of style make N. F. Pavlov's letters a model which holds a special place in our literature. It would be a pity if no more than three letters appear.

Mr. Smirdin, our well-known bookseller, has, with his publications of Russian authors, prepared a good deal of work and trouble for Russian critics, and promises still more. He has already published Lomonosov, Derzhavin, Fon-Vizin, Ozerov, Can-

temir, Khemnitzer, Muravyov, Knyazhnin and Lermontov. One newspaper has reported the impending publication of works by Bogdanovich, Davidov, Karamzin and Izmailov. Assurances have been given by the same source that these are to be followed by Karamzin's *History of the Russian State*, the works of Empress Catherine II, the works of Sumarokov, Kheraskov, Tredyakovsky, Kostrov, Prince Dolgoruky, Kapnist, Nakhimov and Narezhny, and that, furthermore, steps have been taken to acquire the copyrights of Zhukovsky, Batyushkov, Dmitriev, Gnedich, Khmelnitsky, Shakhovskoy and Baratinsky. Ample work for the critics! Let each voice his opinion without worrying that others do not think the way he does. One must be tolerant of the opinions of others. It is impossible to make all people think in the same way. By all means, refute opinions which are not in accordance with your own, but do not persecute them with violence simply because you do not like them. Do not endeavour, outside the literary approach, to show them in an unfavourable light. This does not pay. By wishing to gain more space for your opinions, you may perhaps in this way remove the ground from under their feet.

LETTERS
1847-1848

LETTERS

TO V. P. BOTKIN. FEBRUARY 17, 1847

(A fragment)

St. Petersburg, February 17, 1847[1]

I HAVE read Saisset's article in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* concerning the positive philosophy of Comte and Littré. As far as one can get an idea of a subject at second hand I have grasped Comte's idea, my talks and discussions with you, which have only now become clear to me, having been particularly helpful in this respect. Comte is a remarkable man; but to say that he was the founder of a new philosophy is a very far cry! One needs genius for that, and there is not a trace of it in Comte. That man is a remarkable phenomenon as a reaction to theological interference in science, and an energetic, troublesome and disturbing reaction at that. Comte is a man rich in knowledge and of great intellect, but his intellect is dry, he lacks that verve which is essential to every kind of creativeness, even to a mathematician, if it be given him to push asunder the walls of science. Though Littré has confined himself to the humble role of Comte's disciple, one can immediately tell that his is a richer nature than Comte's.

There is nothing much to say of M. Saisset, who pronounces the fatal verdict on Comte's and Littré's positive philosophy: to him metaphysics—*c'est la science de Dieu,* yet he is a champion of experiment and an enemy of German transcendentalism. He speaks with disdain of German philosophy, of which he hasn't the faintest notion. Here too I had occasion to admire once more the insolent unscrupulousness peculiar to the French, and remembered Pierre Leroux who, in abusing Hegel, extolled Schelling in whom he thought he had an ally, and excused himself when exposed for his ignorance by saying that he had learnt it from a reliable person. Yet there is much that is sound in Saisset's attacks, primarily in regard to Comte's absurd claim to substitute the law of nature for the word

idea. It will be well for Comte if his opponents run a tilt at him over the word; but what will happen to him if they prove sensible enough to agree with him? It is not a question of fact (not, in my opinion, of idea), but of a new name for an old thing without in any way changing its essence, except that the old name possesses the eminent advantage of historical origin and immemorial usage and that it is the derivation of the word *ideal* whose use is not confined to art alone. Absolute idea and absolute law are the same thing, for both represent something general, universal, changeless, divested of the accidental. And so Comte puts up with the old, thinking to create something new. That is ridiculous. Comte finds nature to be imperfect: in this I see the most striking evidence of the fact that he is no leader, but a ringleader, that this is no new philosophical teaching but a reaction, that is, an extreme provoked by another extreme. The pietists marvel at the perfection of nature, in which they see everything as calculated and regulated with supreme wisdom, and they believe that even the vile and prolific breed of rodents, *i.e.*, rats and mice, must be a great blessing simply because nature has been fool enough to produce them unstintingly in monstrous numbers. And so Comte, moved by a spirit of contradiction and the necessity of reaction, opposes their absurdity by another absurdity which alleges that nature is imperfect and could be more perfect. The latter is nonsense, the former is correct, for it just happens that nature's very imperfection constitutes her perfection. Perfection is an idea of abstract transcendentalism, and therefore the vilest thing in the world. Man is mortal, subject to disease and hunger and obliged to fight for his life. That is his imperfection, but that is also what makes him great, what makes him prize and hold his life dear. Insure him against death, disease, accident and sorrow—and he will become like the Turkish pasha, wallowing in luxurious indolence and boredom—worse, he will become a beast. Comte does not perceive historical progress, the living connection running like a live nerve through the living organism of human history. From this I see that the realm of history is closed to his narrow mind. Lomonosov was a great scientist of his day in the natural sciences, but in history he gave points to the donkey—Tredyakovsky; obviously, the historic field was not his element. Comte does

away with metaphysics not as a science of transcendental absurdities, but as a science of the laws of the mind. To him the last word in science, the science of sciences, is physiology. This proves that the philosophic field, no less than the historic, is not his element, and that the only sphere that is accessible to him is the mathematical and natural sciences. That the actions, *i.e.*, the activity of the mind, are the result of the activity of the organs of the brain, there is not the slightest doubt; but who has seen these organs at work? Will anyone ever see them? Comte has pinned his faith upon the further successes of phrenology; but these successes will merely confirm the identity of man's physical nature with his spiritual—nothing more. Man's spiritual nature must not be *separated* from his physical nature as something peculiar and independent of it, but should be *distinguished* from it as the sphere of anatomy is distinguished from the sphere of physiology. The laws of the mind should be observed in the activity of the mind. That is the task of logic, of science, which comes immediately after physiology, as physiology comes after anatomy. To hell with metaphysics: that word signifies the supernatural, consequently, the nonsensical, whereas logic, by its very etymology, denotes *reason* and *speech*. It must go its own way, not for a single minute forgetting that the object of its study is a flower whose root is in the earth, that is, the spiritual, which is nothing more or less than the activity of the physical. To rid science of the ghosts of transcendentalism and theology, to show the precincts of the intellect within which its activity is fruitful, and deliver it once and for all from the clutches of the fantastic and mystical—that is what the founder of new philosophy will accomplish, and that is what Comte will not accomplish, but what, together with many admirable intellects similar to his, he will help the man with that mission to accomplish. He himself is too narrowly built for such a broad and amplitudinous task. He is a redactor and not an author, he is the flash of lightning, the precursor of the storm, but not the storm, he is one of the disturbing symptoms presaging an intellectual revolution, but not the revolution. Genius is a great thing: it is like Gogol's Petrushka—it carries its own smell about with it: Comte does not smell of genius. Perhaps I am mistaken, but that is my opinion.

In that same issue of the *Revue de Deux Mondes* I was very much interested by a short article by a certain Thomas: *Un nouvel écrit de M. de Schelling.* I had a vague idea of Schelling's new mystical conception. Thomas says that Schelling calls deism imbecilic (on which I felicitate Pierre Leroux) and despises it more than atheism which he despises beyond words. What is he? He is a Christian-pantheist and has established for the elect natures (the aristocracy of mankind) an amazingly elegant church having many cloisters. Poor mankind! Good old Odoyevsky once earnestly assured me that there is no line between madness and sanity, and that you could never be sure a man was not mad. How correct that is, not in its application to Schelling alone! He who has a system and conviction should tremble for his reason. Is it not a fact that nearly all madmen are astonishingly sane in their conversation until they seize upon their *idée fixe*? . . .

TO V. P. BOTKIN. JULY 7, 1847

(A fragment)

Dresden, July 7/19, 1847

How are you, my dearest Vasili Petrovich? At long last I have sat down to write to you. So here I am for the second time in this wretched and boring Dresden. However, that may be nonsense (that is, that Dresden is a wretched and boring place, and not that I am in it a second time—the latter circumstance is beyond a shadow of doubt). Alas, my dear bald-headed friend, I have travelled to Europe only to convince myself that I am not born for travelling. I visited Saxonian Switzerland, for example; for a minute I was taken by these picturesque spots, but they soon palled, as though I had known and learned them by heart ages ago. Ennui is my constant companion, and I am looking forward with impatience to coming home. What a stupid, vulgar people these Germans are—ye gods! It is not blood that runs in their veins but the thick sediment of that atrocious beverage known by the name of beer which they lap with a vengeance. Once the conversation at their table turned on *Stände.* One of them says: "I like progress, but moderate progress; in fact I like the moderation in it better

than the progress." When Turgenev told me the words of this true German, I very nearly cried that I do not know German and was unable to tell him: "I like soup cooked in a pot, but even then I like the pot better than the soup." The same young German, wishing to praise some speaker, said of him: "He soars moderately." But one could say a lot about this people cut and fashioned out of odds and ends. In short. . . . ! In the matter of judging the Germans I have become an authority for Annenkov and Turgenev: when a German gets on their nerves with his stupidity they say: "Belinsky was right!" What poverty there is in Germany, especially in wretched Silesia, which Frederick the Great considered to be the finest pearl in his crown. Only here have I realized the awful significance of the words: *pauperism* and *proletariat*. In Russia these words convey nothing. There we have crop failures and famine in places, there we have landowner-planters who treat their peasants like Negroes, there we have thieves and robber-officials; but we have no poverty, though also no wealth. Indolence and drunkenness there beget dirt and rags, but that is not yet poverty. Poverty is the state of hopelessness of delivery from an everlasting fear of hungry death. A man has a strong pair of hands, he is hard-working and honest and wants to work—but there is no work for him: that's poverty, that's pauperism, that's the proletariat! Here a man considers himself lucky if he harnesses himself to a cart with his dog and his little children and hauls coal barefooted from Salzbrunn to Freiburg. He who cannot find a job as dog or horse begs for alms. His face, voice and gestures show that he is not a beggar by calling and that he feels all the horror and shame of his position: how can one refuse him a Silbergroschen, yet how can one give them all when there are ever so many more of them than there are pfennigs in my pocket. It is terrible!

I paid a visit to the Dresden gallery and saw Raphael's Madonna. What nonsense the romanticists have written about her, especially Zhukovsky. In my opinion there is nothing either romantic or classical in her face. This is not the mother of the Christian God: this is an aristocratic woman, the daughter of a king, *idéal sublime du comme il faut*. She looks at you, not exactly with scorn—that does not suit her, she is too well-bred to offend anyone by scorn, even people; she does not look upon us as *canailles*: that word would be too coarse and impure for her noble

lips; no, she looks at us with cold favour, both fearing the taint of our gaze and loath to distress us, plebeians, by turning away from us. The infant which she holds in her arms is more candid: in her one can detect a faint but proud tightening of the underlip, while in him his whole mouth breathes contempt for us *racailles*. In his eyes we see not the future god of love, peace, forgiveness and salvation, but the Old Testament god of wrath and fury, of retribution and chastisement. But what nobleness, what grace of the brush! One cannot admire it enough! I involuntarily recalled Pushkin: the same nobleness, the same grace of expression, combined with the same fidelity and severity of contour! No wonder Pushkin was so fond of Raphael: they are kindred natures. I liked very much Michelangelo's picture of Leda at the moment of intercourse with the swan; not to mention her body (especially *les fesses*) the pain and anguish of ecstasy have been caught in her face with amazing power. There were other things I liked too, but I don't feel like writing about all of them.

I am going to Paris, and I know beforehand that I will be bored there. What deucedly bad luck I have! In Petersburg, before my departure, all I heard about was the band of thieves with Trishatny and Dobryshin at the head,[1] and in coming to Paris all I will hear about is the thief Teste[2] and other thieves, constitutional ministers, so far suspected but not yet impeached by the thief Emile Girardin. *O tempora! o mores!* O, nineteenth century! O, France—the land of shame and disgrace! Her face now is a spitting box for all the European states. It is only the lazy one who does not give her a smack in the face. There was recently Portuguese intervention, and soon, they say, there will be Swiss intervention, which will redound to France's still greater honour.

I have read Louis Blanc's book.[3] Nature has not denied that man either head or heart; but he has tried to increase them by his own means—hence, instead of a great head and a great heart he has contrived an inflated head and an inflated heart. There is much in his book that is interesting and sound; it might have been a remarkably good book had not Blancie contrived to make it a most tedious and most banal book. Louis XIV, if you please, degraded monarchism by emancipating the church of France from Rome! O, horse! The bourgeoisie he shows to have been the enemy of mankind even before Creation and to be conspiring

against its weal, while according to his own book it transpires that there would not have been the revolution he so much admires but for the bourgeoisie, and that the gains of the revolution are their legitimate acquisition. O dear, how stupid—this is more than flesh and blood can bear! Now I am reading the Lamartine fellow,[4] and I can't understand why he says clever and well-phrased things about events on one page, and then falls over himself on the other page to splutter utterly contradictory nonsense—is it because he is clever only by half, or because he wants to please all parties in the hope of some time dropping into a ministerial post? I am sick of these *racailles*: I weep with disgust and vexation, but still go on reading!

I have finished my mineral-water cure and my health has slightly improved. But, they say, the waters have a stronger effect on many people after they have taken them, so I hope to improve still more. In any case, as soon as I arrive in Paris I will go to see the famous *Tyrat-de-malmort.*

My wife has written me that Krayevsky is in Moscow and is stopping with you. I congratulate you on your new friend. To find a friend on earth is a great thing, as Schiller said so aptly more than once, especially a friend with such a sensitive heart, in short, such a friend as A. A. Krayevsky. I hear that this bloodsucker, who has drained the last dregs of my health, has fallen on evil days and that everyone is deserting him. If it's true, I'm glad, and I sincerely wish him the worst of everything and many unhappy returns. Good-bye, Botkin. Give my regards to all our friends—Kavelin, Granovsky, Korsh, Ketcher, Shchepkin, etc.

V. B.

TO V. P. BOTKIN. DECEMBER 1847

(A fragment)

St. Petersburg, December 1847

Now as regards Herzen's letters. The impression which they made on Korsh, Granovsky, yourself and other Muscovites only proves to me that you, Muscovites, lack the tolerance which you consider to be your chief virtue. I really see something that looks

like tolerance in your estimation: you at least are not angry because the letters think their own way and not yours, you don't blush, like Korsh, and call a rakish tone what is really only a joke, witticism, an absence of pedantry and seminarism. I believe that you are not right in only one respect—that you refused to admit anything good in an opinion and view that are opposed to your own. These letters, especially the last one, were written in my presence, before my very eyes, and were the result of daily impressions which caused many honest Frenchmen to blush and lower their heads, and even the rogues blinked in consternation.[1] Even if there are exaggerations in Herzen's letters—good Lord, what's the crime—and where is there perfection? Where is absolute truth? As for considering Herzen's view incontestably erroneous, even not worth refutation—I don't know, gentlemen, maybe you are right, but I am too stupid to follow your wisdom. I do not say that Herzen's view is unerringly right and has taken in all aspects of the matter, I allow that the question of the bourgeoisie is still an open question, and no one has completely solved it, and no one will—history will solve it, that supreme court of judgment over men. But I do know that the dominance of the capitalists has covered contemporary France with everlasting shame and is reminiscent of the Regency days, the administration of Dubois, who sold France to England and begot the orgy of industrialism. Everything in it is trivial, petty and contradictory; there is no sense of national honour or national pride. Look at literature—what is it? Everything in which there is a spark of life and talent belongs to the opposition—not the mangy parliamentary opposition which, of course, stands incomparably lower than even the conservative party, but that opposition for whom the bourgeoisie is a syphilitic sore on the body of France. There is much that is foolish in its fulminations against the bourgeoisie, but then only in these fulminations are life and talent manifested. Look what is going on at the theatres of Paris. Here clever, elaborate production, fine acting and polished French wit serve to cover emptiness, futility and vulgarity. Only Rachel and Racine remind one of art's existence, or else its "ragmen" are sometimes brought out with the aid of Lemaître by a Félix Pyat, a man entirely without talent but achieving talent by sheer force of his hatred of the bourgeoisie.

Herzen did not say that the French public prosecutors were clowns and fools, but simply dilated on the behaviour of one public prosecutor (at the trial of Beauvallon's second), a behaviour worthy of a clown and fool and a scoundrel into the bargain.[2] This is not a fact of his invention—it is in all the French magazines. *A propos* of the French magazines from whose news Herzen is alleged to piece together his letters: that is such a ridiculous reproach that it is not worth answering seriously. Why, can any fact be stated about France that has not already been ventilated in the French magazines? But that is not the point; the point is—how was this fact reflected in the writer's personality, how was it treated by him. On this point Herzen in his letters, as in everything else that he has written, remains a man of talent, and his letters are a pleasure even to those who find them exaggerated or do not quite share the author's views. But then did not Mr. Arapetov also pass contemptuous criticism of Annenkov's letters which he alleged to be a compilation of feuilletons from the Paris magazines?[3] As for N. F. Pavlov, I would advise him, instead of writing letters on Paris from Sretensky Boulevard, to get busy with a third letter to Gogol and finish at that, since he is apparently not destined by Providence to go any further. When we received in Paris the issue of the *Sovremennik* in which was published the fourth letter, I burst out laughing, and Herzen stopped me by gravely remarking that the third letter was probably not passed by the censor. I even blushed realizing the absurdity of my assumption. But on coming back to St. Petersburg I discovered that I had been right, and that as far as literature and many other things were concerned the Muscovites indeed enjoy special privileges with common sense, and may boldly publish first the end, then the middle and *finally* the beginning of their works.[4]

I agree that one cannot explain away *à fond* the vile, ignominious position of contemporary France by the bourgeoisie alone, that it is an extremely complicated and tangled problem, primarily and above all a historical problem, next whatever you like to call it—moral, philosophical, etc. I realize that the bourgeoisie is not an accidental phenomenon, but the product of history, that it is not a mushroom growth of yesterday's appearance and, finally, that it has had its great past, its brilliant

history and has rendered humanity immense services. I even agreed with Annenkov that the term bourgeoisie is not quite definite because of its capaciousness and elastic extensibility. The bourgeois and great capitalists who are so brilliantly ruling the destinies of contemporary France, and sundry other capitalists and proprietors who have little influence on the current of affairs and few privileges, and, finally, people who have nothing at all, *i.e.*, those who are beyond the pale of qualification. Who are not bourgeois? Possibly only the *ouvrier*, who irrigates another's field with his own sweat. All the present enemies of the bourgeoisie and defenders of the people do not belong to the people but belong to the bourgeoisie as much as did Robespierre and Saint-Just. It is from the standpoint of this ambiguity and vagueness of the term bourgeoisie that Herzen's letters *sont attaquables*. This was pointed out to him at the time by Sazonov, with whom Annenkov sided against Michels (that German, who was born a mystic, idealist and romanticist and will die as such, since the rejection of philosophy does not imply change of nature in a man), and Herzen agreed with them against the latter. But if there is that flaw in the letters it by no means follows that they are bad. But that aside. And so, it is not the bourgeoisie in general but the big capitalists who should be attacked as the plague and cholera of contemporary France. She is in their hands, and that is the wrong part about it. The middle class is always great in struggle, in the pursuit and attainment of its aims. In this it is generous and cunning, hero and egoist, for only its chosen act, sacrifice themselves and perish, while the fruits of achievement or victory are reaped by all. In the middle estate the *ésprit de corps* is strongly developed. It acted with surprising sagacity and adroitness in France, and, to tell the truth, more than once made a handle of the people; it would first get it worked up and then send La Fayette and Bailly to shoot it down with cannon shot. In this respect Louis Blanc's fundamental view of the bourgeoisie is not quite unfounded, except that it is stretched to the extreme when every idea, however sound at bottom, appears ridiculous. Moreover, he overlooked the fact that the bourgeoisie in struggle and the bourgeoisie in triumph are different things, that in the beginning its movement was spontaneous, that it did not then dissociate its interests from the interests of

the people. Even during the *Assemblée Constituante* it did not think of resting on its laurels but was concerned with making victory secure. It procured rights not only for itself but for the people as well; its mistake at first was in thinking that the people with suffrage would be satiated without bread; now it has deliberately placed the people in the thrall of hunger and capital, but then it is now not a fighting bourgeoisie but a triumphant bourgeoisie. But all that is not what I want to tell you, it is merely the preamble and not the tale. Here's the tale: I said it was no good for the state to be in the hands of the capitalists, and I would now add: woe to the state which is in the hands of the capitalists; these are men without patriotism, without loftiness of sentiment. For them war or peace merely means a rise or fall in stocks—beyond this they see nothing. The huckster is a creature by nature vulgar, mean, base and despicable, for he serves Plutus, who is a god more jealous than all the other gods, of whom he has the greater right to say: he who is not with me is against me. He requires a man to be his completely, undividedly, and then he generously rewards him; votaries who fall short of this utter devotion he plunges into bankruptcy, then into prison, and finally into penury. The huckster is a creature whose aim in life is profit, and there is no means of keeping that lust within bounds. It is like sea water: it does not quench thirst, but sharpens it. The huckster can have no interests other than those which concern his pocket. Money to him is not a means but an end, and people too are an end: he has no affection or compassion for them, he is fiercer than the wild beast, more inexorable than death, and uses all means: he makes children work themselves to death for him, oppresses the proletarian under pain of death by starvation (*i.e.*, whips him by hunger, using the expression of a Russian landowner whom I met while travelling), strips the shirt off the beggar debtor's back, presses vice into his service and serves it himself, and gets rich on the poor....

Referring to the hucksters, it should be said that every evil passion that gains hold of a man disfigures him, and apart from profit, there are many such passions. That is so, but of all the passions this is probably the foulest. And then it gives the *ésprit de corps* and tone to the whole class. What must that class be like? And what must the state be like that's in its hands?

In England the middle class stands for something—it is represented by the House of Commons; and in the proceedings of that House there is much that is dignified, and there is patriotism there galore. But in England the middle class is counterbalanced by the aristocracy, which makes the English government as statesmanly, dignified and reputable as the French is liberal, mean, vulgar and disreputable. When the aristocracy in England will have had its day, the people will counterbalance the middle class; if not, England will perhaps offer a still more disgusting spectacle than France today. I am not one of those people who lay down as law that the bourgeoisie is an evil, that it must be destroyed, and that things will go well only when it is no more. That is what our German—Michel, thinks, and that, or almost that, is what Louis Blanc thinks. I will agree with this only when I see in practice a state prospering without a middle class, and as I have so far only seen that states without a middle class are doomed to perpetual futility, I will not attempt to solve *a priori* a problem that can only be solved by experience. So long as the bourgeoisie exists and so long as it is strong I know that it must be and cannot but be. I know that industry is the source of great evils, but I also know that it is the source of great blessings for society. Strictly speaking, it is only the least of the evils in the rule of capital, in its tyranny over labour. I agree, that even the reprobate breed of capitalists should have their share of influence on public affairs; but woe to the state where it stands alone at the helm! ...

LETTER TO N. V. GOGOL[1]

JULY 3, 1847

YOU ARE only partly right in regarding my article as that of an angered man: that epithet is too mild and inadequate to express the state to which I was reduced on reading your book. And you are entirely wrong in ascribing that state to your indeed none too flattering references to the admirers of your talent. No, there was a more important reason for this. One could suffer an outraged sense of self-esteem, and I would have had sense enough to let the matter pass in silence were that the whole gist of the matter; but one cannot suffer an outraged sense of truth and human dignity; one cannot keep silent when lies and immorality are preached as truth and virtue under the guise of religion and the protection of the knout.

Yes, I loved you with all the passion with which a man, bound by ties of blood to his native country, can love its hope, its honour, its glory, one of the great leaders on its path of consciousness, development and progress. And you had sound reason for at least momentarily losing your equanimity when you forfeited that love. I say that not because I believe my love to be an adequate reward for a great talent, but because I do not represent a single person in this respect but a multitude of men, most of whom neither you nor I have ever set eyes on, and who, in their turn, have never set eyes on you. I find myself at a loss to give you an adequate idea of the indignation which your book has aroused in all noble hearts, and of the wild shouts of joy which were set up on its appearance by all your enemies—both the non-literary—the Chichikovs, the Nozdrevs and the mayors... and by the literary, whose names are well known to you. You see yourself that even those people who are of one mind with your book have disowned it. Even if it had been written as a result of deep and sincere conviction it could not have created any other impression on the public than the one it did. And it is nobody's fault but your own if everyone (except the few

who must be seen and known in order not to derive pleasure from their approval) received it as an ingenious but all too unceremonious artifice for achieving a sheerly earthly aim by celestial means. Nor is that in any way surprising; what is surprising is that you find it surprising. I believe that is so because your profound knowledge of Russia is only that of an artist, but not of a thinker, whose role you have so ineffectually tried to play in your fantastic book. Not that you are not a thinker, but that you have been accustomed for so many years to look at Russia from your *beautiful far-away;*[2] and who does not know that there is nothing easier than seeing things from a distance the way we want to see them; for in that *beautiful far-away* you live a life that is entirely alien to it, you live in and within yourself or within a circle of the same mentality as your own which is powerless to resist your influence on it. Therefore you failed to realize that Russia sees her salvation not in mysticism, nor asceticism, nor pietism, but in the successes of civilization, enlightenment and humanity. What she needs is not sermons (she has heard enough of them!) or prayers (she has repeated them too often!), but the awakening in the people of a sense of their human dignity lost for so many centuries amid the dirt and refuse; she needs rights and laws conforming not with the preaching of the church but with common sense and justice, and their strictest possible observance. Instead of which she presents the dire spectacle of a country where men traffic in men, without even having the excuse so insidiously exploited by the American plantation owners who claim that the Negro is not a man: a country where people call themselves not by names but by sobriquets, such as Vanka, Vaska, Steshka, Palashka; a country where there are not only no guarantees for individuality, honour and property, but even no police order, and where there is nothing but vast corporations of official thieves and robbers of various descriptions! The most vital national problems in Russia today are the abolition of serfdom and corporal punishments and the strictest possible observance of at least those laws which already exist. This is even realized by the government itself (which is well aware of how the landowners treat their peasants and how many of the former are annually done away with by the latter), as is proven by its timid and abortive half-measures for

the relief of the white Negroes and the comical substitution of the single-lash knout by a cat-o'-three tails.[3]

Such are the problems which prey on the mind of Russia in her apathetic slumber! And at such a time a great writer, whose beautifully artistic and deeply truthful works have so powerfully contributed towards Russia's awareness of herself, enabling her as they did to take a look at herself as though in a mirror—comes out with a book in which he teaches the barbarian landowner in the name of Christ and Church to make still greater profits out of the peasants and to abuse them still more.... And you would expect me not to become indignant?... Why, if you had made an attempt on my life I could not have hated you more than I do for these disgraceful lines.... And after this, you expect people to believe the sincerity of your book's intent! No! Had you really been inspired by the truth of Christ and not by the teaching of the Devil you would certainly have written something entirely different in your new book. You would have told the landowner that since his peasants are his brethren in Christ, and since a brother cannot be a slave to his brother, he should either give them their freedom, or, at least, allow them to enjoy the fruits of their own labour to their greatest possible benefit, realizing as he does, in the depths of his own conscience the false relationship in which he stands towards them.

And the expression: "*Oh, you unwashed snout, you*!" From what Nozdrev and Sobakevich did you overhear this, to give to the world as a great discovery for the edification and benefit of the muzhiks, whose only reason for not washing is that they have let themselves be persuaded by their masters that they are not human beings? And your conception of the national Russian system of trial and punishment, whose ideal you have found in the foolish saying that both the guilty and innocent should be flogged alike?[4] That, indeed, is often the case with us, though more often than not it is the man who is in the right who takes the punishment, unless he can ransom himself, and for such occasions another proverb says: *guiltlessly guilty*! And such a book is supposed to have been the result of an arduous inner process, a lofty spiritual enlightenment! Impossible! Either you are ill—and you must hasten to take a cure, or... I am afraid to put my thought into words!...

Proponent of the knout, apostle of ignorance, champion of obscurantism and Stygian darkness, panegyrist of Tatar morals—what are you about! Look beneath your feet—you are standing on the brink of an abyss!... That you base such teaching on the Orthodox Church I can understand: it has always served as the prop of the knout and the servant of despotism; but why have you mixed Christ up in this? What in common have you found between Him and any church, least of all the Orthodox Church? He was the first to bring to people the teaching of freedom, equality and brotherhood and set the seal of truth to that teaching by martyrdom. And this teaching was men's *salvation* only until it became organized in the Church and took the principle of Orthodoxy for its foundation. The Church, on the other hand, was a hierarchy consequently a champion of inequality, a flatterer of authority, an enemy and persecutor of brotherhood among men—and so it has remained to this day. But the meaning of Christ's message has been revealed by the philosophical movement of the preceding century. And that is why a man like Voltaire who stamped out the fires of fanatism and ignorance in Europe by ridicule, is, of course, more the son of Christ, flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone, than all your priests, bishops, metropolitans and patriarchs! Do you mean to say you do not know it! It is not even a novelty now to a schoolboy.... Hence, can it be that you, the author of *Inspector General* and *Dead Souls*, have in all sincerity, from the bottom of your heart, sung a hymn to the nefarious Russian clergy which you rank immeasurably higher than the Catholic clergy? Let us assume that you do not know that the latter had once been something, while the former had never been anything but a servant and slave of the secular powers; but do you really mean to say you do not know that our clergy is held in universal contempt by Russian society and the Russian people? Of whom do the Russian people relate obscene stories? Of the priest, the priest's wife, the priest's daughter and the priest's farm hand. Does not the priest in Russia represent for all Russians the embodiment of gluttony, avarice, servility and shamelessness? Do you mean to say that you do not know all this? Strange! According to you the Russian people is the most religious in the world. That is a lie! The basis of religiousness is pietism, reverence

fear of God. Whereas the Russian man utters the name of the Lord while scratching himself somewhere. He says of the icon: *if it isn't good for praying it's good for covering the pots.*

Take a closer look and you will see that it is by nature a profoundly atheistic people. It still retains a good deal of superstition, but not a trace of religiousness. Superstition passes with the advances of civilization, but religiousness often keeps company with them too; we have a living example of this in France, where even today there are many sincere Catholics among enlightened and educated men, and where many people who have rejected Christianity still cling stubbornly to some sort of god. The Russian people is different; mystic exaltation is not in its nature; it has too much common sense, a too lucid and positive mind, and therein, perhaps, lies the vast scope of its historic destinies in the future. Religiousness with it has not even taken root among the clergy, since a few isolated and exclusive personalities distinguished for such cold ascetic reflectiveness prove nothing. But the majority of our clergy has always been distinguished for their fat bellies, scholastic pedantry and savage ignorance. It is a shame to accuse it of religious intolerance and fanaticism; rather could it be praised for an exemplary indifference in matters of faith. Religiousness with us appeared only among the Schismatic sects who formed such a contrast in spirit to the mass of the people and were so insignificant before it numerically.

I shall not dilate on your panegyric to the affectionate relations existing between the Russian people and its lords and masters. I shall say point-blank: that panegyric has met sympathy nowhere and has lowered you even in the eyes of people who in other respects stand very close to you in outlook. As far as I am concerned, I leave it to your conscience to admire the divine beauty of the autocracy (it is both safe and profitable), but continue to admire it judiciously from your *beautiful far-away*: at close quarters it is not so attractive, and not so safe.... I would remark but this: when a European, especially a Catholic, is seized with a religious ardour he becomes a denouncer of iniquitous authority, similar to the Hebrew prophets who denounced the iniquities of the great ones of the earth. With us on the contrary: no sooner is a person (even a reputable per-

son) afflicted with the malady which is known to psychiatrists as *religiosa mania* than he begins to burn more incense to the earthly god than the heavenly one, and so overshoots the mark in doing so that the former would fain reward him for his slavish zeal did he not perceive that he would thereby be compromising himself in society's eyes.... What a rogue our fellow the Russian is! ...

Another thing I remember you saying in your book, claiming it to be a great and incontrovertible truth, that literacy is not merely useless but positively harmful to the common people. What can I say to this? May your Byzantine God forgive you that Byzantine thought, unless, in committing it to paper, you knew not what you were saying.... But perhaps you will say: "Assuming that I have erred and that all my ideas are false, but why should I be denied the right to err and why should people doubt the sincerity of my errors?" Because, I would say in reply, such a tendency has long ceased to be a novelty in Russia. Not so very long ago it was drained to the lees by Burachok and his fraternity. Of course, your book shows a good deal more intellect and talent (though neither of these elements is very richly represented) than their works; but then they have developed your common doctrine with greater energy and greater consistence, they have boldly reached its ultimate conclusions, have rendered full meed to the Byzantine God and left nothing for Satan, whereas you, wanting to light a taper to each of them, have fallen into contradiction, upholding for example, Pushkin, literature and the theatre, all of which, in your opinion, if you were only conscientious enough to be consistent, can in no way serve the salvation of the soul but can do a lot towards its damnation.... Whose head could have digested the idea of Gogol's identity with Burachok? You have placed yourself too high in the regard of the Russian public for it to be able to believe you sincere in such convictions. What seems natural in fools cannot seem so in a man of genius. Some people have been inclined to regard your book as the result of mental derangement verging on sheer madness. But they soon rejected such a supposition, for clearly that book was not written in a single day, or week, or month, but very likely in one, two or three years; it shows coherence; through its careless exposition one glimpses premeditation,

and the hymn to the powers that be nicely arranges the earthly affairs of the devout author. That is why a rumour has been current in St. Petersburg to the effect that you have written this book with the aim of securing a position as tutor to the son of the heir-apparent. Before that your letter to Uvarov became known in St. Petersburg, wherein you say that you are grieved to find that your works about Russia are misinterpreted, then you evince dissatisfaction with your previous works and declare that you will be pleased with your own works only when the tsar is pleased with them. Now judge for yourself, is it to be wondered at that your book has lowered you in the eyes of the public both as a writer and still more as a man?...

You, as far as I can see, do not properly understand the Russian public. Its character is determined by the condition of Russian society in which fresh forces are seething and struggling for expression, but weighed down by heavy oppression and finding no outlet, they induce merely dejection, weariness and apathy. Only literature, despite the Tatar censorship, shows signs of life and progressive movement. That is why the title of writer is held in such esteem among us, that is why literary success is easy among us even for a writer of small talent. The title of poet and writer has long since eclipsed the tinsel of epaulettes and gaudy uniforms. And that especially explains why every so-called liberal tendency, however poor in talent, is rewarded by universal notice, and why the popularity of great talents which sincerely or insincerely give themselves to the service of orthodoxy, autocracy and nationality declines so quickly. A striking example is Pushkin who had merely to write two or three verses in a loyal strain and don the *kamer-junker's* livery to suddenly forfeit the popular affection! And you are greatly mistaken if you believe in all earnest that your book has come to grief not because of its bad trend, but because of the harsh truths alleged to have been expressed by you about all and everybody. Assuming you could think that of the writing fraternity, but then how do you account for the public? Did you tell it less bitter home truths less harshly and with less truth and talent in *Inspector General* and *Dead Souls*? Indeed the old school was worked up to a furious pitch of anger against you, but *Inspector General* and *Dead*

Souls were not affected by it, whereas your latest book has been an utter and disgraceful failure. And here the public is right, for it looks upon Russian writers as its only leaders, defenders and saviours against Russian autocracy, orthodoxy and nationality, and therefore, while always prepared to forgive a writer a bad book, will never forgive him a pernicious book. This shows how much fresh and healthy intuition, albeit still in embryo, is latent in our society, and this likewise proves that it has a future. If you love Russia rejoice with me at the failure of your book!...

I would tell you, not without a certain feeling of self-satisfaction, that I believe I know the Russian public a little. Your book alarmed me by the possibility of its exercising a bad influence on the government and the censorship, but not on the public. When it was rumoured in St. Petersburg that the government intended to publish your book in many thousands of copies and to sell it at an extremely low price my friends grew despondent; but I told them there and then that the book, despite everything, would have no success and that it would soon be forgotten. In fact it is now better remembered for the articles which have been written about it than for the book itself. Yes, the Russian has a deep, though still undeveloped instinct for truth.

Your conversion may conceivably have been sincere, but your idea of bringing it to the notice of the public was a most unhappy one. The days of naive piety have long since passed, even in our society. It already understands that it makes no difference where one prays, and that the only people who seek Christ and Jerusalem[5] are those who have never carried Him in their breasts or who have lost Him. He who is capable of suffering at the sight of other people's sufferings and who is pained at the sight of other people's oppression, bears Christ within his bosom and has no need to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The humility which you preach is, first of all, not novel, and, secondly, it savours on the one hand of prodigious pride, and on the other of the most shameful degradation of one's human dignity. The idea of becoming a sort of abstract perfection, of rising above everyone else in humility, is the fruit of either pride or imbecility, and in either case leads inevitably to hypocrisy, sanctimoniousness and Chinaism. Moreover, in your book you have taken the liberty of

expressing yourself with gross cynicism not only of other people (that would be merely impolite) but of yourself—and that is vile for if a man who strikes his neighbour on the cheek evokes indignation, the sight of a man striking himself on the cheek evokes contempt. No, you are not illuminated, you are simply beclouded; you have failed to grasp either the spirit or the form of Christianity of our time. Your book breathes not the true Christian teaching but the morbid fear of death, of the devil and of hell!

And what language, what phrases? "Every man hath now become trash and a rag"—do you really believe that in saying *hath* instead of *has* you are expressing yourself biblically? How eminently true it is that when a man gives himself wholly up to lies, intelligence and talent desert him. Did not this book bear your name, who would have thought that this turgid and squalid bombast was the work of the author of *Inspector General* and *Dead Souls*?

As far as it concerns myself, I repeat: you are mistaken in taking my article to be an expression of vexation at your comment on me as one of your critics. Were this the only thing to make me angry I would have reacted with annoyance to this alone and would have dealt with all the rest with unruffled impartiality. But it is true that your criticism of your admirers is doubly bad. I understand the necessity of sometimes having to rap a silly man whose praises and ecstasies make the object of his worship look ridiculous, but even this is a painful necessity, since, humanly speaking, it is somehow awkward to reward even false affection with enmity. But you had in view men who, though not brilliantly clever, are not quite fools. These people, in their admiration of your works, have probably uttered more ejaculations than talked sense about them; still, their enthusiastic attitude toward you springs from such a pure and noble source that you ought not to have betrayed them neck and crop to both your common enemies and accused them into the bargain of wanting to misinterpret your works.[6] You, of course, did that while carried away by the main idea of your book and through indiscretion, while Vyazemsky, that prince in aristocracy and helot in literature, developed your idea and printed a personal denunciation against your admirers (and consequently mostly against me).[7] He probably did this to show his gratitude to you for having exalted him, the poetaster, to the rank of great poet, if I remember rightly for his "pithless, drag-

ging verse."[8] That is all very bad. That you were merely biding your time in order to give the admirers of your talent their due as well (after having given it with proud humility to your enemies) —I was not aware; I could not, and, I must confess, did not want to know it. It was your book that lay before me and not your intentions: I read and reread it a hundred times, but I found nothing in it that was not there, and what was there deeply offended and incensed my soul.

Were I to give free rein to my feelings this letter would probably grow into a voluminous notebook. I never thought of writing you on this subject though I longed to do so and though you gave all and sundry printed permission to write you without ceremony with an eye to the truth alone.[9] Were I in Russia I would not be able to do it, for the local "Shpekins" open other people's letters not merely for their own pleasure but as a matter of official duty, for the sake of informing. This summer incipient consumption has driven me abroad, [and Nekrasov has forwarded me your letter to Salzbrunn which I am leaving today with Annenkov for Paris via Frankfort-on-Main].[10] The unexpected receipt of your letter has enabled me to unburden my soul of what has accumulated there against you on account of your book. I cannot express myself by halves, I cannot prevaricate; it is not in my nature. Let you or time itself prove to me that I am mistaken in my conclusions. I shall be the first to rejoice in it, but I shall not repent what I have told you. This is not a question of your or my personality, it concerns a matter which is of greater importance than myself or even you; it is a matter which concerns the truth, Russian society, Russia. And this is my last concluding word: if you have had the misfortune of disowning with proud humility your truly great works, you should now disown with sincere humility your last book, and atone for the dire sin of its publication by new creations which would be reminiscent of your old ones.

Salzbrunn, July 15, 1847.

NOTES

LITERARY REVERIES

[1] First published in 1834 in the weekly newspaper *Molva* under the signature *on—insky*.

[2] A reference to the contradictory criticisms on Pushkin's *Angelo* published in the *Molva*.

[3] "That blind man" was I. I. Kozlov, the poet and translator who went blind at the age of 43. The year in which he lost his sight saw the commencement of his literary career.

[4] The chief of Russian Aristarchuses, severe critics, was N. Polevoy.

[5] The chief of the "indefatigable town-criers" who raised a clamour over Nestor Kukolnik was O. I. Senkovsky more familiar under the pseudonym of Baron Brambeus.

[6] A reference to the better known poems of Kheraskov—*Rossiada*, eulogizing the taking of Kazan by Ivan Grozny, and *Vladimir Regenerated*.

[7] The words "our hospitable country" contain a hint of F. Bulgarin's Polish origin, his traitorous participation in Napoleon's campaign against Russia, followed by his re-adoption of Russian citizenship.

[8] An allusion to Senkovsky who called Kukolnik "our young Goethe."

[9] Reference is here made to N. Grech's three-volume Grammar.

[10] The "fat fantastic book" was *The Fantastic Travels of Baron Brambeus*, which ridiculed many world-famous scientists and philosophers, among them the French Egyptologist Champollion and the French naturalist Cuvier V. Odoyevsky criticized this gross sally in an article entitled *Hostility to Education*.

[11] "Tutunji-Oglu"—another of Senkovsky's pseudonyms.

[12] The "baronial mask" is another allusion to Senkovsky (Baron Brambeus).

[13] "Reviews" were the vogue in Russian periodicals during the 'twenties and the beginning of the 'thirties.

[14] From Baratinsky's poem *On the Death of Goethe*.

[15] A reference to Eugène Sue, the French writer.

[16] *The Miller*—an erotic poem.

[17] "A tsar great and wise"—meaning tsar Alexei Mikhailovich (1645-1676).

[18] "Young son"—Peter I, who was proclaimed tsar at the age of 10.

[19] An allusion to F. A. Semyonov, the merchant, an amateur astronomer who set up a primitive observatory at his home in Kursk.

[20] Belinsky later changed his opinion of Cantemir. In his first article on Pushkin, written in 1843, Belinsky stated: "Thanks to Cantemir satire established itself, so to speak, in the manners of Russian literature and had a beneficial influence on the morals of Russian society."

[21] This extremely negative opinion of Tredyakovsky was widespread during 1830-1840.

[22] Vadim, the hero of Zhukovsky's *The Twelve Sleeping Maidens*, was beguiled by the tinkling of a bell.

[23] A reference to Lomonosov's tragedies *Tamira and Selim* and *Demophon*. The *Petriada* was an unfinished poem on Peter the Great.

[24] The punishment of *Telemachida* was applied in jest at the court of Catherine II by making the culprit read or learn by heart several lines, depending upon the degree of his guilt, from Tredyakovsky's poem bearing the above title.

[25] Navin is the Russian for Joshua of Nūn.

[26] The words "god-like Felitza of the Kirghiz-Kaisak Horde" are a slight modification of the opening lines of the ode *To Felitza* dedicated to Catherine II.

[27] The "prodigy knight"—Generalissimo A. V. Suvorov, whom Belinsky describes in the language of Derzhavin's odes, dedicated to Suvorov.

[28] From *Wit Works Woe* by Griboyedov.

[29] From *Eugene Onegin* by Pushkin.

[30] "The Great Man of Russian Grammar" by N. M. Karamzin.

[31] From Karamzin's tale *Ilya Muromets*.

[32] "The meeting of the Russian Scythian with the French Plato" applies to Karamzin's meeting with the French archeologist Jean Jacques Barthélemy, author of the novel *Voyage du jeune Anacharsis en Grèce*.

[33] From I. Lazhechnikov's song *Sweetly Sang the Nightingale*. Shortly before the appearance of Belinsky's article the authorship of this song was erroneously attributed to Merzlyakov, a mistake which Belinsky repeated.

[34] Belinsky appreciated *Slander* more correctly in the 'forties. In his first article on Pushkin he wrote of this comedy: "This work is poetically unimportant, but it belongs to the historically important phenomena of Russian literature, being a daring and resolute attack of satire against the pettifoggery, chicanery and usury which were such a terrible thorn in the flesh of previous society."

[35] "The master of our thoughts" was applied by Pushkin to Napoleon in his poem *To the Sea*.

[36] By the end of 1839 Belinsky had rejected his view of Shakespeare and several other writers as romanticists.

[37] Belinsky applies the term "youthful literature" to French romanticism.

[38] Ferragus is the hero of Balzac's novel *Histoire des treize.*

[39] "Another master of our thoughts"—from Pushkin's poem *To the Sea.*

[40] An allusion to A. A. Marlinsky who, in an article on N. Polevoy's novel, wrote with reference to Hindu literature: "Let us take a trip to India, the steamer 'John Bull' has long been smoking by the quay."

[41] The epithets 'humbug," "cunning blade" and 'Vidocq" apply to F. V. Bulgarin, who was presented by Pushkin in the guise of the French detective Vidocq in an article and epigrams.

[42] Intimating Baron Brambeus, whose articles "mocked at the sanctity of truth and the sanctity of knowledge."

[43] The epithets apply to M. T. Kachenovsky, N. I. Nadezhdin and N. A. Polevoy. The latter was a merchant and proprietor of a tavern.

[44] The words given in italics are a paraphrase from Nadezhdin's article *Literary Apprehensions for Next Year.*

[45] From *Eugene Onegin,* Chapt. 1.

[46] From Pushkin's epistle *To Chaadayev.*

[47] The words "like the murmur of waves" and "the babbling of a brook" are slightly modified quotations from Pushkin's poems *The Gypsies* and *Night.*

[48] Armida—the beautiful sorceress, mistress of an enchanted garden, heroine of Tasso's poem *Gerusalemme Liberata.*

[49] From *Eugene Onegin,* Chapt. 8.

[50] As early as the 'twenties Pushkin's *Prisoner of the Caucasus* and *Eugene Onegin* evoked cheap imitations such as *The Kirghiz Prisoner,* a story in verse by N. Muravyov, *The Prisoner of Moscow,* a story in verse by F. S—v and *Eugene Velsky* (not Belsky, as quoted by Belinsky), a novel in verse.

[51] From Baratinsky's poem To Imitators.

[52] From Faust's monologue (Goethe).

[53] Max and Thekla—the hero and heroine of Schiller's dramas *Die Piccolomini* and *Wallensteins Tod.*

[54] From *Eugene Onegin,* Chapt. 7.

[55] Pushkin wrote an article under the pseudonym of Feofilakt Kosichkin directed against Bulgarin in which he compared him with the garish writer of the times A. A. Orlov.

[56] The remark that A. A. Orlov had "never been in Spain" contains a sharp thrust at F. Bulgarin, who acted traitor to Russia in 1811 by joining Napoleon's army. Bulgarin took part in Napoleon's campaigns against Italy, Spain and Russia.

[57] Pushkin wrote in connection with Bulgarin's publication of *Selected Odes of Horace* that Bulgarin knows no Latin.

[58] The words "frail clay feet" and "hee! hee! hee!" are from Nadezhdin's article.

[59] From Zhukovsky's poem *A Singer in the Camp of the Russian Warriors.*

[60] Belinsky "felt awkward" about not having paid tribute to Polevoy's *Moskovsky Telegraf*, the best magazine of the second half of the 'twenties, which was banned by royal command and its mention forbidden for a time in the press.

[61] From Krylov's fable *The Pike and the Cat.*

[62] Meaning the publications of Grech and Bulgarin: *Syn Otechestva* (*Son of the Motherland*), founded in 1812, *Severny Arkhiv* (*Northern Archives*), 1822, and *Severnaya Pchela* (*Northern Bee*), 1825.

[63] *Nikander Svistushkin* (Buncombe) was the title of a pamphlet by Bulgarin directed against Pushkin; "Jews" and "Thieves" were the names he gave to Pushkin's poems *The Gypsies* and *The Robber Brothers.*

[64] Hinting at M. N. Zagoskin's novels *Yuri Miloslavsky, or the Russians in 1612* and *Roslavlev, or the Russians in 1812.*

[65] The words "foreign emigrant and artful dodger" and "petty knave and rascal" apply to F. Bulgarin.

[66] An allusion to the fact that there was very little to distinguish between the merits of the novel *Peter Vizhigin* and its predecessor *Ivan Vizhigin.*

[67] *Bezglasni* was the pseudonym used by V. F. Odoyevsky.

[68] Refers to Grech's article on Lomonosov printed in *The Readers' Library.*

[69] From Lomonosov's ode *Evening Meditations on the Greatness of God.*

[70] From Pushkin's poem *The Bookseller's Conversation with the Poet.*

[71] "Eminent statesman" refers to the Minister of Public Instruction, S. Uvarov, who in 1832 paid a visit to the Moscow University. S. A. Vengerov (1855-1920), the historian of Russian literature and editor and publisher of Belinsky's *Collected Works*, expressed the belief that the lines in praise of the government and the "eminent statesman," which form such an obvious discrepancy with Belinsky's entire outlook, were introduced into his article by the editor and publisher of the *Molva*, N. I. Nadezhdin.

ESSAY ON A SYSTEM OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY

[1] This article, first published in 1835, is the only printed work in which Belinsky expressed Fichtean views.

THE ACTS OF PETER THE GREAT, THE WISE REGENERATOR OF RUSSIA

[1] Belinsky's work *The Acts of Peter the Great* was published in 1841 in the shape of two articles unmercifully garbled by tsarist censorship deletions. The present version has been restored by Soviet literary research from original sources.

[2] *Narodnost*—substantive derived from the word *narod*, meaning *the people*.

[3] In Belinsky's view the essence of all nationality consists in its world outlook which, in turn, is the origin and basis of every literature. The question of nationality occupies a central position in Belinsky's articles, but he has nevertheless supplied no definition of nationality and even admitted that that was not yet possible.

[4] *Armyaks*—rough peasants' coats.

[5] *Kvass patriots*—votaries of the minutiae of native customs.

[6] *Basurman*—an infidel.

[7] Quotation from A. S. Griboyedov's comedy *Wit Works Woe*.

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] *Prikazi*—administrative departments in ancient Muscovy.

[10] *Tselovalniki*—minor government officials. *Dyaki* and *podyachiye*—government clerks and under-clerks in ancient Russia.

[11] *Semik* Day—an ancient festival, Thursday the seventh week after Easter.

[12] *Mestnichestvo*—a system, established in the Moscow state towards the end of the fifteenth century, under which state posts were distributed among the boyars, not in accordance with merit and ability, but according to lineage.

[13] Belinsky rightly pointed out that the inalienable qualities of the great Russian people are vigour, daring, strength of purpose, wisdom, ingenuity and industry, and showed that mysticism and religious contemplativeness are alien to the Russian people. He errs, however, in maintaining that the Russian peasant is addicted to patriarchal custom ("he ploughs as his fathers and grandfathers did before him, without adding a stick to his wooden plough") and was wrong in assuming that the Russian nation sank back into a torpor after each great revulsion during which it laid low its external enemies. Even so Belinsky found that this was due not to the nature of the Russian people, but to the historical conditions under which it was compelled by the feudalists to exist

LETTER TO V. P. BOTKIN, MARCH 1, 1841

[1] Belinsky's letter to Botkin, dated March 1, 1841, was first published in full in 1914. We reprint here the first half of this letter.

[2] *Hallische Jahrbücher*—periodical of the Hegelian Left, founded in 1837 by Echtermeyer and Arnold Ruge.

[3] The nickname by which Hegel was called in Stankevich's circle.

[4] By the "Katkov affair" Belinsky hinted at Katkov's infatuation with N. P. Ogarev's wife.

[5] An allusion to Sofia Kroneberg, the daughter of I. Y. Kroneberg, a Kharkov professor. Belinsky had first heard of this girl from Botkin who had made the acquaintance of the family during a visit to Kharkov. He wrote Belinsky on February 9th, 1840: "I was in Kharkov and saw the Kronebergs—what, are you blushing?... Although Sofia has never seen you she knows you well and likes to ask about you—I say nothing about how fond she is of reading your articles. Generally speaking, your name, I should say, is better known in Kharkov than it is in Moscow, and all thanks to that good soul Sofia and Kulchitsky; as for the *Nablyudatel* Sofia simply regards it as her own magazine, the magazine of her dearest friends...."

LETTER TO V. P. BOTKIN, JUNE 27-28, 1841

[1] Fragment of Belinsky's letter, first published in full in 1914.

[2] The idea and significance of the friendship that existed among the members of Stankevich's circle is more fully described in Belinsky's letter to Botkin dated September 8, 1841 which is, as it were, a continuation of the present letter.

[3] N. A. Polevoy's "impetus to society" was furnished by his magazine, the *Moskovsky Telegraf*, banned by the censor in 1834. In 1838 Polevoy became associated with N. I. Grech and F. V. Bulgarin, since when Belinsky became his ideological enemy. Belinsky remained his implacable enemy until the latter's death.

[4] *Kutya*—a dish consisting of rice boiled up with raisins eaten after Mass for the dead.

[5] A reference to Nikolai Petrovich Botkin.

[6] Alexander Filippovich—a facetious application of Alexander of Macedonia's patronymic.

LETTER TO V. P. BOTKIN, SEPTEMBER 8, 1841

[1] First published in full in 1914.

[2] V. P. Botkin fell in love with M. A. Bakunin's sister, Alexandra Alexandrovna, to whom he made a proposal of marriage which she accepted. Her brother and father, however, being opposed to the marriage the latter did not take place.

[3] Belinsky here intimates his own infatuation with Alexandra Alexandrovna Bakunina, with whom Botkin subsequently fell in love.

[4] N. V. Stankevich fell in love with Lyubov Alexandrovna Bakunina to whom he became betrothed, but soon discovered that his affection was not genuine. Not being able to bring himself to confess this to his fiancée he went abroad on the pretext of being ill. The real reason for his departure soon became known to the whole Bakunin family with the exception of Lyubov Alexandrovna. She died on August 6, 1838, not doubting to the last minute that Stankevich loved her.

[5] From Pushkin's *Three Springs.*

[6] *The Pioneers,* novel by Cooper. Jean Henri Bancal (1750-1826)—prominent member of the Convention, Girondist, took an active part in the French bourgeois revolution.

[7] A reference to Belinsky's friends who lived permanently in St. Petersburg and were members of his circle, in which he played the leading role.

[8] *Kiryusha*—Kirill Antonovich Gorbunov, portrait painter, subsequently made the well-known portrait of Belinsky.

[9] The scene between M. N. Katkov and M. A. Bakunin described by Belinsky occurred in the latter's apartment.

[10] Belinsky was probably reading Thiers' *History of the French Revolution.*

[11] *Pyotr Nikolayevich*—Kudryavtsev. The "wonderful story" referred to was *The Flower.*

[12] Tatiana Alexandrovna—another of Bakunin's sisters.

THE IDEA OF ART

[1] This unfinished article, written in the first half of 1841, was not published during Belinsky's lifetime.

[2] From Byron's poem *The Prisoner of Chillon.*

[3] From A. V. Koltsov's *The Great Mystery.*

A VIEW OF THE PRINCIPAL ASPECTS OF RUSSIAN LITERATURE IN 1843

[1] First published in the *Literaturnaya Gazeta* in 1844.

[2] "Benefactor" and "prime mover of literature" apply to M. D. Olkhin, the bookseller and publisher, whose praises F. V. Bulgarin sang in the press for venal ends.

[3] *Abbadona, Emma* and *Delirious Delights* are the works of N. A. Polevoy.

[4] The "vulgar moralist" was F. V. Bulgarin, "another moralist"—O. I. Senkovsky.

ARTICLES ON THE WORKS OF ALEXANDER PUSHKIN

EUGENE ONEGIN

[1] Belinsky's eighth and ninth articles on Pushkin given in the present edition were first published in the *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* in 1844, forming part of a series of eleven articles devoted to the works of Pushkin. These articles, over which Belinsky spent much time and labour, occupy a prominent place in his literary legacy and can fully be considered as "outlines of the history of Russian poetry."

[2] *Zipoon*—a coat worn by the peasants.

[3] The Russian word for German is *Nemietz*, meaning a *dumb man*, or a person who cannot speak Russian, having originally been applied among the people to all foreigners.

[4] Manilov—a character from Gogol's *Dead Souls*, personifying complacency, castle-building and mawkish sentimentality.

[5] An allusion to N. M. Zagoskin's novel *Homesick* containing a scene with a "drunken lackey." Belinsky devoted much space in his articles and reviews in combating the pseudo-romanticists and their conception of "true nationality."

[6] Quotation from Gogol's article *A Few Words on Pushkin* printed in the first part of his *Arabesques*.

[7] Essentially the same view in different phrasing is expressed in *Literary Reveries* where Belinsky states: "It is unfair to aver that he (Pushkin —*Ed.*) imitated Chenier, Byron and others; Byron possessed him not as a standard, but as a fact, as the master of thoughts of the age, and I said that Pushkin had paid his due to every great occurrence. Yes—Pushkin was the expression of his contemporary world, the representative of contemporary man, but of the Russian world, the Russian man."

[8] From Lermontov's poem *The Journalist, Reader and Author.*

[9] Words in popular Russian usage literally meaning *maybe* and *may do.*

[10] "One great critic" may be understood as implying either N. I. Nadezhdin or N. A. Polevoy. In his review on *Eugene Onegin* Nadezhdin called the poem "amusing prattle." Polevoy in his appraisal of *Eugene Onegin* considered it to be "a collection of separate incoherent notes and thoughts on this, that and the other put into a single frame, from which the author will not make a thing of separate significance."

[11] Nozdrev—a type of landowner, cheat and brawler portrayed in Gogol's *Dead Souls.*

[12] Pechorin—the hero of Lermontov's novel *A Hero of Our Time.*

[13] This severely critical view of Lensky reflects Belinsky's sharply negative attitude towards romanticism with which, since 1840-1841, he engaged in implacable war.

[14] Jeruslan Lazarevich (Jeruslan the son of Lazarus)—a hero of Russian 17th-18th century legends.

[15] These views on women, love and marriage Belinsky first began to express in 1841 when he became interested in the ideas of the Utopian Socialists. Belinsky, like V. P. Botkin, inveighed against Tatiana for having profaned the sublime feeling of love which she sacrificed "to the laws of the base, senseless and hateful rabble."

[16] This class attitude of Belinsky's in his treatment of Pushkin was regarded by G. V. Plekhanov as "the germ of scientific criticism based on a materialistic conception of history." "Towards the close of his life," wrote Plekhanov, "Belinsky entirely relinquished the idealism of Hegel and showed a leaning towards the materialism of Feuerbach. And according to the teaching of materialism the consciousness develops not from within itself—its development is determined by existence."

REVIEWS ON BOOKS ON HISTORY

THE HISTORY OF MALOROSSIA

[1] First published in the *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* in 1843. In the present edition the end, having no bearing on philosophy, has been omitted.

[2] The "idea of humanity" was one of the principal aspects of Belinsky's outlook during the period 1841-1846, when he was deeply interested in the ideas of Utopian Socialism. Prior to that, between 1834 and 1840, the salient feature of his outlook was the idea of *narodnost* (nationality) in the broad sense of the word.

[3] The author evidently errs here. Descartes could not have given an opinion on Racine's tragedy, since at the time of Descartes' death (1650) Racine, who was born in 1639, was only 11 years old.

[4] Belinsky sometimes spoke slightingly of scientists who made a thorough study of the facts of history without deducing broad sociological generalizations. He held a view of historical science as a "historical art" demanding of the historian broad generalizations and artistic portrayal and not a minute study of facts. Belinsky's allusions to "Slavophiles," "patriots" and "historical critique" apply chiefly to M. P. Pogodin, who in the 'thirties and 'forties of last century devoted himself entirely to research into the ancient period of Russian history.

Further on Belinsky alludes to N. A. Polevoy, the author of an unfinished *History of the Russian Nation.*

A GUIDE TO THE STUDY OF MODERN HISTORY

[1] First published in the *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* in 1844.

LES MYSTÈRES DE PARIS

[1] First published in the *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* in 1844.

[2] Balzac was not duly appreciated by Belinsky, sharing in this respect a common fate with several other French novelists.

[3] The "true friends" of the French people apply, of course, to the French Utopian Socialists.

A GUIDE TO THE STUDY OF THEORETICO-MATERIALISTIC PHILOSOPHY

[1] First published in the *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* in 1845.

[2] Belinsky was not sufficiently familiar with the works of the leading representatives of English and French materialism of the 17th-18th centuries which played a very important role in the development of human thought.

[3] Belinsky had in mind the writings of the "philosophizing" Panslavists and clericals. He was unable to give open expression in the legal press to the sympathy and respect which he entertained for the genuine Russian philosophers and champions against feudalism.

In pointing out the absence in Russia of "a soil or demand" for philosophy, Belinsky had in view prevailing feudal oppression and Russia's then backward condition in comparison with the advanced countries of Western Europe.

THOUGHTS AND NOTES ON RUSSIAN LITERATURE

[1] This article was first published in N. Nekrasov's *Peterburgsky Sbornik* (St. Petersburg, 1846) and is of great importance in providing an acquaintance with Belinsky's views.

[2] In this paragraph Belinsky put forward for the first time a definition of the intelligentsia as a separate social stratum of society.

[3] *Krapivnoye semya*—literally *nettle-seed*. An abusive name for the ancient *podyachiye;* later applied to corrupt and bureaucratic officials.

[4] *Sivukha*—a cheap brand of spirits.

[5] It was obviously not "patriotic" sentiment that prompted Belinsky's remarks about the military might of tsarist Russia in Nicholas' days, but a desire to disarm the "kvass patriots" who, for the thoughts which he expresses in this article concerning the backwardness of Russian society and literature, were prone to brand him as "a troublesome, dangerous and suspicious character and a renegade, and play the literary informer against him." This is extra proof of the shifts Belinsky was put to in order to be able to express himself in print.

A VIEW ON RUSSIAN LITERATURE IN 1846

[1] First published in the *Sovremennik* in 1847. The magazine text of this article has been considerably abbreviated and altered. The manuscript, preserved in the Lenin State Public Library in Moscow, incomplete though it is, has been used for the present edition.

[2] An allusion to the "patchwork empire"—Austria.

[3] Belinsky expressed his attitude towards "nationality" still more definitely in a letter to V. P. Botkin dated March 8, 1847, in which he wrote: "Mine is a Russian nature. I will tell you more clearly: *Je suis un Russe et je suis fier de l'être.* I do not want to be even a Frenchman, although I love and respect that nation more than others. Russian personality is still an embryo, but what breadth and power that embryo contains, how dreadful and stifling does it find all limitation and narrowness!"

Belinsky expounded his ideas on nationality with certain reservations obviously disconnecting himself from the Slavophiles whose views in this respect were expressed with "bluster and fanaticism."

[4] The magazine referred to was the *Moskvityanin* (1841-1856).

[5] These words are a reply to Valerian Maikov who, in an article on Koltsov, had sharply attacked Belinsky without mentioning his name.

[6] Humanistic cosmopolitans—meaning Valerian Maikov.

[7] This and the following paragraph are a passage at arms with Maikov.

[8] "New great problems" obviously apply to the problems raised by the Utopian Socialists.

[9] Behind Belinsky's appraisal of Julia Zhadovskaya the reader senses his hidden controversy with Maikov. Belinsky was right—Julia Zhadovskaya as a writer never rose above third-rate capacity and is now forgotten.

[10] *Sotnik*—commander of a troop of a hundred men.

[11] *Streltzi*—a body of Russian troops originally formed by Ivan Grozny in the middle of the 16th century.

[12] Khlestakov—the hero of Gogol's comedy *Inspector General*, an irresponsible braggart and liar.

[13] Literally: "The Incredible in the Past, or the Past in the Incredible."

[14] The initials M.Z.K. are those of Y. Samarin, Slavophile political writer.

[15] S. A. Maslov (1793-1879), writer and well-known functionary in the sphere of agriculture, described in his article harrowing scenes of harvest time, when a woman toiled in the field for days at a stretch beneath a blazing sun and straightened her back only for a moment in order to suckle her baby at a wasted breast. Another scene describes women in the field breaking off work to give birth to a dead child.

[16] "Seven years' painful experience" refer to Belinsky's employment on the *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* (from August 1839 till April 1846), when he was obliged virtually single-handedly to fill up the Criticism section with regular monthly articles.

A VIEW ON RUSSIAN LITERATURE IN 1847

[1] The two articles under this heading were first published in the *Sovremennik* in 1848.

[2] A neologism coined by Shishkov, a purist of Belinsky's time, to replace the foreign word *magia* (magic). The word was still-born.

[3] *Pobudka* and *yachestvo*—words of native origin suggested by the purists as substitutes for the borrowed words *instinct* and *egoism.*

[4] Russian words of foreign origin meaning *passport, ticket, banknote, receipt.*

[5] Words of native origin meaning *subject* and *industry.*

[6] Both words are synonymous, meaning *to exaggerate, utrirovat* being derived from the French verb *outrer,* while *preuvelichivat* is of native origin.

[7] Russian words meaning *success* and *advance.*

[8] The reference is to the *Otechestvenniye Zapiski.*

[9] The disparaging term "natural school" was invented by Bulgarin to designate writers of the Gogolian trend in literature.

[10] This attempt was made by Bulgarin in a current feuilleton entitled *Titbits from the Journals*

[11] A reference to Pushkin's poem *The Robber Brothers.*

[12] This opinion of Gogol belonged to Vasili Plaksin.

[13] Vorovatin, Nozhov, Pravdolyubov and Blagotvorov were heroes of Bulgarin's novel *Ivan Vizhigin.* These names are typical of the allegorical appellations used by writers of the time, being derived from the Russian words *thief, knife, lover of truth, benefactor.*

[14] Refers to Grigorovich's *The Village* and *Anton Goremika* (Poor Wretch Anton), Dahl-Lugansky's *The St. Petersburg House Porter* and Nekrasov's *St. Petersburg Haunts.*

[15] Nikita Fedorovich—one of the personages of Grigorovich's story *Anton Goremika.*

[16] This reference to Christ as "the Son of God" sounds strange in the mouth of Belinsky, who was a confirmed atheist at this period of his life. It was obviously meant for the censorship.

[17] "The poet who wished to become a poor moralizer" obviously applies to Gogol, who came out in 1847 with *Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends* and renounced his former works.

[18] Prince Rodolphe—the hero of Eugène Sue's *Les Mystères de Paris.*

[19] During his trip abroad in 1847 Belinsky twice visited Dresden—on May 15-19 and July 5-9 (old style). On the first occasion he twice visited the Dresden Gallery, where he saw the famous Madonna di San Sisto, and apparently paid another visit to the gallery on the second occasion. His impressions of the Madonna were described in a letter to Botkin dated July 7, 1847. (*Cf.*, pp. 501-502.)

[20] Goethe's novel *Wahlverwandtschaften* was published in the Russian translation in the *Sovremennik* (1847) under the title *Ottilie.*

[21] The full title of the novel is *Pan Podstolitch, a Provincial Romance,* by F. Masalsky, translated from the Polish.

[22] Belinsky in the 'thirties was an exponent of art for art's sake, and in the 'forties allotted to art a purely subservient role. This article is an exposition of Belinsky's later view on art to which he arrived at the close of his life.

[23] Belinsky refers to his article "A Reply to the Moskvityanin" published in the *Sovremennik* in 1847.

[24] On the appearance of *Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends* by Gogol, who was the founder of the natural school, Belinsky considered Gogol's career as a writer to be at an end.

[25] Judging from these lines Belinsky was the first to introduce into the Russian language and fully explain the word *humanity.*

[26] The present article develops a brilliant characteristic of A. I. Herzen roughly sketched in Belinsky's letters about two years before.

[27] Prostakova—one of the principal characters of Fon-Vizin's comedy *The Minor.*

[28] Belinsky was quick to grasp the true significance of *An Ordinary Story* of which he gave a brilliant interpretation, seeing that he had himself, together with his friends of the 'thirties, lived through a fairly protracted period of romanticism the survivals of which in the 'forties he found to exist among the Slavophiles.

[29] Belinsky did not do ample justice either to the scope or true character of Turgenev's talent, despite the fact that he closely followed the development of the latter's literary activities.

[30] Undoubtedly Belinsky, during the last months of his life, on account of his grave illness, had moments when his aesthetic perspicacity deserted him. There is no other explanation for his qualifying the heroes of V. I. Dahl's commonplace story as the "creations of genius." Indeed this article was dictated by Belinsky in bed, he being too weak to write.

[31] This novel was dealt with in Belinsky's article *A View on Russian Literature in 1846.* (*Cf.*, pp. 393-395).

[32] Nestroyev was the pen name of P. N. Kudryavtsev, who also wrote under the initials "A. N."

[33] *Sto-Odin* (One Hundred and One) was the pseudonym of A. D. Galakhov. The author of the story *Kiryusha* was P. V. Annenkov.

[34] Anastasia Y. Marchenko published her verses, stories and novels in various magazines under the initials "T. Ch." and pen name A. Temrizova.

[35] Belinsky was prevented by serious illness from dealing more fully with *Dombey and Son.*

[36] Belinsky was mistaken: The article in the *Sovremennik* "*From an Artist's Notes*" was signed "X," the author being M. S. Shchepkin. The initial "L" was used by N. A. Melkunov, a friend of Belinsky's of the Stankevich circle days.

[37] *Letters from Avenue Marigny* were sent in by A. I. Herzen from abroad and published in the *Sovremennik* for 1847.

[38] Belinsky here alludes to his illness and his trip abroad, as a result of which the *Sovremennik* "did not fully meet the expectations of the public in the field of criticism."

[39] This refers to Nikolai I. Nadezhdin.

[40] This is an allusion to Belinsky himself.

[41] Meaning V. K. Tredyakovsky.

LETTER TO V. P. BOTKIN, FEBRUARY 17, 1847

[1] Belinsky's letters to V. P. Botkin dated February 17, July 7/19 and December 1847 were first published in full in a collection of *Letters* issued in 1914. In the present edition fragments of this correspondence are reprinted from the proof copy of the *Letters.*

LETTER TO V. P. BOTKIN, JULY 7/19, 1847

[1] Belinsky refers to the scandalous affair of abuse and peculation in the war department in which a "band of thieves" headed by the Chief of the Reserve Corps General Trishatny was involved.

[2] Teste, Jean Baptiste (1780-1852)—French minister of public works, subsequently president of the court of appeal, prosecuted and sentenced for taking bribes.

[3] Louis Blanc's *Histoire de la Révolution Française,* which began to come out in 1847.

[4] "Now I am reading the Lamartine fellow," meaning Lamartine's *Histoire des Girondins* in eight volumes which appeared in 1847. In this work Lamartine misrepresented the historical facts for the purpose of extolling the Girondists and disparaging the Jacobins.

LETTER TO V. P. BOTKIN, DECEMBER 1847

[1] Reference is here made to A. I. Herzen's *Letters from Avenue Marigny* written in July-September 1847 during Belinsky's sojourn abroad.

[2] Beauvallon, a French journalist, who killed another journalist by the name of Dujarier in a duel in 1845. It soon came to light that the duel was disguised murder on the part of Beauvallon and his second. The former was sentenced to 8 years and his accomplice to 10 years' penal servitude.

[3] This refers to P. V. Annenkov's *Letters from Paris,* which were published in the *Sovremennik* (1847).

[4] N. F. Pavlov's fourth letter to Gogol was published in No. 8 and the first and second letters in No. 5 of the *Sovremennik* for 1847.

[5] Michel—Mikhail Alexandrovich Bakunin.

LETTER TO N. V. GOGOL

[1] The publication of *Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends* was not a complete surprise for Belinsky. Six months before Gogol had published in the *Sovremennik, Moskovskiye Vedomosti* and *Moskvityanin* an article entitled *Odyssey,* which was later embodied as a separate chapter in *Selected Passages.* Belinsky claimed that this article, by its paradoxicalness and "high-flown pretensions to prophetic tone," distressed "all the friends and admirers of Gogol's talent and gladdened all his enemies." Following this article Gogol published a second edition of *Dead Souls* with a foreword which filled Belinsky with "keen apprehensions regarding the future reputation... of the author of *Inspector General* and *Dead Souls.*" In his review on this second edition Belinsky said that among the most important defects of the poem were those passages in which "the author tries to rise from a poet and artist to an oracle and descends instead to a somewhat turgid and pompous lyricism." Belinsky, however, reconciled himself with these defects, since such passages were few in the poem and "they can be omitted in reading without diminishing the pleasure which the novel itself affords." Of much greater importance was the fact that "these mystico-lyrical sallies in *Dead Souls* were not simple and accidental errors on the part of the author, but the germ of the perhaps utter deterioration of his talent and its loss for Russian literature."

Thus, Belinsky was prepared for the *Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends.* Their publication nevertheless profoundly shocked him. In a big article dealing with this publication Belinsky, for reasons of censorship, was able to give no more than a mild expression of the indignation which the appearance of this "vile" book aroused in him. In a letter to V. P. Botkin, who had disapproved of his article, Belinsky wrote: "I am... obliged to act against my nature and character: Nature has condemned me to bark like a dog and howl like a jackal

but circumstances compel me to mew like a cat and wave my tail like a fox. You say that the article is 'written without sufficient premeditation and straight from the shoulder, whereas the matter should have been handled with subtlety.' My dear friend, but my article, on the contrary, could never have done justice to such an important theme (albeit of negative importance) as the book it deals with precisely because I premeditated it. How little you know me! All my best articles are unpremeditated, just improvizations; in sitting down to them I never knew what I was going to write.... The article on Gogol's vile book might have turned out to be a splendid one had I been able to shut my eyes and let myself go to the full range of my indignation and fury.... But I had premeditated this article, and I knew beforehand that it would not be brilliant, for I merely struggled to make it business-like and to show the baseness of an infamous wretch. And such it has come from under my pen, and not in the way you have read it. You people live in the country and know nothing. The effect of this book was such that Nikitenko, who passed it, deleted some of my quotations from the book, and trembled for those he had left in my article. At least a third of my own copy was deleted.... You reproach me for having lost my temper. But I did not try to keep it. Tolerance to error I can well understand and appreciate, at least in others if not in myself, but tolerance to villainy I will not stand. You have utterly failed to understand this book if you regard it *only* as an error and do not see it as studied villainy besides. Gogol is not at all K. S. Aksakov. It is Talleyrand, Cardinal Fesch, who deceived God all his life and fooled Satan at his death."

Belinsky's article, such as it appeared, created a strong impression on Gogol, though he failed to grasp its import. It struck him that Belinsky was angered with him only because he took personal exception to the attacks against the critics and journalists scattered throughout the *Correspondence*. In this connection Gogol wrote to Prokopovich on June 20, 1847: "This irritation grieves me very much.... Please have a talk with Belinsky and let me know in what frame of mind he now is with regard to me. If his bile is stirred up let him vent it against me in the *Sovremennik* in whatever terms he pleases, but let him not harbour it in his breast against me. If his wrath has abated give him the enclosed epistle." Prokopovich handed over the "epistle" to the editorial office of the *Sovremennik*, and N. A. Nekrasov forwarded it on to Salzbrunn where Belinsky was then sojourning. Gogol, *inter alia*, wrote Belinsky: "I was grieved to read your article about me in the 2nd issue of the *Sovremennik*. Not that I deplored the degradation in which you wanted to place me before everyone, but because it betrays the voice of a man who is angry with me. And I would not like to make even a man who did not like me angry with me, still less you, of whom I had always

thought as of a man who loved me. I had no intention of causing you distress in a single place of my book. How it has happened that I have roused the anger of every single man in Russia I cannot for the time being understand."

After scanning Gogol's letter, Belinsky, in the words of P. V. Annenkov, flushed and murmured: "Ah, he does not understand why people are angry with him—he must have that explained to him—I shall answer him." Three days later his reply was ready. Belinsky read it to P. V. Annenkov. The latter, writing of the impression which this reply made on him, said: "I was alarmed both by the tone and tenor of this reply, and, of course, not for Belinsky's sake, since no special consequences of foreign correspondence among acquaintances could have been anticipated at the time. I was alarmed for Gogol's sake, who was to have received this reply, and I could vividly imagine his position the minute he began to read this scathing indictment. The letter did not merely contain a denunciation of his views and opinions; the letter revealed the emptiness and ugliness of all Gogol's ideals, of all his conceptions of goodness and honour, of all the moral principles of his life, together with the egregious position of those circles whose defender he professed himself to be. I wanted to explain to Belinsky the whole scope of his passionate speech, but he knew that, it appears, better than I. 'But what else was to be done?' he said. 'All measures should be taken to protect people against a rabid man, even though it were Homer himself. As for insulting Gogol, I could never insult him as he has insulted me in my soul and in my faith in him.'" A. I. Herzen, to whom Belinsky read his letter to Gogol, told Annenkov: "It is a work of genius—and, I believe, his testament as well." This letter to Gogol, which was "the epitome of Belinsky's literary activity," Lenin considered to be "one of the finest works of the uncensored democratic press, which has preserved its great and vital importance to this day." (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Russian edition, Vol. XVII, p. 341.)

In this letter Belinsky not only subjected Gogol's reactionary book to devastating criticism, he exposed the entire feudal and autocratic system of Russia, and only death saved him from severe punishment for this remarkable document. The superintendent of the Third Section, L. V. Dubelt, "regretted" that he was not able to make the great critic "rot in prison." It is known that the Russian writer Dostoyevsky was condemned to death, the sentence later being commuted to penal servitude, for having read Belinsky's letter in a circle of Petrashevsky adherents. The government's cruel reprisals, however, could do nothing to prevent Belinsky's letter from being circulated in thousands of copies. I. S. Aksakov wrote to his father on October 9, 1856, *i.e.*, nine odd years after Belinsky's letter first appeared: "I have travelled much about Russia: the name of Belinsky is known to every youth who is at all given to thinking, to everyone who longs for a breath of fresh air amid the stinking quagmire of provincial

life. There is not a single high-school teacher in the gubernia towns who does not know Belinsky's letter to Gogol by heart."

Belinsky's famous letter was first published by A. I. Herzen in *The Polar Star* in 1855 (2nd ed., London, 1858, pp. 66-76), from which text it was reprinted several times abroad. The full text of this letter appeared in several editions of Belinsky's works as well as in his *Letters* published in 1914. The original has not come down to us. The text here given is a reprint from that published in *The Polar Star.*

[2] Gogol went abroad in 1836 where, with short intermissions, he lived for many years.

[3] The knout with a single lash used as an instrument of punishment in Russia was substituted by the cat-o'-three tails in accordance with the criminal code of 1845.

[4] Gogol had said all this in a letter to Count S. S. Uvarov in April 1845.

[5] Gogol in *Selected Passages from Correspondence with Friends* had written of his intention of making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

[6] Gogol had not mentioned Belinsky by name in his *Correspondence*, but it was obvious to all that it was him he had in mind when speaking of the critics. Thus in Chapter VII he wrote that *Odyssey* ... would refreshen criticism. Criticism was tired and confused from dealing with the baffling works of modern literature, it had flown off at a tangent, and, waiving literary topics, was "beginning to dote."

[7] Refers to P. A. Vyazemsky's article *Yazikov and Gogol.*

[8] In an article *On the "Sovremennik"* Gogol wrote: "Thank God, two of our... first-class poets are still alive and well—Prince Vyazemsky and Yazikov." Furthermore, having in view a new edition of his *Correspondence* Gogol asked Prince Vyazemsky: "read, acquaint yourself, strictly examine and set right my book.... Regard the manuscript," he wrote, "as you would your own cherished property.... And so, dear Prince, do not forsake me, and may God reward you for it, for that will be a truly Christian act of charity." The praise and this plea apparently had their effect, for Prince Vyazemsky wrote his article *Yazikov and Gogol* in defence of Gogol's book.

[9] In the foreword to the second edition of *Dead Souls* Gogol wrote: "Much in this book has been written wrongly, not as things are really happening in the land of Russia. I ask you, dear reader, to correct me. Do not spurn this matter. I ask you to do it."

[10] The words in brackets were, of course, deliberately omitted by Herzen in *The Polar Star* to avoid giving publicity to the names of Nekrasov and Annenkov mentioned in Belinsky's letter.

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APOLLOS (Baibakov, A. D.) (1745-1801)—bishop, ecclesiastical writer, author of *Rules of Poetics*—63, 67

APRAKSIN, F. M., Count (1671-1728)—coadjutor of Peter the Great, first admiral-general of the Russian fleet—128

ARAPETOV, I. P. (1811-1887)—Russian writer, active adherent of peasant reform—499

ARIOSTO, Ludovico (1474-1533)—Italian poet, author of poem *Orlando Furioso*—57

ARISTARCHUS, of Samothrace (2nd c. B.C.)—Alexandrian grammarian and critic—4, 9, 61

ARISTIDES (B.C. 540-467)—Athenian statesman and general—135, 312

ARISTOPHANES (B. C. ab. 450-385)—celebrated Greek dramatist, author of political comedies—5

ARISTOTLE (B.C. 384-322)—famous Greek philosopher, "The Hegel of the ancient world"—57, 119

ARTSIBASHEV, N. S. (1773-1841)—Russian historian—43, 44

AUGUSTUS, Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus (B.C. 63—A.D. 14)—first Roman emperor—40

AVRAAMI, secular name Averki Ivanovich Palitsin (died 1625)—cellarer of the Troitsk-Sergiyev Monastery (Russia) during the Troublous Times—127, 401

BAIBAKOV, A.D.—*Cf.* Apollos.

BAILLY, Jean Silvain (1736-1793)—French astronomer and politician —500

BAKUNIN, M. A. (1814-1876)—Russian political writer. Frequented Stankevich's circle in 1835 where he became intimate with Belinsky; introduced Belinsky to the philosophy of Fichte and Hegel. Subsequently ideologist of the anarchistic wing in the First International—165, 500, 502

BALZAC, de, Honoré (1799-1850)—famous French novelist-realist—5, 74, 75, 89, 94, 321

BARANTE, Amable Guillaume Prosper, Baron de (1782-1866)—French statesman, historian and publicist—304

BARATINSKY (or Boratinsky), Eug. A. (1800-1844)—Russian poet, friend of A. S. Pushkin—4, 5, 61, 64, 65, 488

BARBIER, Henri Auguste (1805-1882)—French satirical poet—94

BARON BRAMBEUS—*Nom de plume* of the writer O. I. Senkovsky *(q. v.)*

BATTEUX, Charles, abbot (1713-1780)—French philosopher, writer on aesthetics—56, 57, 100

BATYUSHKOV, K. N. (1787-1855)—Russian poet—5, 7, 49, 51, 52, 56, 61, 285, 337, 342, 352, 408, 488

BECKER, Karl Friedrich (1777-1806)—German historian, author of popular *Universal History*—391

BENEDIKTOV, V. G. (1807-1873)—Russian poet, writer chiefly of erotic verses of studied elegance. Enjoyed considerable popularity in the 'thirties, but in the 'forties he was no longer read—249

BENTHAM, Jeremy (1748-1832)—English philosopher and publicist—268

BÉRANGER, Pierre Jean de, (1780-1857)—French popular satirical poet —166

BERGMAN, Benjamin—German historian, author of *The History of Peter the Great*—107

BESTUZHEV, A. A. (1797-1837)—Russian belletrist and critic, better known by his pseudonym "Marlinsky," one of the Decembrists—5, 7, 74-77, 136, 249, 275, 400, 409, 434, 479

BEZGLASNI—*Nom de plume* of V. F. Odoyevsky (*q. v.*)

BEZBORODKO, A. A., Prince (1747-1799)—grand chancellor and diplomat during the reign of Catherine II and Paul I—34

BLAIR, Hugh (1718-1800)—Scottish theoretician of aesthetics, professor of rhetoric at Edinburgh University—59

BLANC, Jean Joseph Louis (1811-1882)—French social reformer, historian —496, 500, 502

BOBROV, S. S. (1760?-1810)—Russian mystic poet and translator—40

BOGDANOVICH, I. F. (1743-1803)—Russian poet, author of *Dushenka*— 39, 213, 352, 488

BOILEAU, Nicolas (1636-1711)—French poet and critic—56, 57, 100, 348, 407

BOSSUET, Jacques Bénigne (1627-1704)—French historian and theologian, advocate of reconciliation between Protestants and Catholics—304

BOTKIN, V. P. (1811-1869)—Russian man of letters, friend of Belinsky, literary critic of "Westerners" tendency, inclined to bourgeois liberalism. Author of well-known *Letters About Spain*—149, 152, 154, 156, 158-160, 162, 165, 166, 436, 481, 482, 491, 494, 497

BRYULLOV, K. P. (1799-1852)—famous Russian painter—423

BUFFON, George Louis Leclerc (1707-1788)—French naturalist—31

BULGARIN, F. V. (1789-1859)—Russian journalist, political writer and belletrist, agent of the Third Section (Russian Secret Police)—4-6, 8, 53, 73, 74, 76, 86, 91-93, 390, 409

BULWER-LYTTON, Edward George, Lord (1805-1873)—English novelist —342

BUNYAKOVSKY, V. Y (1804-1889)—Russian mathematician, vice-president of the Academy of Sciences—483

BURACHOK, S. A. (1800-1876)—Russian critic, publisher of reactionary magazine *Mayak* (*Beacon*), ship's engineer and author—508

BUTKOV, Y. P. (died 1856)—Russian writer, author of *St. Petersburg Heights*—381, 383, 405, 482

BUTOVSKY, A. I. (1817-1890)—Russian writer on economics and senator, author of three-volume work *An Essay in National Wealth*—484

BUTURLIN, D. P. (1790-1849)—tsarist statesman, ex-president of the committee of surveillance for controlling the spirit and tendency of works published in Russia. Author of military histories—393

BYRON, George Noel Gordon, Lord (1788-1824)—great English poet—3-6, 16, 17, 36, 51, 59, 62, 65, 69, 77, 81, 94, 100, 164, 207, 208, 216, 261, 320, 327, 342, 345, 371, 411

CAESAR, Gaius Julius (B.C. 100-44)—famous Roman general—16, 135, 138, 156, 157

CAMILLUS, Marcus Furius (B.C. 403-365)—Roman general, censor—135

CANTEMIR, A. D. (1709-1744)—Russian satirist—27, 54, 338, 341, 348, 406-408, 487, 488

CATHERINE II, Alexeyevna (1729-1796)—Russian empress—32, 33, 35, 38, 40, 41, 130, 131, 134, 138, 144, 212, 215, 285, 352, 367, 488

CATO, Marcus Porcius (Uticensis) (B.C. 95-47)—Roman republican, fought with Pompey's party against Caesar—156, 157

CATO, Marcus Porcius (the Elder) (B.C. 234-149)—Roman statesman and author—156, 157

CELTES, Konrad (1459-1508)—German humanist, writer, professor of rhetorics—318

CERVANTES, Saevedra, de, Miguel (1547-1616)—great Spanish novelist, author of *Don Quixote*—371

CHAMPOLLION, Jean François (1791-1832)—French Egyptologist, first to decipher hieroglyphics—6

CHÂTEAUBRIAND, de, François René, Viscount (1768-1848)—French novelist—58

CHARLEMAGNE (Charles the Great) (ab. 742-814)—Roman emperor and king of the Franks—312, 315, 318

CHARLES V (1500-1558)—German-Roman emperor—16, 174, 316

CHARLES VIII (1470-1498)—king of France—16, 315

CHARLES X, Gustavus (1622-1660)—king of Sweden—315

CHARLES XII (1682-1718)—king of Sweden (from 1697), famed for his military exploits and defeated by the Russian troops of Peter the Great at the Battle of Poltava in 1708—16, 134, 315

CICERO, Marcus Tullius (B.C. 106-43)—Roman statesman, orator, philosopher and man of letters—11, 30, 317

CIMON (died B.C. 449)—Athenian commander, won several victories over the Persians—135

CLAUREN, pseudonym of Karl Gottlieb Samuel Heun (1771-1854)—German writer of sentimental novels popular in their time—343

COLERIDGE, Samuel Taylor (1772-1834)—English poet, critic and philosopher—94

COLUMBUS, Christopher (1446?-1506)—famous navigator, discoverer of America—50, 103, 174, 216, 320

COMTE, Auguste (1798-1857)—French philosopher, founder of positivism—491-493

CONDÉ, Louis (1621-1686)—noted French general—31

COOPER, James Fenimore (1789-1851)—American novelist—6

CORNEILLE, Pierre (1606-1684)—French dramatist—5, 31, 40, 57, 94, 257

CROESUS—a king of Lydia in the 6th century B.C., having vast wealth—3, 179

CUVIER, Georges Léopold (1769-1832)—French naturalist, founder of paleontology—6, 440

DAHL (Kazak Lugansky), V. I. (1801-1872)—Russian belletrist and lexicographer, author of a dictionary of the Russian language—386, 387, 436, 471, 474, 475

DANILOV, Kirsha—*Cf.* Kirsha Danilov

DAVIDOV, D. V. (1784-1839)—Russian poet and partisan—65, 488

DE LA GARDIE, J. (1583-1652)—Swedish general—132

DELAVIGNE, Jean François Casimir (1793-1843)—French poet and dramatist—94

DELVIG, A. A., Baron (1798-1831)—Russian poet, friend of A. S. Pushkin; publisher of almanacs *Severniye Tsveti (Northern Flowers)* and *Podsnezhnik (Snow-drop)*. Publisher of the *Literaturnaya Gazeta (Literary Gazette)* from 1830—52, 66

DELILLE, Jacques (1738-1813)—French poet and translator—53, 401

DEMOSTHENES (B.C. 384-322)—the great Attic orator and statesman, head of the republican anti-Macedonian party—11, 30

DERZHAVIN, G. R. (1743-1816)—Russian poet, celebrated for his odes—5, 7, 18, 34-41, 44, 56, 59, 61, 69, 86, 93, 191, 197, 198, 208, 213, 285, 336, 338, 339, 351, 352, 354, 370, 401, 407, 487

DESCARTES, René (1596-1650)—eminent French philosopher-dualist. He was a materialist in physics and an idealist in the theory of knowledge—287, 373

DESTUNIS, S. Y. (1782-1848)—Russian Hellenist, translator of Plutarch, author of *Byzantian Historians*—156, 401

DICKENS, Charles (1812-1870)—famous English novelist—427, 431, 481

DMITRI DONSKOY (1350-1389)—grand prince of Muscovy, victor over the Mongol hordes of Mamai at the Battle of Kulikovo in 1380—127, 366

DMITRIEV, I. I. (1760-1837)—Russian writer, author of numerous satires, epigrams and fables—5, 39, 42, 49, 207, 209, 213, 336, 343, 351, 352, 408, 414, 415, 488

DOBRYSHIN—a colonel or general of the Russian army put on trial for larceny—496

DOLGORUKY, I. M., Prince (1764-1823)—Russian poet, satirist and writer of memoirs—401, 488

DOLGORUKY, Y. F. (1659-1720)—associate and favourite of Peter the Great—128, 130

DOSTOYEVSKY, F. M. (1821-1881)—famous Russian author—384-386, 436, 478

DRINAGERBERG—German humanist—318

DROZDOV, A. V.—Russian master of philosophy, author of *An Essay on a System of Moral Philosophy*—98

DRUZHININ, A. V. (1824-1864)—Russian critic and belletrist, author of story *Polinka Saks*—436, 475

DUBOIS, Guillaume (1655-1723)—French statesman—498

DUCIS, Jean François (1733-1816)—French dramatist and poet, member of the French Academy—17

DUCRAY-DUMINIL, François Guillaume (1761-1819)—French novelist and writer of children's stories, author of several sentimental romances and songs—92

DUDISHKIN, S. S. (1820-1866)—Russian liberal-minded journalist and critic. From 1846, after the resignation of Belinsky, conducted the Book section and later the Critical section of the *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* —483

DUMAS, Alexander (père) (1803-1870)—French novelist and dramatist—94, 403, 434

ECHTERMEYER, Ernst Theodor (1805-1844)—German writer—150

ELIZABETH PETROVNA (1709-1761)—daughter of Peter I, Russian empress—285, 352

EMIN, F. A. (1735?-1770)—Russian novelist, translator and journalist —7, 8

ERASMUS of Rotterdam (1466-1536)—noted Dutch humanist and writer —318

EVERTS, Johann Gustav (1781-1830)—German historian and jurist—7

FABIUS—Roman patrician family. Belinsky evidently alludes to Quintus Fabius Maximus, the Roman general, who died at the close of the 3rd century B.C.—135

FERDINAND V, The Catholic (1452-1516)—king of Aragon and Castile —312

FERRY—author of stories *Jose Juan* and *Horse Tamer* published in the *Sovremennik*—482

FICHTE, Johann Gottlieb (1762-1814)—German philosopher, classic representative of subjective idealism—286, 287, 329

FON-VIZIN, D. I. (1745-1792)—Russian writer, satirist, author of the comedies *The Minor* and *The Brigadier*—35, 38, 40, 41, 48, 121, 208, 213, 285, 337, 338, 352, 407

FRANCIS I (1494-1547)—king of France—174, 315, 316

FREDERICK II, The Great (1712-1787)—king of Prussia—495

FROLOV, N. G. (1812-1855)—Russian geographer, studied in Germany where Granovsky, Turgenev, Bakunin and others grouped about him —483

FYODOR Alexeyevich (1661-1682)—third Russian tsar of the Romanov dynasty, brother of Peter the Great—144, 366

GALILEO, Galilei (1564-1642)—Great Italian astronomer and physicist—103

GARNIER, Robert (1534-1590)—French dramatist—40

GEORGE SAND—*Cf.* Sand

GIBBON, Edward (1737-1794)—English historian—304

GIRARDIN, Émile de (1806-1881)—French journalist, inaugurator of cheap newspapers—496

GLINKA, F. N. (1786-1880)—Russian poet of mystic trend. In his youth one of the leaders of the *Sovuz Blagodenstviya* society and a prominent St. Petersburg freemason—66

GLINKA, S. N. (1776-1847)—Russian poet, journalist, participant of 1812—7

GNEDICH, N. I. (1784-1833)—Russian poet, translator of the *Iliad*—17, 53, 488

GODUNOV, Boris Fyodorovich (1552-1605)—tsar of Muscovy—127

GOETHE, Johann Wolfgang (1749-1832)—great German poet and scholar, author of *Faust* and other works—5, 6, 16, 49, 53, 57, 64, 71, 77, 82, 85, 94, 95, 100, 101, 155, 183, 345, 371, 430, 431

GOGOL, N. V. (1809-1852)—great Russian author—5, 80, 90, 122, 137, 206, 209, 249, 285, 337, 338, 341, 343, 349, 350, 355, 356, 376, 384, 385, 395, 405. 410-414, 434, 486, 487, 493, 499, 503, 508

GOLIKOV, I. I. (1735-1801)—Russian historian, author of *The Acts of Peter the Great*—107, 135, 145

GOLITSYN, M. M. (1674-1730)—Russian general field marshal, coadjutor of Peter the Great, president of the Military College—128

GOLOVIN, F. A., Count (1650-1706)—coadjutor of Peter the Great, admiral and noted diplomat—128

GOLOVKIN, G. I. (1660-1734)—Russian grand chancellor, coadjutor of Peter the Great—128

GONCHAROV, I. A. (1812-1891)—prominent Russian novelist—436, 439, 451, 470, 471

GOSTOMYSL—a legendary personage with whose name many of the ancient Russian chronicles associate the myth of the coming of the Varangians—360, 469

GRANOVSKY, T. N. (1813-1855)—historian, professor of Moscow University, a "Westerner." Was closely associated with Stankevich, Belinsky and Herzen—484, 497

GRACCHUS, brothers, Tiberius Sempronius (B. C. 162-133) and Gaius Sempronius (B. C. 153-121)—Roman statesmen, champions of plebeian democracy, agrarian reformers—156-158

GRECH, N. I. (1787-1867)—historian of literature, belletrist and journalist of a reactionary trend. In cooperation with Bulgarin published the magazines *Syn Otechestva (Son of the Fatherland)* and *Severnaya Pchela (Northern Bee)*—4-6, 41, 53, 54, 90-93, 395, 401

GRIBOYEDOV, A. S. (1795-1829)—famous Russian dramatist, author of comedy *Wit Works Woe*—3, 7, 69, 72, 73, 93, 122, 153, 208, 209, 215, 285, 337, 349, 352

GRIGOROVICH, D. V. (1822-1899)—Russian belletrist, author of *The Village*, *Anton Goremika* and many others—386, 387, 436, 474

GRIGORYEV, A. A. (1822-1864)—Russian poet and critic, adherent of Belinsky—377, 379

GRIGORYEV, V. V. (1816-1881)—Orientalist, professor of St. Petersburg University—483

GRUZINTSEV, A. N. (born 1779)—Russian dramatic author and poet, author of poem *Petriada*—109

GUIZOT, François (1787-1874)—French historian and statesman—304, 306

GUSTAVUS II, Adolphus (1594-1632)—king of Sweden—82, 315, 318

GUTTENBERG, Johannes (1396?-1468)—inventor of printing—92

HARDY, Alexandre (1569?-1632)—French dramatist—40

HEGEL, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich (1770-1831)—famous philosopher, leading representative of German classical idealism—149-151, 158, 287, 304, 329, 491

HEINE, Heinrich (1797-1856)—famous German poet, publicist, critic, banished from Germany for his revolutionary pamphlets—151

HENRY IV (1553-1610)—king of France—312, 316

HERDER, Johann Gottfried (1744-1803)—German bourgeois philosopher, historian, poet and critic—94, 304, 317

HERZEN (Iskander), A. I. (1812-1870)—Russian revolutionary, noted writer, philosopher and publicist. Close friend of Belinsky since 1840; influenced the latter's transition from idealism to materialism and revolutionary democratism. Lived abroad since 1847, where he founded a free press and published the periodicals *Polyarnaya Zvezda (The Polar Star)* and *Kolokol (The Tocsin)*—88, 392, 436, 439, 441, 445, 447, 448, 470, 471, 482, 486, 487, 497-499

HOFFMANN, Ernst Theodor Amadeus (properly Wilhelm) (1776-1822)—German writer of romance, author of fantastic novels—479

HOMER (*fl.* B.C. ab 9th cent.)—the great epic poet of Greece, legendary author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*—6, 10, 32, 39, 57, 82, 95, 119, 257, 317, 371

HORACE, Quintus Horatius Flaccus (B. C. 65-8)—celebrated Roman poet—34, 37, 73, 119, 257, 274, 348

HUGO, Victor (1802-1885)—famous French poet and novelist, head of the French romantic school—5, 59, 94, 320, 321, 434

HUMBOLDT, Friedrich Heinrich Alexander (1769-1859)—German naturalist—392

HUME, David (1711-1776)—Scotch philosopher, historian and economist. Exponent of subjective idealism in philosophy—304

HUSS (or HUS), John (1369-1415)—Bohemian religious reformer, leader of popular uprising against foreign rule and the oppression of the Catholic church—316

HUTTEN, von, Ulrich (1488-1523)—German humanist, principal author of satire *Litteræ Obscurorum Virorum* directed against the Roman church and scholasticism—317, 318

ISKANDER—pseudonym of A. I. Herzen (*q. v.*)

IVAN I, Danilovich, Kalita (1304-1341)—prince of Muscovy, grand prince of Vladimir—127, 366

IVAN III, Vasilievich (1440-1505)—grand prince of Muscovy—6, 22, 127, 132, 358, 366

IVAN IV, Vasilievich, Grozny (1530-1584)—Russian tsar—127, 132, 141, 366

IVANCHIN-PISAREV, N. D. (1795-1849)—Russian writer, adherent of Karamzin—43, 48

IZMAILOV, A. Y. (1779-1831)—Russian writer of fables and journalist—61, 401

IZMAILOV, V. V. (1773-1830)—Russian belletrist, translator and journalist, adherent of Karamzin—61, 488

JACOB Bibliophile—pseudonym of French writer Paul Lacroix (*Cf.* Paul Lacroix)

JANIN, Jules Gabriel (1804-1874)—French theatrical critic and feuilletonist, member of French Academy—94, 322, 434

JASON—captain of the Argonauts in Greek mythology—141

JEAN PAUL—*Cf.* Richter

JEROME OF PRAGUE (died 1416)—Czech reformer, friend and follower of John Huss—316

KACHENOVSKY, M. T. (1775-1842)—Russian professor-historian, publisher of *Vestnik Evropi* (*Europe Herald*), founder of the so-called "sceptical school" in Russian historical science—7, 43, 80

KAIDANOV, I. K. (1782-1843)—Russian historian, author of textbooks written in the spirit of official "patriotism"—6, 155, 293, 313, 318

KALASHNIKOV, I. T. (1797?-1865)—novelist-ethnographer, author of novels: *Daughter of the Merchant Zhelobov, The Kamchadale Girl, The Automatum* and *Life of a Peasant Woman*—4, 6, 90-93

KALITA—*Cf.* Ivan Danilovich, Kalita

KAMENEV, G. P. (1772-1803)—Russian poet, a merchant by origin, author of ballad *Gromval*—339

KANT, Immanuel (1724-1804)—German philosopher, founder of German classical idealism—286, 310, 329, 330

KAPNIST, V. V. (1757-1823)—Russian poet and dramatist, author of comedy *Slander*—53, 61, 72, 121, 338, 488

KARAMZIN, N. M. (1766-1826)—famous Russian historian and journalist, author of *The History of the Russian State*, leader of the sentimental school in Russian literature (story *Poor Liza*)—5, 7, 39, 42-50, 52, 54-56, 59, 61, 76, 81, 88, 90, 107, 120, 191, 213, 284, 336, 339, 342, 356, 358, 397, 398, 405, 406, 410, 488

KARL WILHELM FERDINAND, Duke of Brunswick (1735-1806)—319

KATKOV, M. N. (1818-1887)—originally translator, then well-known Russian philologist and publicist. Began to associate with Stankevich's circle in 1834 and acquainted Belinsky with Hegel's *Aesthetics*. Contributor to the *Moskovsky Nablyudatel* (*Moscow Observer*), later to the *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*. His evolution towards reaction began in the 'forties. In the 'fifties became writing editor of the reactionary *Moskovskiye Vedomosti*—151, 152, 165, 184

KAVELIN, K. D. (1818-1885)—Russian jurist, historian of Russian law, publicist, professor of Moscow and St. Petersburg universities, "Westerner" of bourgeois-liberal tendency—482-484, 497

KAZAK LUGANSKY—pseudonym of V. I. Dahl. *Cf.* Dahl.

KETCHER, N. Ch. (1809-1886)—Russian doctor and man of letters, translated into Russian Shakespeare, Schiller, Cooper, Hoffmann. Close friend of Belinsky, Stankevich and Granovsky and active participant of their circle—497

KHANENKO, I. I.—friend of Belinsky, schoolmaster—166, 167

KHEMNITZER, I. I. (1745-1784)—Russian fabulist, one of leading predecessors of Krylov—7, 39, 40, 209, 351, 352, 407, 488

KHERASKOV, M. M. (1733-1807)—Russian poet, dramatist and novelist—5, 39, 43, 44, 56, 59, 61, 336, 350, 488

KHMELNITSKY, Zinovi Bogdan (1593?-1657)—hetman of the Ukraine, leader of the Cossack uprisings against Polish landlordism—488

KHOMYAKOV, A. S. (1804-1860)—Russian writer, a leader of the Slavophiles, author of political articles and pompous poetry of the official "patriotic" trend—92, 93

KIRSHA DANILOV—18th century apocryphal collector of Russian *bylini* (poem-legends), fairy tales and folk songs—112, 200, 354

KLOPSTOCK, Gottlieb Friedrich (1724-1803)—German poet, employed biblical subjects in his works. His themes opposing tyrants placed him at the head of the *Sturm und Drang Periode*—94

KLYUCHNIKOV, I. P. (1811-1895)—Russian poet, published his poems under the initial "E." A member of Stankevich's circle—167

KNYAZHNIN, Y. B. (1742-1791)—Russian dramatist, author of the tragedy *Vadim Novgorodsky*, which was burnt in 1793 on the verdict of the Senate for propounding republican ideas—39, 336, 488

KOLTSOV, A. V. (1808-1842)—famous Russian self-taught poet, son of a cattle dealer. Friend of Belinsky, who had a high opinion of his poetical talent—167, 379, 380

KORSH, Eug. F. (1810-1897)—Russian publicist, journalist and translator —497, 498

KOSTROV, E. I. (1750?-1796)—Russian poet—40, 488

KOSICHKIN, Feofilakt—A. S. Pushkin's pseudonym under articles: *The Triumph of Friendship* and *A Few Words Concerning Bulgarin's Little Finger*—73

KOTOSHIKHIN or KOSHIKHIN, G. K. (1630-1667)—Underclerk of the *Posolsky Prikaz* (Foreign Office) who ran away to Sweden. Author of book: *Russia in the Reign of Alexei Mikhailovich*, which furnished rich material for the study of pre-Petrine Russia—126, 128, 129, 131, 135, 349, 388

KOZLOV, I. I. (1779-1840)—Russian poet and translator—4, 65

KOZLOVSKY, P. D.—Educationist, inspector of the Land Surveying Institute in Moscow, friend of Belinsky—167

KRASOV, V. I. (1810-1855)—Russian poet and translator, friend of Belinsky and Stankevich—151

KRAYEVSKY, A. A. (1810-1889)—Russian publicist, editor-publisher of the literary magazine *Otechestvenniye Zapiski*, the newspaper *Golos* (*Voice*) and various other publications. Journalist-entrepreneur, ruthlessly exploited Belinsky and introduced all kinds of "diplomatic" reservations into his articles—497

KRONEBERG, A. I. (died 1855)—gifted Russian translator, celebrated for his translations of Shakespeare. Wrote chiefly for the *Sovremennik*—380, 484

KRUSENSTERN, I. F. (1770-1846)—Russian admiral and navigator—402

KRYLOV, I. A. (1768-1844)—famous Russian fabulist—5, 7, 54, 83, 93, 137, 198, 201, 208, 209, 213, 285, 342, 349, 351, 352, 356, 401, 407, 408

KRYUKOVSKY, M. V. (1781-1811)—Russian dramatist—6

KUDRYAVTSEV, P. N (Nestroyev) (1816-1858)—Russian historian, novelist and critic, professor of Moscow University, friend of Belinsky—151, 167, 477

KUKOLNIK, N. V. (1809-1868)—Russian poet, dramatist and novelist, author of pompous and stilted dramas in the official "patriotic" style such as *The Hand of the Almighty Has Saved Our Motherland* and others—4-6, 8, 93, 410

KULCHITSKY, A. Y. (1815-1845)—Russian poet and prose-writer, friend of Belinsky. Used the pseudonyms "P. Remizov" and "Govorilin"—166, 167

KURBSKY, A. M., Prince (1528?-1583)—Russian waywode and writer. Defended opposition boyardom in his correspondence with tsar Ivan Grozny—127

KUTORGA, S. S. (1805-1861)—Russian professor of natural science at St. Petersburg University—392
LACROIX, Paul (1806-1884)—French author, better known under the pseudonym of "Jacob Bibliophile"—94
LA FAYETTE, Marie Joseph Paul (1757-1834)—French politician—500
LA FONTAINE, August (1758-1831)—prolific German novelist—92, 230, 343
LA FONTAINE, Jean (1621-1695)—famous French fabulist and author of fairy tales—5, 94, 198, 257
LA HARPE, Jean François de (1740-1803)—French writer and critic, friend and disciple of Voltaire—56, 57, 61, 100
LAMARTINE, Alphonse (1790-1869)—French poet, novelist and statesman —4, 53, 69, 94, 402, 497
LAZHECHNIKOV, I. I. (1792-1869)—Russian writer and dramatist, author of a number of historical novels—5, 7, 25, 87, 88, 409
LEIBNITZ, Gottfried Wilhelm (1646-1716)—eminent German philosopher of the idealistic school, predecessor of German classical philosophy—330
LEMAÎTRE, Frédérick (1800-1875)—French actor, played tragic and comic parts—498
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LERMONTOV, M. Y. (1814-1841)—famous Russian poet—191, 200, 203, 209, 215, 239, 285, 337, 342, 343, 345, 349, 376, 377, 379, 488
LEROUX, Pierre (1798-1871)—French publicist, Utopian Socialist—491, 494
LESSING, Gotthold Ephraim (1729-1781)—German educator, critic and dramatist—94
LEVERRIER, Urbain Jean Joseph (1811-1877)—French astronomer—378, 482
LINAR de Crudner, Baroness (1764-1824)—wife of Russian diplomat, published in 1803 an autobiographical sentimental novel *Valeria*—261
LISYANSKY, Y. F. (1774-1837)—Russian traveller and navigator, author of *A Journey Round the World in 1803, 1804, 1805, and 1806*—402
LITTRÉ, Maximilien Paul Émile (1801-1881)—French savant, positivist, adherent of Comte—482, 491
LIZANDER, D. K. (1824-1894)—Russian poet—377
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LOMONOSOV, M. V. (1711-1765)—famous Russian scientist, philosopher and poet—5, 7, 8, 28-31, 38, 39, 44, 45, 54, 81, 90, 91, 93, 109, 121, 137, 336, 339, 341, 342, 348-356, 377, 407, 408, 487, 488
LORENTZ, F. K. (1803-1861)—professor of history, author of *A Modern History* and other works—293, 318, 391
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MAIKOV, V. I. (1728-1778)—Russian author, poet and humourist, member of Novikov's circle—40
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MALTHUS, Thomas Robert (1766-1834?—English bourgeois reactionary economist—483
MANZONI, Alessandro (1775-1863)—famous Italian poet and novelist—59
MARAT, Jean Paul (1744-1793)—leader of the Jacobins, prominent leader of the French bourgeois revolution. Editor of magazine *L'Ami du peuple* —157, 158
MARCHENKO, A. Y. (1830-1880)—Russian authoress who wrote under the initials "T. Ch." and the pseudonym "A. Temrizova"—436, 479
MARIUS, Gaius (B. C. 156?-86)—Roman general—135, 290, 310
MARKEVICH, N. A. (1804-1860)—Russian poet and historian-ethnographer —281
MARKOV, M. A. (1810?-1876)—Russian novelist, poet and dramatist—82
MARLINSKY, A.—the pseudonym of A. A. Bestuzhev. *Cf.* Bestuzhev
MARMONTEL, Jean François (1723-1799)—French writer and educator— 56, 100
MARTINOV, A. Y. (1816-1860)—Russian actor—61
MARTIN ZADEKA—a mythical personage to whom the authorship of books interpreting dreams and oracles were attributed—236, 260
MARRYAT, Frederick (1792-1848)—English novelist, author of novels of the sea—342
MASALSKY, K. P. (1802-1861)—Russian poet and novelist of the official conservative clique—5, 90, 91, 93
MASLOV, S. A. (1793-1879)—Russian writer and agriculturist, editor of the *Zemledelchesky Zhurnal* (*Agricultural Journal*)—393
MELNIKOV (Andrei Pechersky), P. I. (1819-1883)—Russian author, ethnographer—393
MENSHIKOV, A. D. (1670?-1729)—favourite and coadjutor of Peter the Great—24, 128, 137
MENZEL, Wolfgang (1798-1873)—German publicist and historian—149, 151
MERZLYAKOV, A. F. (1778-1830)—Russian poet and critic, professor of Moscow University, author of song *Amid the Valleys*—43, 52, 61
MESHCHERSKY, A. I., Prince (died 1779)—friend of Derzhavin—37
MICHELANGELO (1475-1564)—great Italian painter, architect and sculptor —496

MICHELET, Jules (1798-1874)—French historian and publicist of democratic and republican views—304
MICKIEWICZ, Adam (1798-1855)—Polish poet, first to introduce romanticism into Polish literature—59
MIGNET, François Auguste (1796-1884)—French historian—482
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MILYUTIN, V. A. (1826-1855)—Russian economist, jurist and writer —483
MINAYEV, D. I. (1808-1876)—Russian poet, father of the poet D. D. Minayev and author of the translation of *The Lay of Prince Igor's Regiment* —377
MININ (Sukhoruk), K. Z. (died 1616)—Nizhni Novgorod tradesman, organizer of the popular levy against the Poles in 1612—127
MNISZEK, Marina (died 1614)—wife of False Dmitri I—132
MOHAMMED or Mahomet (571?-632)—founder of the Mohammedan religion—124
MOLIÈRE (Jean Baptiste Poquelin) (1622-1673)—French dramatist—5, 94, 326, 433
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MOROSHKIN, F. L. (1804-1857)—Russian jurist and historian, professor of Moscow University—141
MÜLLER, Johannes (1752-1809)—German historian and publicist—304
MURAVYOV, A. N. (1806-1874)—Russian ecclesiastical writer of the official school—488
MURILLO, Bartolomé Esteban (1617-1682)—famous Spanish painter, head of the Seville school—411
NADEZHDIN, N. I. (1804-1856)—Russian historian of literature and publicist, professor of art and archeology in Moscow University, editor and publisher of magazine *Teleskop*, adherent of Schelling's philosophy—78, 485, 486
NADOUMKO, Nikodim Aristarchovich—pseudonym of N. I. Nadezhdin. *Cf.* N. I. Nadezhdin
NAKHIMOV, A. N. (1782-1815)—Russian satirical poet—121, 488
NAPOLEON I Bonaparte (1769-1821)—emperor of the French—54, 57, 63, 135, 139, 290, 312, 315, 319, 354, 458
NAREZHNY, V. T. (1780-1825)—Russian writer of fiction—409, 488
NEBOLSIN, P. I. (1811-1896)—Russian ethnographer, historian and economist—436, 481
NEKRASOV, N. A. (1821-1878)—famous Russian revolutionary-democratic poet—380, 512

NELEDINSKY-MELETSKY, Y. A. (1752-1828)—Russian poet, Secretary of State to Paul I—41
NEPLYUEV, I. I. (1693-1773)—Russian diplomat, organizer of the Orenburg region, author of *Memoirs*—144
NESTROYEV, A.—pseudonym of P. N. Kudryavtsev. *Cf.* P. N. Kudryavtsev
NEVSKY (see Alexander Yaroslavich Nevsky)
NIKITENKO, A. V. (1804-1877)—author, professor of St. Petersburg University and government censor, author of *My Story of Myself and My Life's Experiences*—152
NODIER, Charles (1780-1844)—French author—54
NOVIKOV, N. I. (1744-1818)—political writer and public man during the reign of Catherine the Great, magazine and book publisher —41, 213
ODOYEVSKY, V. F. (1803-1869)—fiction writer, philosopher of Schelling school and music critic, wrote under the pen names of "Grandpa Irinei," "Gomozaika Irinei Modestovich," "Bezglasni," etc.—5, 7, 84, 89, 215, 494
OEHLENSCHLÄGER, Adam (1799-1850)—Danish poet—59
OLEG—the first prince of Kiev—32, 367
ORLOV, A. A. (1790?-1840)—Russian poet and fiction writer, author of numerous trivial stories—8, 73, 86
OSTOLOPOV, N. F. (1782-1833)—Russian critic, poet and fiction writer, director of St. Petersburg theatres—61, 63
OZEROV, V. A. (1769-1816)—Russian dramatist, wrote in the manner of French classicism—7, 50, 61, 198, 213, 336, 337, 342, 408, 487
OZNOBISHIN, D. P. (1804-1877)—Russian poet and translator—4
PALITSIN, Avraami. *Cf.* Avraami
PATKUL, Johann Reinhold (1660-1707)—Lifflandia nobleman—89
PAUL DE KOCK (1794-1871)—French novelist—93, 342
PAVLOV, N. F. (1805-1864)—Russian fiction writer, publicist and critic—7, 487, 499
PEISISTRATUS (B. C. 610?-522?)—ruler of Athens—312
PEREVOSHCHIKOV, D. M. (1788-1880)—Russian mathematician and astronomer, professor of Moscow University—482
PERICLES (B. C. 493?-429)—Athenian statesman, leader of the democratic party—135, 156, 157
PETER I, The Great (1672-1725)—the last tsar of Muscovy and first Russian emperor—19, 24, 26-30, 33, 84, 85, 105, 109, 110, 113, 115, 117, 119, 120-124, 126-131, 134-142, 144-146, 201, 203, 212, 214, 283, 312 333, 334, 348, 349, 354, 355, 358-363, 368, 398, 406, 410
PETROV, V. P. (1736-1799)—Russian poet and translator—5, 39, 44, 350
PHILIP of Macedon (B. C. 382-336)—king of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great. Conquered in B. C. 338 the whole of Greece—312

PHILIP II (1525-1598)—king of Spain (1556-1598)—150
PINDAR (B. C. 522-443)—Greek lyric poet—37, 257
PLAKSIN, V. T. (1796-1869)—pedagogue, author of textbooks on literature —54
PLATO (B. C. betw. 430 or 427-347)—great Greek philosopher-idealist— 40, 108
PLAVILSHCHIKOV, P. A. (1760-1812)—Russian actor, playwright and pedagogue—41
PLESHCHEYEV, A. N. (1825-1893)—Russian poet and writer of fiction—377
PLETNEV, P. A. (1792-1862)—Russian poet, critic, dean of St. Petersburg University—53
PLUTARCH (46?-120?)—Greek writer-moralist and historian—119, 156, 157
PODOLINSKY, A. I. (1806-1886)—Russian poet—4, 61, 66
POGODIN, M. P. (1800-1875)—Russian historian, archeologist and journalist. Publisher of the magazine *Moskvityanin*—87, 409, 483
POLEVOY, N. A. (1796-1846)—Russian critic, belletrist, dramatist, historian and journalist. Organizer and publisher of the magazine *Moskovsky Telegraf*—151, 155, 249, 409
POLEZHAYEV, A. I. (1807-1838)—Russian poet, author of numerous anti-government and atheistic works—69
POLONSKY, Y. P. (1820-1898)—Russian poet and belletrist—377
POLOTSKY, Simeon (1629-1680)—Russian cleric, pedagogue and author— 36, 54
POPE, Alexander (1688-1744)—English poet, translator of Homer and publisher of first complete edition of Shakespeare—59
POPOVSKY, N. N. (1730?-1760)—Russian author, translator, professor of Moscow University, pupil of Lomonosov—40
POROSHIN, S. A. (1741-1769)—Russian writer, author of memoirs concerning Paul I whose tutor he was—483
POTEMKIN, G. A., Prince of Taurida (1739-1791)—Russian statesman and favourite of Catherine II—34
POZHARSKY, D. M., Prince (1578?-1641)—Russian waywode, prominent figure of the Troublous Times, joint leader with K. Minin of the popular levy against the Poles—127
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PTOLEMY II Philadelphus—Egyptian king, founder of museum and library at Alexandria in the 3rd century B. C.—298
PUSHKIN, A. S. (1799-1837)—great Russian national poet and writer, founder of the Russian literary language—3-7, 18, 26, 49, 52, 55, 56, 59, 62-69, 74, 76-83, 86, 90, 93, 108, 110, 112, 116, 128, 137, 138, 191, 195-201, 207-209, 212, 214-218, 220, 242, 243, 249, 251, 255, 259, 268, 285, 337, 341-345, 349, 350, 352, 356, 376, 377, 406, 408-412, 496, 508, 509

PUSHKIN, V. L. (1767-1830)—Russian poet, uncle of A. S. Pushkin—61
PYAT, Félix (1810-1889)—French revolutionist, belletrist and dramatist, author of *Le Chiffonnier de Paris*, lampooning the bourgeoisie—498
RACINE, Jean Baptiste (1639-1699)—French dramatist and poet, notable representative of French classicism—5, 40, 56, 57, 94, 257, 288, 498
RACHEL, Élisa (1821-1858)—French tragedienne—498
RANKE, Leopold (1795-1886)—German historian—304
RAPHAEL (1483-1520)—great Italian painter—428, 495
RAUMER, Friedrich Ludwig Georg (1781-1873)—German historian, professor—304
REPNIN, A. I., Prince (1668-1726)—Russian general field marshal, coadjutor of Peter the Great—128
REUCHLIN, Johann (1455-1522)—German humanist, scholar and pedagogue—317, 318
RICHARD II (1367-1400)—king of England—152
RICHARDSON, Samuel (1689-1761)—English novelist, founder of the sentimental literature of the 18th and early 19th centuries—252
RICHELIEU, de, Armand Jean du Plessis, Duke (1585-1642)—French cardinal and statesman, virtual ruler of the state under Louis XIII—141, 315, 316
RICHTER, Jean Paul Friedrich (1763-1825)—German author, better known under the pseudonym of Jean Paul—401
ROBERTSON, William (1721-1793)—Scotch historian—304
ROBESPIERRE, Maximilien (1758-1794)—Jacobin, prominent leader of the first French bourgeois revolution—500
ROLLIN, Charles (1661-1741)—French historian and educationist—45, 348
RONSARD, Pierre (1524-1585)—French poet—40
RÖTSCHER, Heinrich Theodor (1803-1871)—German theoretician of aesthetics and dramatic art—184
ROTTECK, Karl (1775-1840)—German historian and statesman—304
ROUSSEAU, Jean Baptiste (1670-1741)—French lyrical poet, exiled for his satires—354
ROUSSEAU, Jean Jacques (1712-1778)—noted French philosopher and writer of the Enlightenment—93
RUBAN, V. G. (1742-1795)—Russian writer of poems and journalist, collaborator of Novikov's magazines and publisher of satirical almanacs —41
RUMYANTSEV, N. P., Count (1754-1826)—Russian statesman, published ancient records of Russian history. His huge library subsequently went towards the founding of the Rumyantsev Museum in Moscow— —401
RZHEVSKY, V. K.—distant relative of Bakunin, friend of Belinsky—167
SAADI (1184?-1291)—great Persian poet-moralist—64

SAINT-JUST, de, Louis Antoine (1767-1794)—French revolutionist, companion in arms of Robespierre with whom he was executed in Paris —500

SAISSET, Émile Edmond (1814-1863)—French philosopher of the eclectic tradition—491

SAND, George—pseudonym of Amantine Lucile Aurora Dupin, baroness Dudevant (1804-1876)—famous French authoress, expressed in her novel the spirit of revolt against woman's inequality in bourgeois society—201, 342, 371, 427, 484

SATIN, N. M. (1814-1873)—Russian poet-translator, friend of Herzen, Ogarev and Belinsky—483

SAVICH, A. N. (1810-1883)—Russian astronomer, academician—482

SAY, Jean Baptiste (1767-1832)—French economist, adherent of Adam Smith—268

SAZONOV, N. I. (1815-1862)—Russian writer, émigré—500

SCHELLING, von, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph (1775-1854)—German philosopher, a leading representative of German classical idealism—287, 329, 330, 491, 494

SCHILLER, von, Johann, Christoph Friedrich (1759-1805)—famous German poet and dramatist of the romantic school—3, 5, 36, 50, 57, 68, 70, 71, 77, 94, 100, 149, 155, 158, 160, 166, 216, 304, 345, 459, 497

SCHLEGEL, August Wilhelm (1767-1845)—noted German critic, historian of literature and poet-translator—51, 56

SCHLOSSER, Friedrich Christoph (1776-1861)—German historian—304

SCHLÖZER, August Ludwig (1735-1809)—German historian—7, 80, 304

SCIPIO, Publius Cornelius (B.C. 235-184)—Roman general—135

SCOTT, Walter (1771-1832)—famous English novelist—3, 5, 59, 69, 73, 77, 81, 82, 85, 94, 290, 291, 305, 306, 320, 342, 345, 371

SEMEN, A. I. (1783-1862)—Russian printer and publisher—392

SENKOVSKY, O. I. (1808-1858)—journalist of the official "patriotic" trend, wrote under the pseudonym of "Baron Brambeus"—3-7, 25, 46, 53, 91, 93

SHAFIROV, P. P., Baron (1670-1739)—Russian diplomat and man of letters. In cooperation with Peter the Great wrote *A Discourse on the Swedish War*—128

SHAKESPEARE, William (1564-1616)—great English dramatist—3-5, 17, 27, 32, 35, 37, 50, 56-58, 69, 71, 73, 100, 206, 216, 342, 344, 345, 371, 380, 425, 430

SHAKHOVSKOY, A. A., Prince (1777-1846)—Russian poet and dramatist, author of poem *The Stolen Coats*—40, 488

SHALIKOV, P. I., Prince (1768?-1852)—Russian man of letters—6, 43, 47

SHCHEPKIN, M. S. (1788-1863)—famous Russian actor, former serf, a friend of Belinsky—497

SHEIN, M. B. (executed 1634)—Russian boyar and waywode—127
SHEVIRYEV, S. P. (1806-1864)—Russian critic, professor of history of literature and journalist of reactionary trend. Waged constant war with Belinsky. Founded the magazine *Moskvityanin* in collaboration with Pogodin—68, 390, 391, 436, 485-487
SHIRINSKY-SHIKHMATOV, S. A., Prince (1783-1837)—member of Russian Academy of Sciences, poet—109, 401
SHUVALOV, I. I. (1727-1797)—Russian statesman, general-adjutant, favourite of Empress Elizabeth Petrovna, patron of Lomonosov—30
SIMEON, The Proud (1317-1353)—grand prince of Muscovy, son of Ivan Kalita—127, 366
SKOPIN-SHUISKY, M. V., Prince (1587-1610)—Russian boyar and waywoda of the Troublous Times—127, 132
SMARAGDOV, S. N. (1805-1871)—Russian writer, author of textbooks on history—293, 294, 313, 314, 316, 318, 319
SMIRDIN, A. F. (1795-1857)—Russian bookseller and publisher—53, 63, 90, 91, 93, 436, 483, 487
SNEGIREV, I. M. (1793-1866)—Russian archeologist and collector of Russian antiquities, professor of Moscow University—82
SOCRATES (B.C. 470-399)—Greek philosopher-idealist—324
SOLLOGUB, V. A., Count (1814-1882)—Russian author—215
SOLOMON—king of Israel—181
SOLON (B.C. ab. 7th-6th cc.)—Athenian lawgiver and poet, one of the seven Greek Sages—312
SOLOVYOV, S. M. (1820-1879)—Russian historian, professor of Moscow University—482, 484
SOMOV, O. M. (1793-1833)—Russian belletrist, poet, critic, translator and journalist—43, 48
SOPHOCLES (B. C. 495?-405)—Greek tragic poet, author of numerous tragedies of which only seven survive—380, 381
SOUTHEY, Robert (1774-1843)—English poet laureate of the romantic Lake School—94
STAËL, de, Anne Louise Germaine, Baronne (1766-1817)—French novelist and publicist—58
STANKEVICH, N. V. (1813-1840)—Russian man of letters, publicist and philosopher, intimate friend of Belinsky, Koltsov, Granovsky and others, head of the literary-philosophical circle in the 'thirties—160
STOIKOVICH, A. A. (1814-1886)—Russian librarian and writer—392
STROYEV, V. M. (1812-1862)—Russian journalist and translator, often wrote under the initials "V.V.V."—320, 323
STRUGOVSHCHIKOV, A. N. (1808-1878)—Russian poet and translator—82
SUE, Marie Joseph, called Eugène (1804-1857)—French writer and novelist, author of *Mystères de Paris*—18, 94, 320, 322-324, 327, 403, 427, 434

SUMAROKOV, A. P. (1718-1777)—Russian dramatist and poet, director of the first St. Petersburg theatre—5, 31, 32, 40, 41, 44, 53, 56, 61, 121, 257, 336-338, 350, 351, 406, 488

SUVOROV, A. V. (1729-1800)—great Russian general—34, 143

SVECHIN, P. I.—author of poem *Alexandrida*—7

SVYATOPOLK I, Vladimirovich (980?-1019)—grand prince of Kiev, nicknamed *Okayanni* (*The Damned*)—367

SVYATOSLAV Igorevich (942-972)—grand prince of Kiev—32, 367

TACITUS, Publius Cornelius (55?-120?)—Roman historian—119

TASSO, Torquato (1544-1595)—famous Italian poet, author of *Gerusalemme Liberata*—32, 53, 57

T. Ch.—see Marchenko, A. Y.

TEGNÉR, Esaias (1782-1846)—Swedish poet—59

TEPLYAKOV, V. G. (1804-1842)—Russian poet and traveller—93

TESTE, Jean Baptiste (1780-1852)—French statesman, tried and condemned for bribery—496

THEMISTOCLES (B.C. 527?-460)—Athenian general and statesman of the Graeco-Persian wars—135

THIERRY, Jacques Nicolas Augustin (1795-1856)—French historian—291, 304, 393

THIERS, Louis Adolphe (1797-1877)—French statesman, historian and publicist, author of *History of the French Revolution*—166, 304, 391

TIMOFEYEV, A. V. (1812-1883)—Russian poet—4

TIMOLEON of Corinth (B.C. 411-337)—Corinthian general, liberated Syracuse from the tyrant Dionysius and restored the republic throughout the cities of Sicily—156, 157, 312

TITIAN, Vecellio (1477-1576)—Italian painter, chief representative of the Venetian school—438

TREDYAKOVSKY, V. K. (1703-1769)—professor of Latin and Russian rhetoric at the Academy of Sciences, poet and philologer—8, 27, 31, 54, 348, 398, 406, 488, 492

TRISHATNY—tsarist general, corps commander, convicted of embezzlement of public funds in the 'forties of last century—496

TUMANSKY, V. I. (1801?-1853)—obscure Russian poet—4

TURGENEV, I. S. (1818-1883)—famous Russian author—380, 436, 471-474, 478, 495

TUTUNJI-OGLU—pseudonym of O. I. Senkovsky *(q.v.)*—6

TYRANOV, A. V. (1808-1859)—Russian portrait painter—423

TYUTCHEV, F. I. (1803-1873)—Russian poet, civil servant in Ministry of Foreign Affairs, later president of the foreign censorship committee—392

USHAKOV, V. A. (1789-1838)—belletrist, author of *Piyusha* ridiculing Belinsky—87, 392, 409

UVAROV, S. S., Count (1786-1855)—tsarist minister of education, author of the notorious formula: "Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality"—156, 482, 509

VAN DYCK, Anthony, Sir (1599-1641)—Flemish portrait painter—438

VELDE, Karl Franz, van der (1779-1824)—German author and dramatist —402

VELASQUEZ, Diego Rodriguez de Silva (1599-1660)—Spanish painter —438

VELLANSKY, D. M. (1774-1847)—one of the first Russian *Natur*-philosophers, a Schellingian, professor of the Military Surgical Academy—7

VENELIN, Y. I. (1802-1839)—Bulgarian writer—391

VENEVITINOV, D. V. (1805-1827)—gifted Russian poet and philosopher (Schellingian), founder of the *Lyubomudri* (Wisdom-Lovers) philosophical circle—68

VIARDOT, Louis (1800-1883)—French writer, translator and critic —343

VICO, Giovanni Battista (1668-1744)—Italian historian and philosopher —304

VIDOCQ, François Eugène (1775-1857)—French detective, ex-convict. Author of memoirs, some of which were translated into Russian—60

VIRGIL, Publius Vergilius Maro (B.C. 70-19)—Roman poet, author of the *Aeneid*—6, 10, 39, 57, 119, 257

VLADIMIR Svyatoslavich (died 1015)—prince of Novgorod, later grand prince of Kiev—6, 23, 125, 367

VOLTAIRE, François Marie Arouet (1694-1778)—great French deistic philosopher of the Enlightenment, poet, historian—6, 31, 57, 94, 100, 164, 257, 506

VOROTINSKY, I. M., Prince (died 1627)—Moscow boyar—127

VOYEIKOV, A. F. (1777-1839)—Russian poet, writer, translator, magazine publisher—43, 53, 87, 91, 93

VOSS, Johann Heinrich (1751-1826)—German poet and translator—51

VYAZEMSKY, P. A., Prince (1792-1878)—poet and critic, sympathized with the Decembrists until 1825, after which he turned reactionary —54, 511

WALDO, Peter (12th cent.)—a merchant of Lyons who founded the Waldenses sect in the latter half of the 12th cenury—316

WALLENSTEIN, Albrecht, Duke of Friedland (1583-1634)—imperial commander-in-chief during the Thirty Years' War—82, 318

WELTMAN, A. F. (1800-1860)—Russian novelist and archeologist, author of various works of fiction and history—87, 88, 92, 93, 377, 387-389, 409, 476-477

WERNER, Friedrich Ludwig Zacharius (1768-1823)—German poet and dramatist—71

WIELAND, Christoph Martin (1733-1813)—German man of letters, one of the founders of modern German literature, dominated by the influence of the French Enlightenment—343

WORDSWORTH, William (1770-1850)—English poet, chief of the Lake School—94

YAZIKOV, N. M. (1803-1846)—Russian poet, Slavophile—4, 65, 66

YEFIMIEV, D. V. (1768-1804)—Russian dramatist, author of *A Tearful Comedy*, and others—41

YEGOR FEDOROVICH—nickname given to Hegel in Stankevich's circle —150

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