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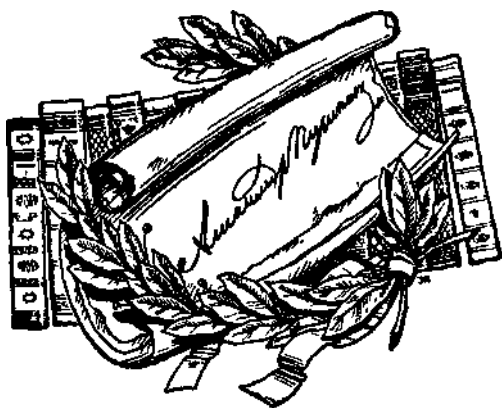
ПУШКИН

***Сборник статей, посвященных
великому русскому поэту
Пушкину***

P U S H K I N

*A COLLECTION OF ARTICLES AND ESSAYS
ON THE GREAT RUSSIAN POET*

A. S. PUSHKIN



THE O.S.S.R. SOCIETY FOR CULTURAL RELATIONS
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THE GREATNESS OF PUSHKIN

By Prof I LUPPOL

I

Pushkin created the Russian literary language was the founder of modern Russian literature and made humanity the richer for his immortal works

Pushkin's name is inseparably bound up not only with literature, but also with the whole Russian culture, the culture which the great Russian people built up in a struggle with a harsh nature and with the no less harsh forms of social relationships which shaped its history

Behnsky wrote of "Eugene Onegin" that it was a national work inasmuch as it represented "an encyclopedia of Russian life" We today can say that Pushkin's writings constitute an artistic encyclopedia of national life and national consciousness

Although Pushkin's epoch is long past, his work lives on, as, indeed, Pushkin himself lives on, in the sense that a man can be said to live on forever — in the memory of later generations

Pushkin was a child of his age, an age of cruelty, autocracy and serfdom It was the age of the "traveling despot" Alexander I and of Nicholas Palkin¹, an age, when "it was dan-

¹ A nickname of Tsar Nicholas 1, meaning Nicholas of the Stick

gerous to speak and disastrous to keep silent, to employ the just observation of one of Pushkin's contemporaries

Outside of the ecclesiastical academies, no study of philosophy was permitted, for the simple reason that, according to official doctrine, "the advantage of philosophy has not been proved, while possibly harm might result from it" There remained only the sphere of literature and art Obstructed in its progress by barriers of censorship, continually under the surveillance of the gendarmerie, the sorely tried literature of the period proved none the less the sphere where national consciousness first found artistic expression, and the principal role in this process belongs to the genius of Pushkin. It was with every right he wrote of himself in 1823

A lonely sower of Liberty,
I left my dwelling early, before the rising of the stars
And with my clean, unsullied hands, I scattered life-giving
Seed among the enslaved furrows

The Russian national consciousness found its expression in the struggle against the feudal, autocratic regime, it gathered strength in the struggle against the bourgeois and landlord regime

Pushkin's age confronted him with two fundamental political problems what should be done in regard to the autocracy and in regard to serfdom With his poetical intuition Pushkin grasped the true import of these problems, and pointed to the correct solution in his writings

Pushkin dreamt—and not only dreamt, but was convinced—that the time would come when autocracy would vanish and that his name would be remembered in that very connection Addressing himself to Chaadayev in 1818, he wrote

Comrade, believe joy's star will leap
Upon our sight, a radiant token,
Russia will rouse from her long sleep,
And where autocracy lies, broken,
Our names shall yet be graven deep ¹

¹ Trans Babette Deutsch

Pushkin drew an appalling picture of the village under serfdom

Without heeding tears or moans,
By fate elect to ruin people,
The savage lords, by brutal arbitrary rule,
By whip and birch, appropriate
The peasant's labour, property and time
Bent on the plough that's not his own,
Submitting to the whip, the haggard slave
The furrows tread of his relentless lord
All drag their miserable yoke here till their grave
All hope and tender feeling stifling in their bosom,
Here budding maidens grow and bloom
For the indulgence of the callous scoundrel

Whatever Pushkin's tactics may have been in different periods of his life — autocracy and serfdom were always regarded by him as enemies to be fought, and it was in fighting them that he met his death

Pushkin was one of the "glorious group" of revolutionary-minded noblemen who engaged in unequal combat with the autocracy and serfdom. He was the bard of the Decembrists, a man of forward vision, which permitted him to transcend his age and class

Chronologically he belonged to the age in which he lived, but spiritually he belonged to the future. "I am a citizen of future generations," he said of himself. The poetical focus of all the contradictions of his age, he, indeed, contradicted himself at times. But running through all the contradictions was a certain consistency, a line that leads to our own age, to ourselves.

Pushkin was opposed to autocracy, was opposed to serfdom, but he was also opposed to the middle-class philistines of his day. He did not live to see the emergence of the revolutionary intelligentsia, still less to see the rise of the revolutionary working class.

It were idle to speculate on what he would have been had he lived to see the latter. It is enough for us to know what he was in his own age and whither he was drawn as poet.

The political rebels of the time, noblemen with revolutionary tendencies, were, as Lenin brilliantly put it, "infinitely removed from the people." Pushkin, the poet, was near to the people, because he was created by his people.

The deepening of national consciousness and the struggle waged on its behalf, echoing the struggle of the Russian people, signified above all a keen realisation of human personality, of personal human dignity.

Even as a youth Pushkin would have no traffic with those who "are craving for freedom only for themselves." His sense of human dignity was not a personal, subjective feeling, but a sense of the human dignity of the whole people, the whole nation. His sense of personality as an intrinsic value was likewise not an expression of morbid individualism, but a sense of the personality of each of his fellow men.

This Pushkinian sense of the dignity of man, this Pushkiman humanism, unknown till then in Russian literature, is even now, in historical perspective, of vast significance, though perhaps still insufficiently appreciated.

The peoples of Western Europe passed through the historical periods usually known as the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. As Engels justly remarked, the colossi of the Renaissance, whatever may be said of them, were no narrow-minded bourgeois. To the ideal of the Middle Ages — the saint and the ascetic — they opposed their own ideal of the live human being, throbbing with vitality, to whom nothing human was alien. To the ecclesiasticism of the Catholic Church, which submerged human personality, they opposed human personality itself, the individual proud of his personal dignity. To dead scholastic schemes they opposed animate nature and human experience. To the conventional church art they opposed the realism of life. This process which signified the disintegration of feudal ideology, began in Europe only in the XV—XVII centuries, reaching its culmination in Pushkin's day. We associate the period with the luminous names of Dante, Petrarch and Boccaccio in Italy, of Rabelais, Molière and Voltaire in France, of Shakespeare and Byron in England, Lessing, Goethe, Schiller and Heine in Germany. But for this process Europe needed four centuries.

In France, Voltaire was preceded by the popular fabliaux, by Rabelais and Montaigne. We, prior to Pushkin, had our folk-tales, our Lomonosov and Radishchev. However, the road which Europe traversed in the course of four hundred years, was covered by us in decades and by Pushkin himself in a mere score of years. Indeed, Pushkin with his feeling for nature, his sensitive awareness of the human being, of human personality and of human

dignity, Pushkin with his humanism and realism, was in himself our literary Renaissance Pushkin, in his twenty years of creative activity, caught up with European literature and made Russian letters a part of world literature

Pushkin is our Voltaire, our Shakespeare, our Goethe, for Pushkin imbibed world literature, lived and suffered through it, and created an original Russian literature, a fitting branch of world literature He became a world poet

This man looks now at us with his wise, penetrating eyes. We feel this look and we glory in it We say to him "Thy words,

'There, round the entrance to the grave

Let young life freely play*,
are realized At the grave of the greatest Russian poet plays
the young, happy Soviet life."

II

We intend briefly to trace the poet's creative path, which was closely connected with his political life Although his literary work was by no means a by-product of his political activity, it was not for nothing that Pushkin always constituted a major political problem for the government As he said himself, "every free word, every illegal composition" was attributed to him Otherwise tsarism would not have kept him from the age of twenty till his death in political exile time and again, and under the constant surveillance of the gendarmes

Pushkin's childhood and adolescence coincided with a period of fierce reaction

The liberal promises made at the beginning of Alexander I's reign heralded, as it turned out, an intensification of the oppression of serfdom

After the defeat of Napoleon in 1812 and his subsequent collapse, Russia, the land of autocracy and serfdom, became the gendarme of Europe The Arakcheyev regime at home spelt unbridled reaction

Intensification of serf exploitation gave rise not only to peasant insurrections, but also to a revolutionary movement among the nobles, especially those belonging to the army, who had participated in the war against Napoleon and had visited foreign countries. This movement, which took the shape of

secret political societies, resulted in the December uprising of 1825

It was not these political events, of course, that formed the first impressions of Pushkin's childhood and the basis, as it were, of his future creative activity. He felt their impact somewhat later, in the Lycee. The first sources of the future poet's creative inspiration were the folktales which he heard from his nurse, Anna Rodionovna, and the French books in his father's library.

As soon as he began to read independently the young Pushkin conceived a liking for the Anacreonian gallantry of French lyrics. Parry, Gresset, Gricourt, "Vaniusha La Fontaine" were the favourite authors of the precocious child. This was the food that sustained the imagination of the future poet, an imagination of which he wrote as a fifteen-year old boy: "Imagination, only thou art my reward!"

Pushkin's poetical future was evidently laid at that time.

It was natural that Pushkin's Lycee years were the years of his apprenticeship as poet and it was natural, too, that the French literature of the period should at first win the upper hand over the folk tales of the nurse.

Love, friendship, wine, as a repository and synonyms of happiness, colored the poetry which Pushkin wrote as a student. It was somewhat later that a new current made itself evident in his creative work.

The ideas of the French Revolution of 1789, which were the ideas of the then revolutionary bourgeoisie, found philosophical expression in definite concepts and images. Struggle against tyranny and fanaticism connoted the struggle against the regime of absolutism and feudalism, against the ideology of religion and the church. The same was connoted by the call for the struggle against slavery and prejudice. In their place a demand was made for liberty, equality and law, as corollaries of "natural right," the highest law of human society. These ideas, propagated by Kunitsin, a young professor in the Lycee, appealed to Pushkin on account of their libertarianism and revolutionariness.

The early motifs of Pushkin's political lyrics were strengthened in consequence of his intercourse with Chaadayev and other radical-minded officers of the Tsarskoye Selo garrison. Their influence made Pushkin, yet a schoolboy, a vehement political opponent of autocracy and serfdom.

These motifs attained genuinely revolutionary heights in his

"Ode to Liberty," which gave expression to all the elements of the revolutionary tradition of natural right, protest against tyranny and fanaticism, against slavery, and the demand for freedom and Constitutional government

The "Ode to Liberty" (1817) is the culminant product of the influence of the French revolutionary ideas of the 18th century on Pushkin, and at the same time a mature beginning of the process of the concretization and application of these ideas to autocratic-feudal Russia, brilliantly realised in his poem "Derevnya" ("Village"), written in 1819

Up till then Russian literature had known no such political genre. With Pushkin this genre, however, was not something incidental to the fundamental line of his poetical development, but rather a vital spring of this development

Perfectly natural was the transition from "Arzamass"¹ with its literary struggle against "Slavonic-Russian poetics" to the "The Green Lamp" an organisation related to the Decembrist movement

At this time Pushkin wrote both the plaintive yet wrathful "Village" and the captivating "Ruslan and Ludmila" in which he groped for "the deeds of bygone days, the tales of the hoary past," and, confident of himself, broke with the old poetical tradition

Pushkin evidently could not escape the attention of the tsarist gendarmes, in 1820 he found himself exiled to the south of Russia. From then till his death the poet was under constant police surveillance

In the past, historians of literature, loyal to the tsar, always contended that the poet's sojourn in the south proved extremely beneficial. Did he not see the Crimea, the Caucasus, the sea, and the southern sky? We might ask these historians, why Pushkin could not have seen all those beauties of nature without being a political exile

Pushkin's sojourn in exile did not break his spirit, but rather hardened it. While in exile he wrote "The Prisoner of the Caucasus," "The Fountain of Bakhchisarai," began "Eugene Onegin" and conceived "The Gypsies". His experiences sometimes recall those of Byron's heroes, but it would be an unpardonable mistake to see in the Pushkin of this period a mere Russian pupil of Byron's. In those years, Pushkin had already

¹ "Arzamass"—a society which cultivated light witty verses

absorbed the learning of his age and caught up with European literature, and it should occasion no surprise if some features of the Russian scene and Russian society aroused in him certain Byronic ideas and associations.

There are even less grounds for seeing in the heroes of Pushkin's so called "Byronic poems" the Russian poet himself "The Prisoner of the Caucasus," temporarily "hermit from the world" and imaginary "friend of nature," had long before "lost his voluptuousness" and was full of "sad reflections " Aleko desired liberty only for himself, and not for nothing did Pushkin write to Ryleyev, when the latter advised him to make Aleko "at least a blacksmith," that "it would be best to make him an official of the 8th rank or a landowner "

Pushkin was in fact and in his own opinion a "victim of calumny and of vindictive ignoramuses" and could never write about himself "Without ecstasy and desires, I languish, a victim of passions." His desires, his ecstasy, were best expressed at this period in the lines. "But no, we shall delight in happiness, we shall partake of the communion from a bloody chalice," and in his visit to his Decembrist friends in Kamenka

Pushkin's libertarian sentiments only strengthened in his southern exile, and for this very reason it appeared insufficient to the government, in 1824 we find the poet writing to Yazykov from a new and more isolated place of exile in the country

"Maliciously fate toys with me Long shelterless have I been wandering where'er it pleaseth the despots to toss me Falling asleep, I know not where I shall awake. Ever hunted, as an exile do I drag out my shackled days"

Pushkin's urge towards a literature based on popular experience was already evident at the time of his forced sojourn in the South In Mikhailovskoye it found expression in his study and work, in further chapters of "Eugene Onegin" and in his "Boris Godunov" As regards literature, this process connoted a departure from Byron and the adoption of the system of "our father Shakespeare," this being a natural and logical stage in the poet's creative development, a stage conditioned by his entire preceding creative quest

After the December uprising of 1825 was crushed, Pushkin was sent under escort of a courier to Moscow to Nicholas I in order to treat with him as to his future The forces were certainly unequal and Pushkin was obliged to compromise with the emperor However, the concessions which he made were

no concessions of principle, Pushkin remaining ever faithful to the memory of the Decembrists, but only tactical concessions.

Deprivation of liberty, unending repressions, open police surveillance, censorship by the tsar and gendarmes of all his works, the political suit entered against him in 1827 in connection with a passage from "Andre Chenier," a second suit in 1829 in connection with his "Gavrihada"—the whole system of watching, spying on and badgering of the poet—all should be borne in mind if we are to understand the lines in his "Presentiment" (1828) written in connection with the "Andre Chenier*" affair

Once again the storm clouds gather
All around me silently,
Once again with dire disaster
Jealous fate is threatening me

Besides the oppression he suffered at the hands of the autocracy the poet had to contend with the slanderous vituperations of literary philistines such as Bulgarin, Grech and others like them who fawned and grovelled before the government

Pushkin's free intellect was soaring to the heights of world literature, to an artistic perception of the depths of human hearts and human passions, it enabled him, during the years 1830—1835, to depict with rich imagery the much affected and freedom-loving spirit of the Russian people. During these years Pushkin completed the immortal "Eugene Onegin", wrote "The Covetous Knight," which Shakespeare himself might have claimed as his own, "Mozart and Saheri," this gamma of the problems of talent and craftsmanship, of genius and crime, of frankness and dark envy; "The Stone Guest," this poem of a life absorbed by a single passion and fearless in the face of death, and the "Feast During the Plague" with its palpitating joy in battle and ecstasy in struggle, as the pledge of immortality

In the same period he wrote the "Tales of Belkin" which include the touching story of "The Station-master," prepared the draft of the "History of the Village Goryukhino," which foreshadowed the great satirist Shchedrin, and composed a cycle of tales, in which he expressed in no uncertain way his views on priests and kings

The problem of the destinies of men, peoples and states was handled by Pushkin with consummate skill in "The Bronze Horseman" The words "Uzhe tebyel" "Thou, look out!" flung by

Yevgeni at the idol on the bronze horse, ring out as a declaration of rights of the individual

Pushkin was increasingly drawn to images connected with the people, with their hopes and doings great or small. The blacksmith Arkhip in "Dubrovsky," who calmly burns the hated scribes and who, at the risk of his life, rescues a cat from the roof of the burning house, represents much more than one might expect a minor character to be: we see a hearty and freedom-loving Russian man—a personification of great humanism. Pugachov, not only in "The Captain's Daughter," but also in the "History of the Pugachov Rebellion" (notwithstanding its necessarily official terminology) is portrayed as a figure no less impressive than Catherine. He is even more a figure to strike awe than she. "All the common people" are with Pugachov, and stand opposed to her, the "Kazan landlady", yet he is not a raven, but only a squeaker, "while the raven is still-a-flying."

Pushkin embarrassed the autocratic feudal regime and had to be removed. Inquisitionists volunteered their services, they caused Pushkin unbearable torment, all the refined methods of badgering were employed against him, then they found an international adventurer for the purpose — and Pushkin, the greatest Russian poet, passed away.

III

It was in the power of tsarism to murder Pushkin, to rob the Russian people of his body, to fence his writings from them with censorial restrictions, but it could not rob them of Pushkin's language and Pushkin's literature, for Pushkin's language became the Russian literary language, while the new literature, initiated by Pushkin, developed into modern Russian literature.

A people's language is one of its most essential possessions. But language is an historical phenomenon: it changes and develops with time. In the Pantheon of the culture of a nation a permanent place is reserved for those geniuses who, drawing upon the riches of the popular language for their writings, enrich and develop the language, naturally and freely, without having resort to artificial and labored plans. From such geniuses whole periods in history of literary language derive their names. Such were Dante and Petrarch in Italy, Rabelais, Montaigne

and Racine in France, Goethe and Schiller in Germany, Lomonosov and Pushkin in Russia

Pushkin was keenly aware of the gap lying between the contemporaneous Russian language and the "mode of thought and sentiments" of the Russian people, i e, that which he regarded as one of the most important elements of nationality

The enrichment and the development of the Russian language was for Pushkin a cause that was close to his heart, an important social and political cause "Only revolutionary minds, like those of M Orlov and Pestel," wrote Pushkin in 1822, "can love Russia as only a writer can love its language All work must be done in this Russia and in this Russian language" Pushkin evidently compared the creation of a new literary language to a political revolution and looked upon both as manifestations of love for one's country and people

"We still have no literature, no books," wrote Pushkin in 1824, "we have, from our childhood, derived all our knowledge, all our notions from foreign books, we have accustomed ourselves to think in a foreign language, the enlightenment of the age calls for important objects of reflection as food for minds which can no longer content themselves with the brilliant play of imagination and harmony But science, politics and philosophy have never been expounded in Russian, we have no metaphysical language whatever Our prose is so incondite that we are obliged even in ordinary correspondence to create new turns of speech to explain the most ordinary ideas " This sad picture is connected with the fact that "the reading public is restricted," that "literature is not felt as a popular requirement, because there exists no general opinion" (as Pushkin called public opinion)

Pushkin gave their due to his literary predecessors—Lomonosov, Karamzin, Zhukovsky Nevertheless, we should not blind ourselves to the differences existing between Pushkin and his language and theirs

Karamzin, as writer of belles-lettres, followed the French writers He broke with the language of Lomonosov, which had become archaic and took for orientation French literature and the French language His was a literary language, but of literary "society" of literary salons, of "chamber" literature—a language of the few and for the few, that language of the drawing-rooms, which was ridiculed by Pushkin with irony and

which kept aloof from the people, at the same time making literature inaccessible to **the** people Zhukovsky likewise wrote **for** the few, despite his diverse and rich poetical interests. Not for nothing did a collection of his poems bear the title "Für Wenige" (For the Few)

Pushkin set himself to master "dialects" and mould a single national language

He made an intense study of the Russian language along two different lines, acquainting himself both with the historic forms of the language in the ancient monuments of people's literature and with the contemporaneous spoken language

We know that Pushkin, not only as a child but also as a man of mature years, during his exile in Mikhailovskoye, took delight in listening to the tales of his nurse, Anna Rodionovna, that he frequented fairs and markets in order to hear Russian as spoken by the people, and that when in Orenburg and Berdi he asked to hear folk songs and legends "Alfieri," wrote Pushkin in 1830, "studied Italian by frequenting the Florentine market. It would do us good to listen sometimes to Moscow waferbakers. Their speech is marvellously correct and pure."

It does not follow from this that the literary language must be an exact replica of the spoken language "The written language is continually being enriched by expressions which arise during conversation, but one should not renounce the acquisition of the centuries. To employ in writing the spoken language alone would mean that one does not know his language," the poet wrote in 1836, less than a year before his death

That is why in Pushkin's poetry we meet alike specific literary expressions, words in common use, and elements of old Russian, but all are fused in one "Pushkinian" language, delightful to the ear, at once plastic and musical

In the charm of this fusion of the old language with popular, spoken language and with studied literary expressions lies the secret of Pushkin's poetical form. He modestly called this secret—"taste" and wrote briefly. "True taste consists not in the unthinking rejection of a particular word or turn of speech but in a sense of proportion and fitness."

* * *

Language alone does not constitute literature Pushkin condemned writers, who "care more for the outer shell of words, than for the thought which is their true life" The word in itself is dead, thought gives it life Mentioning the fact that "the French to this day are amazed at the boldness of Racine who used the word 'pave'" (pavement), while Dehllé prides himself on using the word 'vache' (cow)," Pushkin exclaims "Literature which bows to such petty and capricious critics is deserving of contempt Pitiful is the lot of poets, whatsoever their merits otherwise, if they are obliged to glory in such victories over prejudices of taste There is a more exalted daring! Daring of invention, of creation, when a broad plan is embraced by creative thought—this is the daring of Shakespeare, Dante, Milton, Goethe in 'Faust', Molière in 'Tartuffe'" (1827) "Thought*" exclaims Pushkin in another passage, "is a great word! Wherein he the majesty of man if not in thought!"

Great literature requires not only artistic language, but also ideas The words of a poet or a writer of prose should not be more profound or more beautiful, so to speak, than the thought which they express Literary images should be thoughts clothed in appropriate words This was a fundamental point of Pushkin's system of esthetics to which he consistently adhered throughout his entire creative work From it followed all the other demands which he made on language and literature, demands which led him to realism of form and of content, to the creation of the new literature

"Precision and brevity are the principal merits of prose," wrote Pushkin in 1822, before he himself had launched into "humble prose" "Prose calls for ideas and more ideas, without which brilliant expressions avail nothing, poetry is another matter Nevertheless, even in poetry it would be advisable for our poets to have a more considerable stock of ideas, than they usually possess"

While insisting on the need of simple language, Pushkin stressed that it does not imply poverty of thought He championed simplicity of language against poverty of thought Prettiness of language and its embellishment without content will in any case result in bad poetry Pushkin's idea is clearly expressed in the following passage "The charm of naked beauty is still so incomprehensible to us that even in prose we pursue shabby

ornaments, we still cannot appreciate poetry shorn of the conventional ornaments of verse Not only have we not tried to raise poetical style to a noble simplicity, but we attempt to give pompousness to prose" (1828) Thus, simplicity of language is also demanded of poetry as the highest criterion of artistic merit

Absence of pompousness and of external and conventional ornament, together with simplicity and brevity have a bearing on the sincerity of poetry "Sincerity is a precious quality in a poet," wrote Pushkin

To one who knows anything of the history of literature, it must be clear that with such views Pushkin could be satisfied with neither classicism nor romanticism, trends to which he was drawn in his young days He turned to them in childhood, giving them their due in his first works, but as he approached maturity he abandoned them without regret

Pushkin was opposed to the abstract definitions of classicism and romanticism He held that a work could be written by a dreamer, bear the impress of "German ideologism" and yet belong to the "classical genre" as this was understood in the 17th and 18th centuries Conversely, a work strictly classical in form could still possess the features of "romantic affectation "

Similarly, in poetry, no single genre should dominate "It is the fashion nowadays to hold forth against elegies," the poet wrote in 1823, "just as in the old times one poured ridicule on the ode " It is not a question of the types and varieties of poetry, not of outer poetical forms and devices The main thing is that poetry should not be pretentious, timid, drab "I must confess," he wrote in his draft of the preface to "Boris Godunov," "that in literature I am a sceptic (to say no more) and that all its sects mean the same to me, each one having its good and bad sides Should rites and forms bind the literary conscience with superstitions?"

What, then, were the dictates of Pushkin's literary conscience?

He spoke of "the correctness and perfection of classical antiquity and the drab uniform copies made by its imitators," the various unities of time, place and action were in his opinion conventional and artificial barriers to the development of art He fought with especial vigor against "unity of style — this fourth requirement of the French tragedy," according to which all the characters, regardless of their place in society, should

speak in the language of high society, a uniform and "would-be literary" one He was equally strongly opposed to pseudo-classical dramatic poetry, for its "servile predilection for kings and heroes "

Romanticism as a trend in the ordinary sense of the word was also a phase which the poet soon outgrew As a youth of 17 he had already passed through the stage of "sad elegies," of "lonely sylvan darkness," of "separation of foggy days," had sung of the "solitary moon," of "sad and simple sounds of the pipe," of "early bloom of hope," and bewailed life which "withers from torments," and in 1817 we find him declaring that "a flighty old man and a grave youth are equally ridiculous "

Romanticism of the Byronic type was disowned by Pushkin in the depiction of his heroes (Aleko in "The Gypsies," "The Prisoner of the Caucasus") and in his system of literary methods as a whole "Byron," wrote Pushkin in 1827, "conceived and loved only one character Byron took a one-sided view of the world and human nature, then turned away from them and immersed into his own self "

It was absolutely necessary to seek another and new path for Russian literature Pushkin found this path in realism, in the artistic creations of the people.

"A weaned taste," he wrote in the draft of his preface to "Boris Godunov," "demands other, more intense sensations and seeks them in the turbid, but seething sources of the new popular poetry " This led the poet to "the system of our father Shakespeare" as a literary model What drew him to Shakespeare was the latter's "free and broad depiction of characters," the "unlabored and simple delineation of types and his sure feeling for the people " "The popular rules of the Shakespearean drama," wrote Pushkin, "not the court usage of the Racine tragedy are suitable for our stage "

The characters in a tragedy should be live beings, with many passions and many vices Such is Pushkin's "The Covetous Knight "

Pushkin held that the truth of art does not reside in conventional schemes or in accentuated one-sidedness, but only in verisimilitude And verisimilitude consists "not in strict adherence to costume, colour, time and place," but "in the truth of passions, in the verisimilitude of emotions and presupposed circumstances," in the verisimilitude of characters It is amazing how close this is to Engels' plea for the depiction of "typical characters in typical circumstances"

Work and inspiration are equally essential to the poet Pushkin said of "Boris Godunov," that it was "the fruit of continual work and conscientious study " He might have said the same of his so-called "small tragedies" as well as his novels and tales "Work engenders thought, while inspiration is a disposition of the mind to the most lively reception of impressions and to understanding of ideas, consequently also to their explanation" Such inspiration resulted in "Boris Godunov" and, in fact, in all of Pushkin's writing

Pushkin demanded of the writer "philosophy, objectivity, the statesman-like ideas of the historian, shrewdness, vivid imagination, absence of bias for favourite thoughts, freedom " All these characteristics are typical of his own artistic creation

And, indeed, how could it be otherwise when, according to Pushkin, the object of tragedy, the whole meaning of great art lies in "'the individual and the nation, human fate, national fate "

These fundamental principles of Pushkin's creative work, this Pushkiman realism, this Pushkinian craftsmanship, formed the basis of modern Russian literature And while Pushkin absorbed both the Russian folklore and all the achievements of world literature, he became the mighty tree of modern Russian literature, from which grew Lermontov, Gogol, Nekrasov, Shchedrin, Tolstoi, Dostoyevsky, Chekhov and Gorky

V

The national poet, whose works represented an encyclopedia of Russian life, was bound to appear before the tribunal of history which, in October 1917, finally settled the long standing contest as to the destinies of this Russian life In other words, while the litigants advanced a claim to the future of Russian life, they also claimed its artistic encyclopedia, Pushkin's creative heritage It could not be otherwise Pushkin's heritage was closely interlinked with the fate of Russia, which in the 19th century was the central problem occupying Russian social thought, Russian philosophy and Russian literature.

The litigation for Pushkin's heritage began between the Occidentahsts (Zapadniki) and Slavophiles, and found its clearest expression in 1880—at the time of the unveiling of Pushkin's monument in Moscow

Two speeches delivered in connection with the ceremony—by Turgenev and Dostoyevsky—cannot but draw our attention

even today Both writers, following Behnsky or, to be more exact, the young Gogol, acknowledged in Pushkin the first i? Russian national poet and the creator of the Russian literary language. But Turgenev and Dostoyevsky started out from different fundamental principles and reached different conclusions

For Turgenev, Pushkin's art was an embodiment of the soul, the essence of the Russian people This soul, as the soul of any people, consists of two elements—receptivity and self-expression According to Turgenev, the Russian and consequently the Pushkiman soul, is characterized by duality "Its receptivity is dual in nature—it is receptive to its own life and to the life of other occidental peoples, with all its riches and, at times, bitter fruits Its self-expression, uneven, impetuous, at times self-expression of genius, is also dual, it has to fight alien complications, and its own contradictions "

"We do not share the opinion of those,' said Turgenev, "who affirm that the Russian literary language comes to us only from the plain people along with other salutary institutions " Turgenev foresees the objection ' If a poet does not always have in his writings his own people in view and does not see in them his principal object, he never will be their poet The people, the plain people, will never read him "

But this does not trouble Turgenev, and he continues, true to his fundamental conception "Indeed, gentlemen, where is the great poet, whose works are read by those whom we call 'the plain people'? The German plain people do not read Goethe, nor the French people, Moliere, even the English people do not read Shakespeare. They are read by their nation All art is the elevation of life to the ideal Those who stand on the level of ordinary, everyday life, are below this level"

The conclusion is evident the nation is not identical with the people, the nation is higher than the people, the nation is the summit of the people, the national excludes that which appertains to the people Freedom in creation, creative work should be free from the people, the people are an inert mass, steeped in ordinary, everyday life The people do not read Goethe. Mohere, Shakespeare, Pushkin, because the level of art, the ideal of art, is unattainable for them This is but natural, normal, thus it was in the past, thus it always will be Such in reality was the viewpoint of those liberals, bourgeois and landowners, who regarded Pushkin as theirs and thought that they would lead the people, the masses, all Russia, along the

path of the civilized West, i e., the bourgeois capitalist path What matter that the people will in future also not read Pushkin—why, in the West the people do not read Mohere, Goethe and Shakespeare

Dostoyevsky saw this separation of Turgenev's "nation" from the people He called it "separation of society from the people " He considered it greatly abnormal that society placed itself above the people He was of the opinion that Pushkin first pointed to this) malady in his depiction of Aleko in "The Gypsies" and in "Eugene Onegin " According to Dostoyevsky, Pushkin indicated, as a remedy for the "malady," the health-giving springs of the truth of the people, Pushkin's art typified Russian beauty, which he derived from the spirit of the people What Turgenev called receptivity, Dostoyevsky called world-responsiveness with its positive content in universal reconciliation Such reconciliationism was the "truth of the Russian people," the first step to which lies in humility "Humble thyself, proud man, and before all humble thy pride Gam the victory over self, suppress thyself and thou shalt be free, as thou never dared to imagine "

Dostoyevsky's conclusion is also evident society is not identical with the people, society places itself above the people This is unnatural, abnormal, thus it was in the past, but it should not continue thus The people is the bearer of truth, it is wise in its humility, humility and universal reconciliation is the truth of the people One should accept this truth, and to suppress and to break oneself is to find freedom

This, in reality, was the point of view of those reactionary "lovers of the people" who affirmed that Pushkin was theirs and that they would lead the people, the popular masses, the whole of Russia, along a primitive road of their own, meaning the road of the bourgeoisie and kulaks What matter that the plain people still be naked and poor as they were before—"did not Christ wander uttering his blessings on our poor earth a slave "

Turgenev and Dostoyevsky, when all is said and done, despite their different points of departure, were not so far apart. The one denied that "salutary institutions" will come from the "common people," the other considered socialism a malady and allowed no place for it in the soul of the Russian people

Instead of seeking and working for real freedom in real social relationships, Turgenev looks for freedom in artistic creation, while Dostoyevsky looks for it in man's inner world

Social life they leave as it was But the important thing that was actually common to both of them was that they were both historically wrong

In 1880, during the unveiling of the monument, Pushkin's heritage was disputed in the absence of the poet's sole legitimate heir The controversy over the destiny of Russia took place behind the back of the sole historical judge The question of freedom was discussed in the absence of the leading force of the emancipation movement Neither of the litigants, who imagined themselves to be experts on the soul of the Russian people, knew this people One deemed its soul to be in eternal receptivity and inertia, the other—in the wisdom of humility and patience, while actually its nature turned out to be liberty-loving and revolutionary This was realized in his time by the great Russian poet Pushkin Suffice it to recall his enumeration of those who made up Pugachov's following Russian serfs, peasants working in factories, Cossacks, Tatars, Bashkirs, Kalmyks and, finally, as a generalization "All the common people were for Pugachov, the clergy wished him well, the scribes and officials were not yet numerous, and were wholly on the side of the plain people Only the nobles were openly for the government" Thus miscalculated the luckless tutors of the people's soul

The working class, having gathered strength, knew the soul of the Russian people better than they did, because it was its own soul It educated and tempered it in a long and bitter struggle against the bourgeois and landlord regime, it raised the toiling masses against their eternal enemies and led them in the final struggle against landlords, capitalists and kulaks

Over twenty years ago, in October 1917, the yoke of the parasites was overthrown for all time, and indissoluble ties of brotherhood linked together the free Soviet peoples

Russia's path, it appears, was the path of Pushkin's heritage Despite Turgenev, the working class won freedom for the whole people Despite Dostoyevsky, the people found in socialism both outer and inner freedom And whereas formerly, the masses, deprived of all place in the world of culture, lacking even the most elementary of educational facilities, had no access to Pushkin and did not read him, now, in the epoch of the Stalin Constitution, they have found their great poet, who has become theirs for ever

In the Soviet Union there is not a single factory, collective farm, Red Army unit or school, where Pushkin's words do not sound and resound as a mighty echo in each heart

Dostoyevsky said that "our poor and disordered country" would, "perhaps, eventually find a new word to say to the world¹", would show "a way out for European yearning in the Russian soul," and that all this was inherent in the artistic genius of Pushkin's wisdom of humility. Yes, our country did find the new word to say to the world, it does show the way out for the yearning of Europe, but it is not the "poor and disordered" country of Dostoyevsky, but the rich, abundant Soviet land, vigorous in body and spirit. And it shows the way out not in Dostoyevsky's Christianity and in his pious plea "Be humble!" but in the Stalin Constitution and in the cheerful call "Be proud, be proud, man of labour, know thine own dignity "

It was the great Pushkin who, in the dawn of our literature, taught us this human pride, this knowledge of one's own dignity. It is the great Stalin who is teaching us the honour and valour, the glory and heroism of socialist labour, in which lies all our human pride, all our human dignity



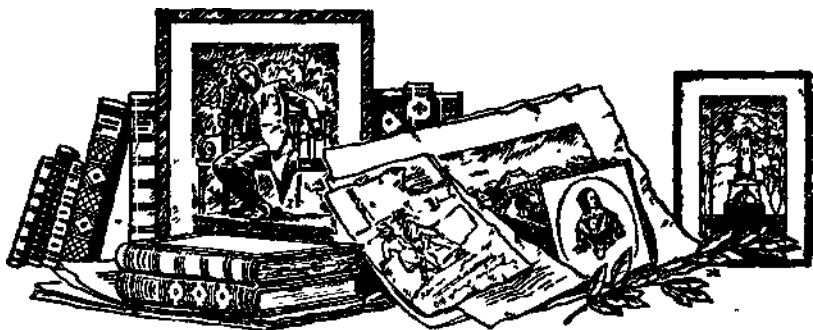


Pushkin.

E. Heilmann. Metal engraving, 1822

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF THE POET





ALEXANDER SERGEYEVICH PUSHKIN

A Biographical Essay

By Prof V KIRP0T1N

PUSHKIN'S EPOCH

Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin, the greatest of Russian poets, was born in 1799 and died in 1837. He lived and worked in the period which was marked by revolutionary activities among the nobility.

Pushkin was born and brought up in an aristocratic environment. Even then, in the first third of the 19th century, during the reign of Tsars Alexander I and Nicholas I, the great majority of the nobility were the mainstay of reaction, consciously and stubbornly upholding serfdom and the autocracy.

"The nobility gave Russia the Birons and Arakcheyevs," wrote Lenin, quoting Herzen, "innumerable 'drunken army officers, squabblers, gamblers, country-fair heroes, brawlers, floggers, harem owners', and complacent Manilovs."

"And among them," wrote Herzen, "developed the people of December 14, a phalanx of heroes, brought up like Romulus and Remus, on the milk of a wild beast. They were valiant knights forged from head to foot of pure steel, warrior-champions who marched consciously to certain destruction for the sake of awakening the younger generation to a new life, for the sake of purifying the children born in an environment of executions and servility."

The revolutionary uprising of Yemelyan Pugachov, which had shaken the empire to its very foundations, was still fresh in everyone's memory.

The experience of the more advanced Western countries and the lessons of the (bourgeois revolution in France at the end of the 18th century prompted the more advanced members of the nobility to realize that if serfdom is preserved it will inevitably bring about a new peasant revolution on a scale immeasurably more ominous than that of the Pugachov movement. The works of Voltaire, Holbach, Diderot and other Encyclopedists of the 18th century were thoroughly studied by the more enlightened people of Russia.

The discontent among the peasantry, frequent peasant uprisings, their own observation of the sufferings of the serfs and the arbitrariness of the Russian autocracy, plus the advanced ideas coming from the bourgeois West, led the (better and most educated of the young noblemen to strive for reforms along the European pattern.

The trend of economic development pointed in the same direction. In Pushkin's time Russia was a country of landlordism and serfdom, but her domestic and foreign markets were slowly beginning to develop and her first industrial enterprises were being organized. Production for the market, even of agricultural products, very soon brought to light the fact that compulsory serf labour was unprofitable and that free labour was more productive and economically more progressive.

These were the causes that fostered the revolutionary movement of the Decembrists.

Alexander I ascended the throne upon the assassination of his father, the emperor Paul, who had been hated for his terrible unreasonableness and insufferable tyranny. The new emperor at first made advances to the progressive elements of that time. He deliberately spread liberal illusions without intending, however, to give up any of the prerogatives of absolutism or landlordism. The victory over Napoleon, who had invaded Russia in 1812, followed by the entry of the Russian troops into Paris, augmented Alexander's popularity for a while. However, taking advantage of his increased authority he adopted a most viciously reactionary home and foreign policy. The governments which had participated in defeating Napoleon formed the Holy Alliance for the purpose of crushing any revolutionary movement wherever it might appear. The Austrian statesman, Metternich, an inveterate foe of liberty and a die-hard defender of autocracy and feudalism, was the leading spirit of this Holy Alliance. At the instance of Metternich, and for motives of his own, Alexander I throttled popular revolutionary movements all over Europe. He entrusted the conduct of internal affairs to his favorite, Arakcheyev, a rude soldier and obscurantist. Arakcheyev became especially notorious for the organisation of military settlements, which meant the transformation of several hundred thousand peasants into hereditary soldiers, kept in obedience by flogging and execu-

tions. Public education during the second half of Alexander I's reign fell into the hands of hypocrites and quacks. All the more gifted professors were driven out of the universities. The fierceness of the censorship became anecdotal. One censor, for instance, prohibited a book describing the injurious effects of mushrooms, giving as his reason that "mushrooms are eaten during Lent and are therefore agreeable to God."

In the meantime almost all the educated young noblemen who, inspired by patriotism, had joined the army during the war for the defence of the fatherland, visited Western Europe during the campaigns against Napoleon. Their own observations there convinced them of the superiority of the more liberal West European ways. Their discontent with the reaction grew more intense. For the purpose of realizing their ideals the revolutionaries among the nobility organized several secret political societies.

In 1816 there was organized in St. Petersburg the Society for Saving the Country, the first Decembrist organization. Later this was reorganized into the League of Felicity. Among the officers of the large military forces quartered, in the Ukraine, in the South of the former Russian Empire, there sprang up a Decembrist organization which became known as the Southern Society. The organization in St. Petersburg, reorganized after the establishment of the southern group, was called the Northern Society. As we shall see further on, Pushkin was in close contact with the active members of the Northern Society, among whom the poet Ryleyev was an outstanding figure, as well as with the active members of the Southern Society, headed by Colonel Pestel, one of the finest representatives of the Decembrist movement.

The program of the Decembrists contained demands for the abolition of serfdom and the substitution of a constitutional monarchy or republican form of government for the autocracy. The advocates of a constitutional monarchy predominated among the St. Petersburg Decembrists, while the Southern Decembrists were predominantly republicans.

The Decembrist uprising took place after the death of Alexander I, immediately upon the accession to the throne of Nicholas I, on December 14, 1825, in St. Petersburg, and a few weeks later in the Ukraine. Both uprisings were crushed. The Decembrists did not have sufficient forces to overthrow the autocracy.

The great majority of the nobility were not with the Decembrists but with Nicholas I, as they saw in the autocracy the surest defender of their landed interests. And, being noblemen—even though revolutionary noblemen—the Decembrists were very far removed from the common people. They neither could nor would arouse the people for a struggle against the autocracy and serfdom.

Tsai Nicholas I punished the Decembrists fiercely Five leaders of the movement were hung—Colonel Pestel, Ryleyev, Sergei Muravyov-Apostol, Bestuzhev-Ryumin and Kakhovsky One hundred and twenty others were sentenced to hard labour in Siberia Thousands of soldiers who took part in the uprising were sent to the Caucasus, where they perished from disease or in battle with the mountain peoples, who were then being subjugated by the tsar's government

The reaction which had set in during the reign of Alexander I triumphed The military settlements were retained A special corps of gendarmie was organized under the command of General Benkendorf, a relentless suppressor of every live thought, every live undertaking in Russia The censorship was intensified In the realm of foreign affairs Nicholas I continued the policy of the latter half of the reign of Alexander I and became the "Gendarme of Europe " Later on Nicholas I sent out Russian troops for the express purpose of suppressing revolutionary movements in Western European countries

The great Russian critic Behnsky, the founder of revolutionary democratic ideology in Russia, began his activities during the second half of the reign of Nicholas I The movement of the democratic "*Raznochintsy*" who expressed the demands of the awakening peasantry, developed widely only after Pushkin's death and subsequent to the defeat of Russia in the Crimean War an 1855

At the beginning of Pushkin's literary activity, Russian literature was still largely under the influence of pseudo-classicism, which had dominated in Russia during the 18th century Pseudo-classicism stood for imitating the old literary standards and against a truthful description of contemporary life The pseudo-classicists wrote for the ruling aristocracy and not for the people Gavril Derzhavin, the outstanding poet of the 18th century, based his claim for immortality on the fact that he was the first to eulogize Catherine II (glorified by him under the name of Felicia) and that he spoke the truth to tsars

The pseudo-classicists used an artificial, bookish, clumsy language, incomprehensible to the masses

Even before Pushkin entered the literary field, a number of writers, among whom Karamzin and Zhukovsky were the most outstanding, began the battle against pseudo-classicism, offering in its stead sentimentalism and romanticism They strove to portray the inner life of man—his feelings and sensations—rather than write of official life They refused to

¹ From *razno*, "different," and *chin*, "rank" an historical term applied in tsarist Russia in the '60's of the 19th century, to members of the intelligentsia, not belonging to the privileged classes (*Editor*)

follow the artificial rules set up by the pseudo-classicists, and adopted freer and more natural forms of literary expression.

Still neither Karamzin nor Zhukovsky could create a realistic and popular literature

As opposed to pseudo-classicism, they glorified the inner life of man, but the man they were interested in was the man of the ruling class

It was left for Pushkin to render Russian literature truly popular and to modernize completely the Russian literary language

PUSHKIN'S CHILDHOOD

As stated previously, Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin was born in Moscow on May 26 (June 6 according to the Gregorian calendar), 1799

His father, Sergei Lvovich Pushkin, belonged to the nobility. His family, though once very notable, had towards the time of the poet's birth lost its former wealth and influence. Pushkin's mother, Nadezhda Osipovna, was a grand-daughter of Hannibal, the famous "Negro of Peter the Great."

Hannibal was of Ethiopian (Abyssinian) origin. As a boy he was taken as a captive to Turkey and thence into Russia. Peter I brought him up and, appreciating his exceptional ability, introduced him into the ranks of his aides.

Pushkin's parents led an aimless, fashionable life. They took little interest in the child. The bringing up of little "Sasha" was left in the hands of the servants and of ever-changing and always fatuous foreign tutors. The boy received a French education at home. He began to read very early. There was a large French library in his father's house. His younger brother Lev recalls how "The child passed sleepless nights devouring book after book secretly in his father's study." At the age of 11 he was already well acquainted with the French classics and the works of the French Encyclopedists of the 18th century. Along with the influence of European enlightenment Pushkin was subjected from his childhood to the influence of Russian folklore. His nurse, Anna Rodionovna, a serf woman, knew the Russian folk tales splendidly and introduced him into the wonderland of popular fantasy. With the serf Nikita Timofeyevich Kozlov, who had been assigned to take care of him, little Pushkin wandered all over Moscow, observing the life of the "common people" and listening to the speech of the Moscow "common folk."

Pushkin's early acquaintance with literary interests and literary society must be noted. Pushkin's father wrote fashionable verses rather well and his uncle Vasili Lvovich Pushkin had been a well-known poet in his

day The Pushkin home was visited by many famous writers of that period

Moscow society lived far away from the tsar's court and the tsar's government Many of its members were not in any governmental office and were not striving for an official career There was less servility here than in St Petersburg society, more independence and self-respect All of these factors had a certain effect on young Pushkin From his childhood on he showed certain traits, characterized by unobservant (grown-ups as "stubbornness and unruliness," which in reality were manifestations of an independent spirit unable to stand any coercion or violence

THE LYCEE

In 1811 the Lycee, a privileged school intended to prepare young¹ men to fill various positions in the governmental service, was founded at Tsarskoye Selo near St Petersburg

Unlike the students of other institutions of learning, the students of the Lycee were not subject to corporal punishment The Lycee was opened on October 19, 1811, in the presence of the tsar and the ministers The Lycee had a six-year course Only thirty pupils were admitted at first Brought together in one school for a long term, away from their relatives and home surroundings, they set up friendships among themselves The Lycee students were a rather motley crew Among them were future tsarist bureaucrats, but there were also the future Decembrists, Pushkin and Kuchelbecker, the poet

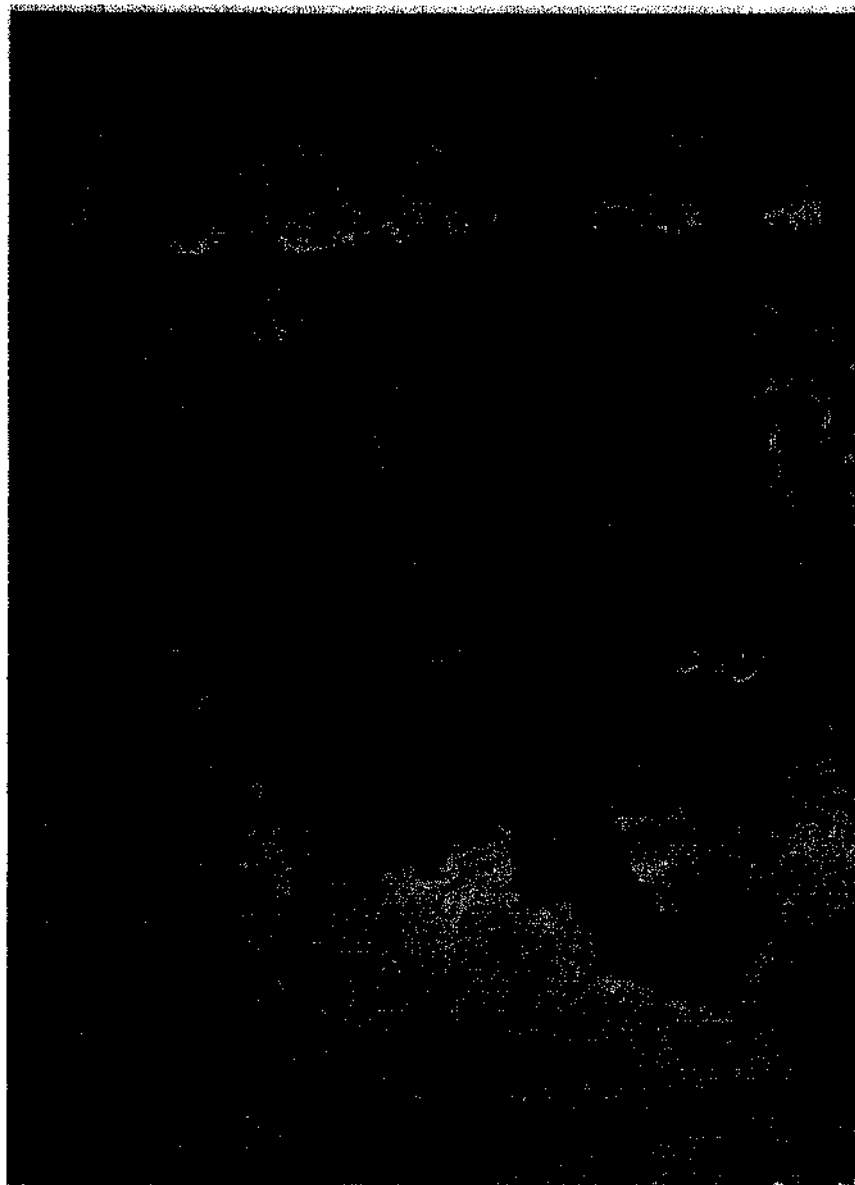
Pushkin, Kuchelbecker and Delvig (who was also a poet) became Pushkin's best and closest friends Pushkin preserved a strong attachment to them through all the ordeals of their political struggle with the autocracy Young Pushkin adopted an attitude of bold independence in his relations with the school authorities He and his comrades, carried away by love of political liberty and literary interests, created within the Lycee a sort of "little republic," far removed from the atmosphere of servility, hypocrisy and rude military manners which held sway in the court of Alexander I

Pushkin's critical attitude towards the people of the ruling class was coupled with sympathy for the common people He made friends easily with peasants, porters and servants He had friends among the servants at the Lycee and in the Tsarskoye Selo court

The standards of teaching at the Lycee were rather low The students were supposed to receive within six years their high school and college



Pushkin Pronouncing.
Artist unknown, 1830's



Pushkin in the Park.
V. Serov, Water Color, 1899

education It was impossible to accomplish this in such a limited time, and the curriculum had to be curtailed and distorted

The majority of the Lycee teachers did not realize Pushkin's exceptional talents. Here are some of his teachers' characterizations of him. "Very lazy, inattentive in class, immodest, rather capable, witty (more is the pity!) only for prating, makes very mediocre progress."

"Thoughtless, flighty, untidy, negligent; but good-natured and polite, has a special passion for poetry "

There were also, however, among the Lycee teachers some splendid people, who had a good influence on their pupils Among them was the French teacher, Boudri, a brother of Marat, the great man of the French Revolution This fact alone suggested to the students thoughts of struggle against the autocracy Then, especially, there was the natural history teacher, Kunitzm Kunitzm had been educated in Western Europe His scientific world outlook had been formed under the influence of the progressive philosophy of enlightenment imbued with the spirit of equality and directed against autocracy, political oppression, arbitrariness and the enslavement of man by man under serfdom Kunitzm unfolded before the young students thoughts very unusual for Russia of that period

Thus the advanced ideas of the century penetrated even through the thick walls of the Lycee Great and important events in public life were taking place at the time Pushkin, the student at the Lycee, was a contemporary of the invasion of Russia by the French army, the burning of Moscow, the expedition of Russian troops to Europe, the taking of Paris and the fall and exile of Napoleon, who had terrorized the entire world

Like the progressives of that period, Pushkin expected that Alexander I, who posed as the liberator of the European nations from Napoleon's despotism, would inaugurate a tolerant, liberal policy in European and home affairs. So much the greater was young Pushkin's disappointment and indignation at the Arakcheye regime and the policies of the Holy Alliance

The officers of a regiment of Hussars quartered at Tsarskoye Selo at that time were influenced by the ideas of the Decembrists. Pushkin and many other Lycee students became very friendly with them Through them Pushkin gained access to all the forbidden "illegal" literature of his time Among the officers of this Hussar regiment there was the philosopher and journalist Chaadayev, a man of liberty-loving political views Later on, during the reign of Nicholas I, Chaadayev was pronounced insane, 'by order of the tsar, for his critical attitude towards conditions in Russia

During his school years at the Lycee, Pushkin became imbued with ideals of political liberty He dreamed of the overthrow of the "absolute

power," of autocracy, and the establishment of a more liberal political order in Russia

Pushkin's literary talent quickly ripened and took form at the Lycee. This development was accelerated by the Lycee environment, where literary interests were very strong: manuscript magazines were circulated, literary readings were organized, and so on. Pushkin's first appearance in print came while he was still at the Lycee, when his poem, "To My Friend the Poet," was published in the magazine *Vestnik Evropi* ("The European Herald")

The examination session of the Lycee on January 8, 1815, was attended by the aged Derzhavin. Pushkin recited one of his poems, "Reminiscences of Tsarskoye Selo," in the presence of the famous poet. This declamation turned into a triumph for the young poet. Derzhavin discerned the future genius in this boyish beginner. "This is he who will replace Derzhavin," he said when Pushkin had finished. The event made a great impression both upon Pushkin and his comrades. It was the first public recognition of Pushkin's genius.

"It happened in 1815," Pushkin wrote later. "Derzhavin was very old. He was dressed in his official uniform and plush boots. The examinations tired him extremely. He fell into a doze which lasted until the examinations in Russian literature began. Then he brightened up and his eyes began to shine, he was entirely transformed. Of course, his poems were recited and analyzed and praised repeatedly. He listened with (great animation). Finally I was called on. I recited my 'Reminiscences at Tsarskoye Sello,' standing two paces away from Derzhavin. It is more than I can do to describe my feelings at the time. When I reached the verse where I mention Derzhavin's name, my boyish voice rang out and my heart began to beat in a transport of delight. I do not remember how I finished my reciting. I do not remember where I ran off to. Derzhavin was delighted. He called for me, he wanted to embrace me. They looked for me, but could not find me."

Pushkin's literary talent grew and developed with the aid of his continuous and assiduous reading. He was carried away as of old by the foremost thinkers of Western Europe, especially by Voltaire.

He studied attentively the classics of European literature and contemporary Western and Russian writers. Pushkin's poetical genius, his universal education and multiple interests attracted the attention of the older generation of writers, such as Karamzin and Zhukovsky, who began to regard him, a schoolboy, as their young comrade.

As student at the Lycee Pushkin took an active part in the literary combats of that time. The reactionary literary forces united in a society named "The Round Table of the Lovers of Russian Letters" at the head

of which stood Admiral Shishkov "The Round Table" took up arms ferociously against the reformation of the Russian literary language which had already been begun by Karamzin, Zhukovsky, Batyushkov and others. The partisans of new progressive principles in literature organized, in opposition to the "Round Table," another society, called "Arzamass". While still at the Lycee, Pushkin was already closely connected with the "Arzamass", and upon graduating he joined the organization formally. Among the members of the "Arzamass" there were several future Decembrists. The activity of the "Arzamass" prepared the ground for realism in literature.

Pushkin had already outgrown the narrow bounds of the Lycee. He was impatient to get out into life.

In the summer of 1817 the long-awaited day arrived, and Pushkin and his comrades graduated from the Lycee.

PUSHKIN'S LIFE IN ST. PETERSBURG AFTER THE LYCEE

Upon graduating from the Lycee, Pushkin received an appointment to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. His duties were purely formal. At that time many young noblemen, members of wealthy and influential families, were in government (service only for the sake of appearances, in order to receive official ranks). Pushkin devoted all his time to the seething social and literary life of the capital. On attaining freedom, on his liberation from the cramping rules of the school, the youthful poet was carried away also by the society life of the capital. He went to balls and theatres, feasted, fell in love and had several "affairs of honor," all of which ended well.

Social dissipation, however, never captivated Pushkin excessively. He never gave up his public and political interests, or his scientific studies or literary work to gratify society. It must be remembered that very many revolutionaries of that time belonged to high society. And St. Petersburg at that time was seething with political activity. The years spent by Pushkin in St. Petersburg after his graduation from the Lycee were the years when the Decembrists' societies and their programs were finally shaped. The Decembrist societies were secret organizations and only a few people knew of their organizational aims and problems. But the Decembrists did not hide their sentiments and political views. They advocated almost openly constitutional limitation and even the overthrow of the autocracy. They passionately condemned serfdom and discussed different ways of liberating the peasants. Many of Pushkin's friends and comrades, with whom he was closely associated, participated in this movement. His closest Lycee friend,

Pushchin, joined the secret society Pushkin himself was not a member of the Decembrist political organization. He was not told of its existence, but he absorbed avidly the atmosphere of the revolutionary circles of the nobility, he was fully in sympathy with them, and helped them spread their ideas.

About this time the literary society "Arzamass" broke up. Disputes with the "Round Table" and with Admiral Shishkov seemed insipid in St. Petersburg, where the political conspiracy against the autocracy was ripening and taking shape. Pushkin joined another literary society, "The Green Lamp," organized by the Decembrists for the purpose of spreading their ideas among the uninitiated who sympathized with the movement but did not know of its organizational forms and final aims. At the gatherings of "The Green Lamp" Pushkin participated in discussions in which the Alexander-Arakhcheyev regime was subjected to severe criticism, and hopes for the political and social regeneration of Russia were proclaimed.

In a number of poems written during that period Pushkin, while not participating in the Decembrist conspiracy, stepped forward as the herald of the ideals of the Decembrists. In 1817 he wrote his "Ode to Liberty," in which he castigated the autocracy and caroled political liberty.

There is a direct appeal in this ode for an uprising and for the overthrow of the autocracy.

"Oh shake and shiver, tyrants of the world!
But lend an ear, ye fallen slaves,
Gain courage and arise!"

Pushkin's condemnation of the autocracy was accompanied by his condemnation of serfdom. His journey to the village of Mihailovskoye, his parents' estate in the Pskov province, made real his conception of slavery. It was there that he wrote the poem, "Village," in which he depicts the horrors of serfdom.

Pushkin's epigrams on the tsar and on Arakhcheyev and other members of the tsar's retinue enjoyed especial popularity. Biting and well pointed, they hit the mark without fail, and exposed the odiousness and ridiculousness of the autocracy. It was impossible to print them, of course, but hundreds and thousands of hand-written copies of them were distributed. There was no progressively-minded person who did not know them, copy them and hand them on further. Pushkin's poems and epigrams castigating the autocracy, directed against serfdom, and singing the praises of liberty had the effect of Decembrist proclamations. The Decembrists gladly made use

of them for undermining the tsar's authority and for dissemination of their views

During this St Petersburg period, after his graduation from the Lycee, Pushkin wrote his first large literary composition, the poem "Ruslan and Ludmila " This work showed a further growth in the literary independence of Pushkin's genius. Its cheerful buoyancy, its playful, witty adaptation of fairy tale themes, its very language, unusually simple and precise for those days, were the first shoots of Pushkin's future realism. The poem was a huge success. It was in great demand. Zhukovsky presented Pushkin with his portrait with the following inscription "To my victorious pupil from his defeated teacher, on that most solemn day when he finished his poem 'Ruslan and Ludmila ' "

The critics, on the other hand, the advocates of obsolete bookish theories about art, flew into a rage. The reviewer of the magazine *Vestnik Evrope*, quoting the scene of Ruslan with the head, exclaimed. "But spare me such detailed descriptions and permit me to ask. Imagine a bewhiskered fellow dressed in a drab peasant greatcoat and bast sandals intruding into the club of the Moscow nobility and shrieking at the top of his voice 'Howdy, fellows!' Is it possible that they would look with admiration upon such a wag?" (Annenkov)

All this comment about Pushkin's new poem in St Petersburg went on in the poet's absence. His revolutionary poems and epigrams had finally become known to the government. Misfortune descended upon the poet.

Alexander I decided to banish Pushkin to Siberia or to the Solovetsky Islands. Pushkin was summoned to appear before the St Petersburg military Governor-General, Miloradovich. In his presence Miloradovich ordered the chief of police to go to Pushkin's apartment and search it. When the poet heard this order for a search he declared that the manuscripts of all the forbidden poems had been burned, demanded pen and paper, and himself wrote down from memory everything that was of interest to Miloradovich. By this brave act, which won him the favour of Miloradovich, but chiefly through the pleading of his influential friends Karamzin and Zhukovsky, his punishment was lightened. He was banished to the South under the surveillance of General Inzov, the chief administrator for the settlement of colonists in the Southern Region, whose residence was at Ekaterinoslav (now Dnepropetrovsk). On May 6, 1820, Pushkin left St Petersburg for his Southern exile.

PUSHKIN'S EXILE IN THE SOUTH

Immediately upon his arrival at Ekaterinoslav, Pushkin caught a cold while bathing in the Dnieper and took sick with a fever. He lay entirely alone on a (hard bench in a ramshackle shanty, without any aid or attendance. The family of General Rayevsky, passing through Ekaterinoslav on their way from St. Petersburg to the Caucasus, found the poet in this condition.

General Rayevsky was one of the heroes of the war of 1812. His elder son Alexander had had a marked influence on Pushkin. Some of the traits of his character were depicted by Pushkin in his poem "Demon." Pushkin was also on friendly terms with the general's younger son, Nicholas, the Decembrist, and with his daughters. The Rayevskys obtained permission from Pushkin's "guardian," General Inzov, to take the poet along with them. Pushkin recovered during the journey. Together with the Rayevskys he took treatment at the Caucasian mineral springs, where he stayed for two months. Those places were still wild at the time, scarcely touched by human hands.

From the Caucasus Pushkin went with the Rayevskys to the Crimea. They stopped at Gurzuf, where Pushkin stayed for three weeks. In the Rayevsky family Pushkin found the friendly sympathy and attention of which he had had so little in his own family. His stay in the Crimea remained a bright spot in Pushkin's memory.

In the Crimea, together with Nicholas Rayevsky and his sisters, Pushkin began his acquaintance with the works of the English poet Byron, whose fame rang all over Europe at the time.

While Pushkin was taking treatment and resting in the Caucasus and Crimea, the chancery of General Inzov moved from Ekaterinoslav to Kishinev, the capital of Bessarabia, which had recently been annexed to Russia. Pushkin left for Kishinev in September. Kishinev was an interesting city with a cosmopolitan population consisting of Moldavians, Greeks, Turks, Jews and Russians.

General Inzov, despite his office, was a kind, patriarchal man. He did not trouble Pushkin with any work, granted him frequent leaves of absence and did not hamper him in his favourite occupation, literary work. Pushkin led a diversified and stormy life at Kishinev. There were some collisions with the local aristocracy which were smoothed over with Inzov's assistance. Once Pushkin followed a camp of gypsies and wandered with them for a while over Bessarabia.

This varied and tumultuous life in Kishinev did not, however, interrupt Pushkin's studies. As before, he devoted much attention to books.

Living in far-away Kishinev, Pushkin continued to follow with the closest attention European events and! internal politics. Circumstances aided him in this occupation. General Orlov, who was stationed at Kishinev, was a member of the Decembrist Secret Society. He conducted propaganda among the soldiers of the military units under his command. It was in Kishinev that Pushkin made the acquaintance of Colonel Pestel, who visited the city. The intelligent and energetic leader of the Decembrists made a great impression upon the poet. "Pestel has one of the most original minds I ever met," he said of him.

General Inzov often permitted Pushkin to visit Kawienka, the estate of V. H. Davidov, the son of General Rayevsky's mother by her second marriage. Conventions of the active members of the Southern Society of Decembrists took place at Kamenka every year, under the guise of celebrating the birthday of Davidov's mother. During one of these conferences Pushkin was also present at Kamenka. Thus Pushkin's contact with the Decembrists was even strengthened during his exile.

He did not, however, join the Secret Society. The participants of the Decembrist conspiracy concealed from him, for various reasons, the fact that a revolutionary organization existed. They feared that the ardent poet would not be able to be sufficiently secretive. In exile Pushkin lived under police surveillance. Should Pushkin join the Secret Society this would enable the police, in spying upon him, to discover traces of the conspiracy. This also compelled them to keep Pushkin away from their organization. They protected the great poet. They did not want him to be exposed through participation in the conspiracy to the danger of death or imprisonment at hard labor should the uprising be crushed.

Pushkin, however, suspected the existence of the illegal organization of the Decembrists and yearned to join it.

At Kishinev Pushkin met Ypsilanti, a Greek, who was organizing an uprising of his enslaved compatriots against the Turkish yoke. Pushkin was on intimate terms with a Greek woman, Calypso Polychroni, who had emigrated from Turkey into Russia and, as the story goes, had been the mistress of Byron, who died in Greece in the ranks of the fighters for the national independence of Greece. Ypsilanti undertook his march in 1821. Pushkin did more than sympathize with him in this undertaking. There are grounds to suppose that Pushkin planned, following Byron's example, to flee from Kishinev in order to participate personally in the Greek national struggle for liberation against Turkey. During Pushkin's stay in the South a revolutionary storm broke out in a number of European countries—Germany, France and Spain (1820). Tine progressive forces in Spain under the leadership of Riego seized power through a military uprising and compelled the King to submit to the constitution.

proclaimed by them. Even in Russia, an St. Petersburg, there was a mutiny in the Semyonovsky Guards regiment. All these events were discussed fervently by the Decembrists whom Pushkin met often in the South Under the influence of the revolutionary upsurge in Europe and Russia the revolutionary notes in Pushkin's writings reached their highest point. In Kishinev Pushkin wrote his poem "The Dagger," in which he appealed for a violent struggle against the autocracy

In the poems written in Kishinev Pushkin enthusiastically awaited the arrival of a victorious revolution.

"Ye winds, ye gales, plough up the waters,
Break the pernicious barriers down!
Where art thou tempest, freedom's symbol?
Above the captive waters burst!"

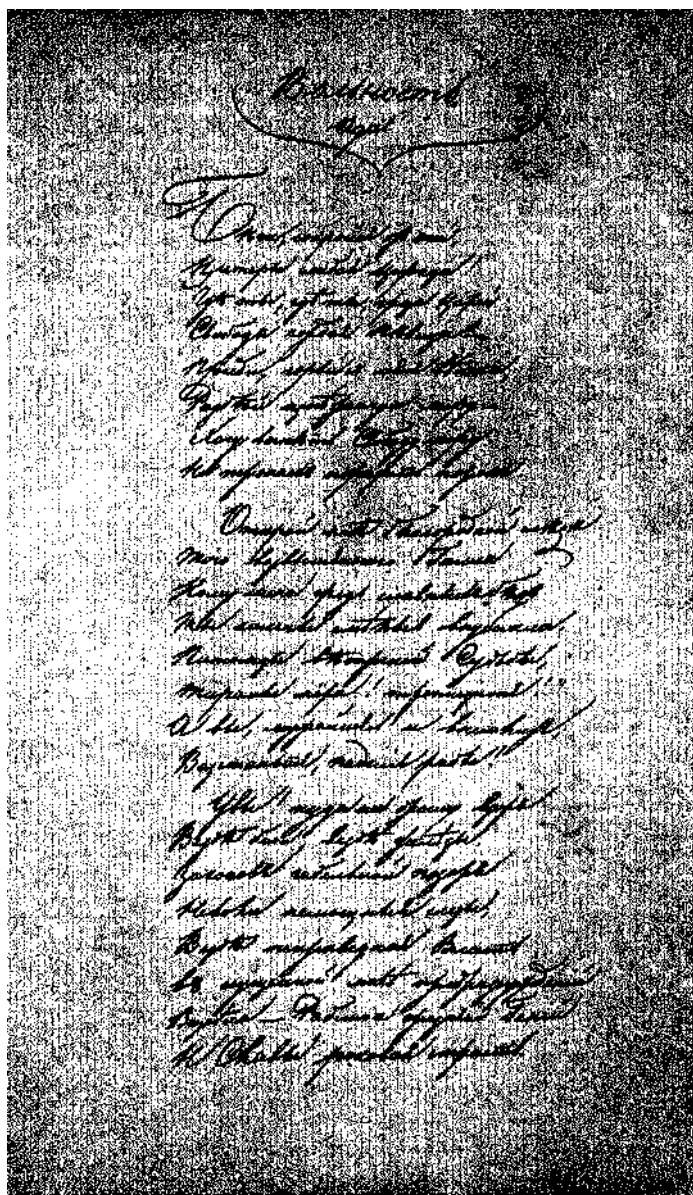
It was not destined that Pushkin's hopes be fulfilled. He experienced acute disappointments during his stay in the South The reactionaries, with the aid of the Holy Alliance and Alexander I, everywhere repulsed the revolutionary attack. The defeat of the revolutionary upsurge of the first half of the 1820's made a great impression on Pushkin He began to come to the conclusion that the masses were not as yet ripe for liberty, that the reaction was much stronger than the revolution

These bitter thoughts found their expression in a number of his poems Thus he wrote:

"Ye tended flocks — ye peaceful peoples!
What need is there to give herds freedom?
They're to be slaughtered or be Shorn
Their lot from one age to another—
A yoke with tinkling bells and whip "

While all these important historical events were unfolding there also occurred some changes in Pushkin's own destiny From Kishinev he moved to Odessa to work under the newly appointed Governor-General of the New Russia Region, Count Vorontzov

Vorontzov was the direct opposite of Inzov. He was a haughty lord who treated his subordinates disdainfully and demanded absolute submission and flattery Pushkin's official position was that of a petty functionary in his chancery. Vorontzov accordingly treated Pushkin as a petty functionary, while Pushkin was conscious of the fact that he was a (great poet, the glory and pride of Russian literature.



From the Ode "Liberty".

(Literary Institute of the U.S.S.R. Academy of Sciences).

From the poem "In Memorial",
(Lenin Public Library)

In reply to Vorontzov's persecution, Pushkin wrote biting and well-pointed epigrams about him. Vorontzov began to demand of St Petersburg that the disagreeable poet be removed from Odessa. Pushkin's difficulties in Odessa were made worse by a chronic lack of money. Feeling the hopelessness of his situation, hating the regime in the country and seeing no prospects of a release from exile, Pushkin decided to flee from Russia, but he did not succeed in carrying out his intention.

At this time a letter of his, in which he denied the existence of God and the immortality of the soul, was intercepted. This letter settled the matter. Alexander I ordered that he be dismissed from government service and exiled to the remote village Mikhailovskoye, to the estate of his parents, where he was to be under the surveillance of both the civil and ecclesiastical authorities.

During his exile in the South, Pushkin worked a great deal. Besides numerous lyrical poems, he wrote the epic poems "The Prisoner of the Caucasus," and "The Fountain of Bakhchisarai," almost completed "The Gypsies," and started his novel in verse, "Eugene Onegin."

The satirical poem "Gavrihada," ridiculing religion and Christianity, and in which Pushkin's materialistic and atheistic world-outlook was eloquently expressed, was also written in the South. The publication of this poem in Russia was forbidden for almost a century—until the Revolution. A fresh current of realism penetrated the Byronic romantic form of Pushkin's Southern poems. This current was to become stronger and finally triumph in his later writings.

PUSHKIN'S EXILE IN MIKHAILOVSKOYE

By order of the government, Pushkin had to travel from Odessa to Mikhailovskoye without stopping anywhere or passing through Moscow. He left Odessa on July 30, 1824, and arrived at Mikhailovskoye on August 9. There he found his parents, who were spending the summer at their estate.

The surveillance over Pushkin on the part of the church authorities was undertaken by the father-superior of the adjoining Svyatogorsk monastery. The civil authorities, in accordance with the suggestion of the Governor of the Pskov Province, were represented by Pushkin's own father. This brought about a series of conflicts between father and son. Their relations became so strained that Pushkin considered asking the authorities to substitute imprisonment in some fortress for exile at his father's estate. Luckily his father and the family soon left Mikhailovskoye and the surveillance over Pushkin was entrusted to another landlord.

Pushkin led a solitary life at Mikhailovskoye. He could not keep up acquaintance with the neighbouring nobles, except for the family of the landowner Osipova, to whom he remained friendly throughout his life.

At Mikhailovskoye Pushkin also thought of fleeing abroad. He even started some correspondence with his friends on the subject, but here, as in Kishinev, he did not succeed in executing his plan.

Delvig and Pushchin did not forget the poet, and came to see him in his place of exile despite the fact that doing so might arouse the government's suspicions. The visits of his friends gave Pushkin much joy. Pushchin described his meeting with Pushkin in his memoirs: "The horses tore along among the snowdrifts. We galloped up hill again along a winding path. There was a sudden sharp turn and we shot through half-closed gates, our bells jingling. It was more than we could do to stop the horses in front of the porch. They carried us past the porch and stopped in a snow bank in the yard. I looked around and saw Pushkin standing on the porch barefoot, with only a shirt on, with uplifted hands. I jumped out of the sleigh, threw my arms around him and dragged him indoors. It was terribly cold outside, but there are moments when (a man does not catch cold). We looked at one another and kissed silently. He forgot the need to cover his nakedness and I did not stop to think of my frost-covered coat and cap. It was about eight o'clock in the morning. The old woman who came running into the room found us embracing in the same condition—as at the moment we entered the room—one half-naked, the other all covered with snow. At last our tears began to flow and we came to ourselves. I felt ashamed before this woman, but she understood everything. I do not know whom she took me for, but she began to embrace me without asking any questions. I understood immediately that this was his nurse, and almost choked her in my embrace."

At Mikhailovskoye Pushkin manifested great interest in the folklore and the mode of life of the common people. As in his childhood, he listened to his nurse's tales with delight and wrote down folk songs. On holidays Pushkin sometimes disguised himself as a peasant (to the great astonishment and horror of the neighbouring landlords) and visited fairs and shrines frequented by pilgrims, where he conversed with the common people and peasants, lending an attentive ear to their dialect, inquiring about their life.

Pushkin continually complained from Mikhailovskoye about the tediousness of life there, but this boredom did not keep him from working. On the contrary, in work he found an escape from the despondency which was overcomming him. Pushkin ordered many books, followed attentively all the literary disputes in the capital, reflected upon them in letters to his friends, and studied history, both Russian and Western European.

At Mikhailovskoye Pushkin finished "The Gypsies," wrote four more chapters of "Eugene Onegin" (two had been written in Odessa), wrote the historic tragedy "Boris Godunov" and the farcical poem "Count Nulin."

In telling how he wrote "Boos Godunov," Pushkin states "The study of Shakespeare, Karamzin and our ancient chroniclers gave me the idea of arranging in dramatic form one of the most dramatic epochs of recent history. Unperplexed by any other influence, I imitated Shakespeare in his, broad and free rendition of characters, his careless and simple composition of types I (followed Karamzin in the clear unfolding of events In the Chronicles I tried to surmise the trend of thoughts and the language of those days Wonderful sources! I don't know whether I succeeded in making the best use of them At least my labors were ardent and conscientious I confess sincerely that the failure of my drama would grieve me, because I am firmly convinced that the popular rules of the Shakespearean drama, not the court usage of Racine's tragedy, are suitable for our stage, and that any unsuccessful experiment may retard the reformation of our stage "

A painstaking study of history and a desire to keep close to the truth of the past life directed Pushkin's pen when he wrote "Boris Godunov " But at the same time he expected to find in the bloody experience of the past instructive lessons for the present The theme of "Boris Godunov" is the theme of the people and government and the idea which the poet wanted to express in this tragedy is the idea that a government is strong only through the support of public and popular opinion

On December 14, 1825, the Decembrist uprising was crushed in St Petersburg Emperor Nicholas I ascended the throne

At the very first news of the uprising Pushkin had gotten ready to start without permission for St Petersburg, but changed his mind The brutal punishment of the Decembrists by Nicholas I impressed (him very painfully "Hanged is hanged," he wrote, "but hard labor for one hundred and twenty friends, brothers, comrades—that is terrible" Still Pushkin hoped that the new tsar would permit him, as a man who had not participated in the conspiracy and uprising, to return to St Petersburg He wrote to his friends asking them to plead with the tsar to free him from exile He also wrote directly to the tsar But Nicholas had not as yet decided as to what was to be done with Pushkin. Pushkin's name, it was, true, was not mentioned in the list of conspirators, but Pushkin's poems and epigrams had been found in the papers of almost all the arrested Decembrists. It became clear to the government that Pushkin's poetry had played an enormous agitational role in the Decembrist movement. In order to settle the question about Pushkin, the government sent the secret agent

Boshnyak to the Pskov province, where Pushkin lived, for the purpose of investigating his behaviour, with the right (to arrest (him should the information gathered be unfavorable to the poet To his great sorrow Boshnyak did not find any proof of a conspiracy or a peasant revolt being prepared by Pushkin Nicholas decided not to prosecute him in connection with the Decembrist case. He decided to apply different tactics He ordered the poet to *he* brought to him at Moscow where he was at the time for the coronation ceremony, for a personal interview In September 1826, mne months after December 14, Pushkin was (brought urgently to Moscow, to the tsar

PUSHKIN AND NICHOLAS 1

In Moscow Pushkin was taken immediately to the emperor, without even a chance to shave or wash up after his journey The tsar ihad decided to make an attempt to tame Pushkin and transform him into a court poet who would glorify the official policies in laudatory hymns. The government's intentions were clearly expressed in one of the letters from the Chief of the Gendarmes Corps, Benkendorf, the man closest to the tsar, to his sovereign "Pushkin is rather a scape-grace; still, should we succeed in directing his pen and conversation, it would be of direct advantage."

The tsar met Pushkin with hypocritical benevolence At first Pushkin did not grasp the tsar's designs, and looked upon this meeting with him as a meeting for negotiations Pushkin did not intend to renounce his ideals at all, though he soberly took into consideration the changes in the political situation after the defeat of the Decembrists The tsar asked Pushkin what he would have done had he been present in St Petersburg on December 14 Pushkin answered without any hesitation that he would have joined the rebels Here is what one of his contemporaries, Count Korf, wrote about the meeting of the poet with the tsar "Once at a small dinner gathering at the tsar's table, where I was present, the conversation turned to Pushkin 'I saw Pushkin for the first time,' said the tsar, 'after my coronation, when he was brought to me in Moscow from his place of detention "What would you have done had you been present in St Petersburg. on December 14?" I asked him among other things "I would have joined the ranks of the rebels," he answered To my question whether his viewpoint had changed and whether he would give me his word of honour to think and act differently should I let him go free, he gave me a lot of compliments about December 14, but wavered about giving a direct

answer and only after a prolonged silence extended his hand and promised to change!' "

Pushkin gave the promises demanded by the tsar very unwillingly, and only in the hope that the cruelty shown by the tsar during the crushing of the Decembrists uprising would prove to be only an episode and not a system. The poet found out, however, in the very near future, that he had erred in his calculations.

The tsar announced to Pushkin that he personally would take upon himself the censorship of his works. This decision was at first understood by the poet and the surrounding people as an act of imperial grace, as a riddance from the captious objections of the ordinary censorship. Later on, as we shall see, this "grace" turned out to be heavy fetters constraining every step of the poet in print. In order to enjoy even those minimum rights which the lot of the ordinary Russian writers, Pushkin was compelled at times to publish his works under an assumed name or anonymously.

Moscow society met the poet upon his return (from exile with great attention and sympathy). But the tsar continued to distrust Pushkin, in spite of the Hatter's promise to conduct himself loyally towards the government. In order to test Pushkin, Nicholas commissioned him to write a memorandum on public education. Pushkin wrote the memorandum in evasive terms, so as to say nothing that might irritate Nicholas, yet nothing that would be contrary to his own views. Pushkin's memorandum did not find favour with the tsar. Pushkin stood for education, while the tsar saw education an enemy of absolutism, and considered the chief virtue of a loyal subject to be servile, unreasoning subordination. The tsar's answer was transmitted to Pushkin through Benkendorf. It was to the following effect: "The principle accepted by you, that education and genius serve as the only foundation of perfection is a principle dangerous for general tranquility. It led you yourself to the edge of an abyss and threw into the abyss a number of young people. Morality, diligent service and zeal are to be preferred to inexperienced, immoral and useless education. These are the principles upon which well-directed up-bringing should be based."

Pushkin supposed, taking into account his fame and public influence, that he would be able to influence the tsar in the spirit of enlightenment. In his poem "Stanzas" he drew a parallel between Nicholas I and Peter the Great, pointing at Peter as a standard to be followed by the executioner of the Decembrists.

Be proud, then, of this family likeness,
Be like your grandsire in every sense

Like him, unwearying and firm,
Like him, unmindful of offense.¹

The plea to be "unmindful of offense," to bear no malice was a plea for forgiveness for the Decembrists. Even after the defeat of the Decembrists Pushkin continued to esteem highly their ideals.

The lofty dreams of your noble mind,
Your grief and toil are not in vain,

he wrote the same year in which he wrote the "Stanzas," addressing the exiled revolutionary noblemen.

Quite soon (Pushkin learned through experience the true meaning of the tsar's "grace." An expression of sympathy to the Decembrists and criticism of the punishment to which they had been subjected by Nicholas was suspected—not without cause—in his poem "Andre Chenier," about the French poet executed during the Revolution. Pushkin was examined and cross-examined, dragged through all the stages of inquiry, threatened, and finally (though not subjected to any punishment) put under secret police surveillance.

As a matter of fact, Pushkin had no right, even after his return from exile, to travel from one place to another without Benkendorff's permission. He was reprimanded for reading ~~his~~ drama "Boris Godunov" to a group of friends and acquaintances before it had been published. He was made to sign a written promise not to read his new works to anybody before they had passed the censorship. The manuscript of "Boris Godunov" had to be delivered to the tsar, who wrote an ignorant opinion suggesting that the drama be changed into a novel. As a result of this "opinion" the publication of "Boris Godunov" was practically prohibited for a number of years.

After the establishment of police surveillance over Pushkin, his every step was followed by reports such as the following: "Secret. I have the honour to report that the well-known poet, retired government official of the X class, Alexander Pushkin, has arrived at Moscow and stopped in the Tverskaya Precinct, first ward, in the house of Ober, Hotel Anglia, and that secret surveillance over him has been established" (Report of Chief of Police Miller to the Superintendent of Police of the city of Moscow, September 20, 1820). Pushkin was surrounded by detectives and spies who followed his every step. His letters were read by government functionaries.

At this time new troubles befell Pushkin. A copy of his poem "Gavri-

¹ Trans by E. S. Simmons

liada" was delivered to the government. This was no laughing matter. the usual punishment for atheistic works was Siberia and hard labour.

Pushkin at first denied that he was the author; then he wrote a personal letter to the tsar. The contents of this letter are not known, but it is probable that he confessed to the commission of this "crime". Again he was not punished, but had to face new reprimands, warnings and demands.

In Moscow Pushkin became acquainted with Natalia Nikolayevna Goncharova, who subsequently became his wife. He proposed to her in 1829, but was refused. Upset by his unsettled (public and political situation and distressed by his personal failures, Pushkin undertook a journey to the Transcaucasian army front where Russia was then at war with Turkey. Another reason for his going to the Caucasus was that he wanted to meet his old comrades who had been exiled there for their participation in the Decembrist conspiracy. This journey, undertaken without applying for permission, provoked the further displeasure of the tsar and a sharp reprimand from Benkendorf, the Chief of the Gendarmerie Corps, who wrote the following letter to Pushkin:

"The Sovereign Emperor, having learned from public announcements that you, dear Sir, have traveled to the Transcaucasus and visited Erzerum, has condescended to order that I inquire of you by whose permission you undertook this journey. I on the other hand beg you humbly to inform me for what reason you failed to keep your word of honour and departed for the Transcaucasian countries without informing me beforehand of your intention to make this journey."

Pushkin petitioned for permission to go to Europe, or, should this be prohibited, then at least to China. He was refused again in an insulting manner. The tsar was afraid to let Pushkin go abroad, and wanted to retaliate (for Pushkin's disobedience in making this journey to Erzerum).

Persecution by the tsar and Benkendorf led the government-controlled press to make attacks on Pushkin as a writer.

In 1830 there began to appear "The Literary Gazette," a newspaper edited by Pushkin's friend, the poet Delvig. Pushkin participated actively in this newspaper. In the beginning he edited the paper directly, as Delvig was away from St. Petersburg.

The appearance of a (new newspaper, even a literary one, worried Bulgarii, the publisher of the only political newspaper, *Severnaya Pchela* (The Northern Bee). Bulgarii was one of Benkendorf's spies. Knowing the attitude of the tsar towards Pushkin, Bulgarii let himself go to the limit. When the seventh chapter of "Eugene Onegin" was published he gave it the following review: "Not a single thought in this watery seventh chapter! Not a single sentiment, not a single picture worthy of looking at! A complete

failure! And so our hopes have disappeared! Onegin has reappeared in the wilderness of our poetry pallid, weak .. One's heart aches to see such a colorless picture!" Bulgarm also engaged in direct denunciations against Pushkin and) his closest friends, both in print and in letters addressed directly to Benkendorf at the "Third Department" (Secret Police)

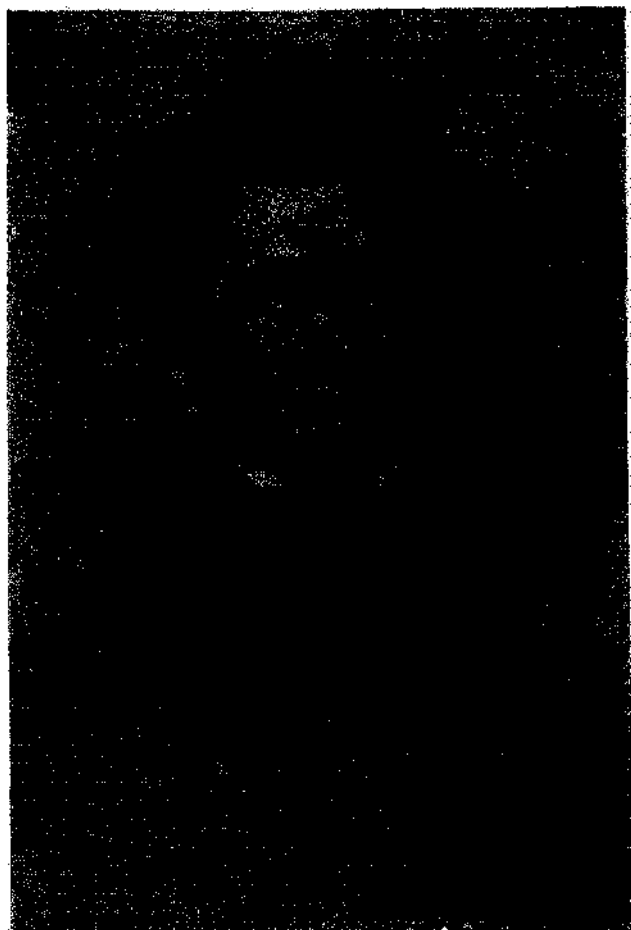
The tsar's "grace" turned out rather sadly for Pushkin He found himself in the position of a captive He could not even marry without the permission of (the tsar and the gendarmes In the spring of 1830 his proposal was accepted by Natalia Goncharova and her family, but her mother was afraid to give her daughter in marriage to a man known to be in disfavour with the tsar Pushkin was compelled to turn to the tsar through Benkendorf for an approval of his marriage In reply he received a perfectly Jesuitical document, in which approval of the poet's intention to marry was combined with caustic reproaches, overbearing warnings, impertinent reproof and direct lies

"His Majesty," Wrote Benkendorf to Pushkin, "in his entirely paternal solicitude toward you, kind Sir, has deigned to entrust me, General Benkendorf, not as the chief of the gendarmerie corps, but as a man in whom it pleases him to confide, with the duty of looking after you and guiding you with my advice No police organs have ever received any orders to spy on you " The tsar and his gendarmes lied, for Pushkin lived under direct police surveillance

Nevertheless, Pushkin's genius continued to grow and ripen During this period he kept working on "Eugene Onegin" and wrote the poem "Poltava," the unfinished novel in prose "The Negro of Peter the Great" and a great number of lyrical poems

THE AUTUMN OF 1830, AT BOLDINO

In the spring of 1830, Pushkin's proposal was accepted by Natalia Nikolayevna Goncharova To provide for the material needs of the poet, who was about to start family life, his father allotted to him a part of his estates at Boldmo, in the Nizhni-Novgorod province On September 1, Pushkin left for Boldmo to arrange the transfer of part of the estate to himself and find out what income might be expected from it Pushkin expected to stop at Boldino for a very short time, settle matters there, and then return to Moscow It turned out, (however, that he was compelled to stay at Boldino all through the autumn, for almost three months, because of a cholera epidemic that broke out in the Volga Region Quarantines were established on all roads leading to Moscow, and free entry into



Pushkin,
V. Maltz. Etching, 1899



Pushkin's wife, N. N. (Gancharova-pushkina.
Water Color. V. (G a n , 1814

Moscow was prohibited Pushkin very quickly ascertained the state of his financial affairs. The estate had been ruined, and the peasants inhabiting it were poor, one could not count on any income from it. The main source of a nobleman's subsistence — income from his land and peasant serfs — did not exist for Pushkin. His finances now depended entirely upon his profession, upon the remuneration for his literary works.

Pushkin strove to get away from Boldino and go to his fiancée in Moscow. In addition he was troubled by rumours that reached Boldino about his engagement being broken.

During his stay at Boldino Pushkin witnessed peasant disturbances.

Three times Pushkin left Boldino and three times he was compelled to return. He made use of his forced stay at Boldino for literary work. Never had Pushkin written so many splendid works of art in so short a time. He wrote at Boldino the last two chapters of "Eugene Onegin" and also another chapter in which he depicted Onegin's participation in the Decembrist conspiracy. He destroyed this chapter immediately, fearing grievous consequences. He wrote there his poetical novelette "The Little House in Kolomna," his dramatic works "The Covetous Knight," "Mozart and Salieri," "Feast During the Plague," "Don Juan," a series of prosaic stories under the common title "Tales of Belkin," "History of the Village Goryukhino," a great number of lyric poems and critical literary articles. All of this in less than three months.

"Eugene Onegin," which he finished at Boldino, grew into a novel in which Pushkin depicted the life of contemporary Russian society. "In Onegin," wrote Behnsky, "we see a poetical reproduction of Russian society taken at one of the most interesting moments of its development. 'Onegin' may be called an encyclopaedia of Russian life and a national work in the highest degree."

Pushkin revealed in his dramatic works a remarkable ability to feel deeply and to understand the life and spirit of other nations. This peculiarity of Pushkin's genius had its roots, as Behnsky correctly remarked, in the Russian national character, one of the features of which is the absence of national exceptionalism, an interest in the progressive achievements of other nations, a faculty of quickly assimilating the international wealth of science, art and politics.

In "Tales of Belkin" Pushkin introduces as heroes people whom the aristocratic literature of the preceding period considered as unworthy of portraying: an artisan coffin maker, a petty government employee, a station master, etc. In his story "The Station-master" we see a manifestation of that sympathetic attitude toward the unfortunate, degraded and humiliated which was manifested in Gogol's "The Greatcoat," in "Anton, the Wretch-

ed" by Grigorovich, in the early works of Dostoyevsky, in Nekrasov, and which represents such a splendid trait of Russian realistic literature

In "History of the Village Goryukhino" Pushkin gave us a picture of serfdom, of the inhuman management of the landlords, of the ruination and pauperization of the peasant serfs "May 4 Snow Trishka flogged for being pert" — an excerpt from the diary of one of the owners of the village of Goryukhino, quoted by Pushkin "May 6 The brown cow died Senka flogged for being drunk May 8 Clear weather May 9 Rain and snow Trishka flogged for being drunk according to the weather" — Pushkin pondered much at Boldino over the attitude of the landlords towards the peasants He saw that serfdom, which made the peasant the object of inhuman exploitation and torture, at the same time ruined the landlords He understood the real feelings of peasant serfs toward the noble landowners Pushkin made use of his Boldino observations during the subsequent stage of his literary work, when he began to study intensely the subject of peasant uprisings.

AFTER MARRIAGE

Towards the winter of 1830 Pushkin at last broke away from Boldino His marriage to Natalia Goncharova took place on February 18, 1831 "I am married, I am happy," he wrote to (his friend Pletnyov "My only wish is that nothing in my life may change—I can't expect anything better. This condition is so new to me that it seems I am regenerated "

After marriage Pushkin settled down in Moscow However, trouble with his mother-in-law—a quarrelsome, almost demented woman who incited Natalia Nikolayevna against her husband—compelled Pushkin to change his place of residence He moved to St Petersburg and at first took up quarters at Tsarskoye Selo Just as before his marriage, a report on the establishment of secret police surveillance followed him Nicholas I again enlisted him in the government staff Pushkin became a functionary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as he had been after his graduation from the Lycee As before, Pushkin had nothing to do with chancery matters The tsar permitted him to occupy himself with the writing of a history of Peter the Great, as his official business This duty coincided with Pushkin's desires He had been interested in history for a long time and now he had the chance to work in the State Archives

However, the "tsar's kindness" was of a hypocritical character The tsar had seen Natalia Goncharova during his visits to Moscow He wanted her to frequent the imperial court For this purpose it was necessary,

according to the usages and rules of that time, that the husband occupy an official position Thus the tsar's "grace" in reinstating Pushkin on the government staff is explained. The poet's wife did not understand her husband's intellectual interests She was young and pretty, she liked hectic social life and social success Social life required enormous expenditures, which could be covered neither by Pushkin's literally earnings nor, still less by the income from the ruined and mortgaged property allotted to him by his father

In spite of his vivacious and passionate character, Pushkin was always distinguished by an unusual love for work "Work," wrote P Vyazemsky, "was his sanctuary, the font in which his sores were cured, his gloom turned into cheerfulness, his weakened strength restored. When he felt a flight of inspiration and plunged into his work, he was calmed, he grew more manly, he was reborn "

Pushkin longed for assiduous work, but the conditions of his new life in St Petersburg did not permit him to concentrate The life there disturbed and distracted him, prevented him from giving himself up wholly to scientific and creative work "My life in St Petersburg is neither one thing nor the other," he wrote in one of his letters of that period "I revolve in society, my wife is greatly in vogue All this requires money. I can get money through work, and work requires solitude "

"St Petersburg does not suit me in any respect," he wrote in another letter "I can adjust neither my tastes nor my means to it But I shall have to stand it for two or three years "

Pushkin's hopes were not to be realized The tsar and St Petersburg society did not permit him to leave St Petersburg, kept him against his will in the unhealthful, inimical atmosphere of the capital Still Pushkin as of old followed eagerly the development of political events, and continued his scientific and literary work

In 1830, after the July revolution in France, the Polish revolt began The war with the Poles, who were fighting for their independence, was protracted Warsaw was taken only in August 1831 Pushkin responded to the Polish events with patriotic poems "To the Calumniators of Russia" and "The Anniversary of the Borodino Battle "

During these years the problem of the relations between the peasant serfs and the landlords and the problem of a peasant revolution in Russia became matters of essential importance for Pushkin He witnessed the cholera uprisings in 1830, and in 1831, a number of uprisings occurred in the Arakcheyev military settlements in the Novgorod province The Novgorod revolts were especially remarkable because of the union between the revolting soldiers and the revolting peasants Pushkin's thoughts turned from these local and isolated peasant revolts of 1830-1831 to the revolt of

Pugachov half a century earlier (1773—1775), which had shaken the tsar's empire to its very foundations. He asked for permission to study the files of the Government Record Office about the Pugachov movement, under the pretext that he was preparing to write the story of Suvorov, who had participated in the crushing of the revolt. Pushkin could not say frankly that he was interested in Pugachov, because this would have aroused suspicions about his political reliability.

Pushkin was very much interested in the great peasant movement in Russia at the end of the 18th century. For the purpose of making a thorough study of it he obtained a leave of absence for a journey through the provinces which had been affected by the Pugachov revolt. He left at the end of the summer for Kazan, Orenburg and Uialsk, and visited the Cossack village of Berdi, where Pugachov's headquarters had been located. Pushkin found living eye-witnesses of the revolt, and open sympathy towards it. "The Ural Cossacks (especially the old men)," noted Pushkin, "are to this day attached to the memory of Pugachov. 'It would be a sin to complain about him,' an 80 year-old Cossack woman told me, 'he did not do any harm to us.' Tell me," I said to D. Pyanov, "how did Pugachov bless your marriage?" "He may be Pugachov to you," answered the old man angrily, "to me he was the great tsar Peter Feodorovich!"

Pushkin showed remarkable sagacity while investigating the causes of the Pugachov revolt. He came as near as was possible, considering the scientific level of his time, to revealing the class origin of the revolt. "All the common people were for Pugachov," he wrote. "Only the nobility sided openly with the government. Pugachov and his supporters tried at first to win over the nobles, but their interests were too contrary."

On his way back from the region of the Pugachov revolt, Pushkin stopped again at Boldino for the autumn season. Here he wrote, among other things, an historical work about the Pugachov revolt, entitled "A History of Pugachov." When Pushkin presented this work to the tsar's censorship, the latter ordered him to change the title from "A History of Pugachov" to "History of the Pugachov Rebellion." This difference in titles manifested the difference between the attitudes of Pushkin and the tsar towards the leader of the peasant revolution of the 18th century.

The theme of the peasant movement found its reflection also in the novel "Dubrovsky." Troyekurov, a wealthy, wilful and overbearing nobleman, dishonestly gained possession of the estate of his neighbour Dubrovsky, a petty landowner. Dubrovsky's peasant serfs did not want to be transferred to Troyekurov's ownership, as he was noted for his inhuman cruelty. They rose up under the leadership of Vladimir Dubrovsky, who could not find justice against the illustrious magnate. With remarkable truthfulness Pushkin depicted the revolting peasants, Dubrovsky's serf,

the peasant blacksmith Arkhip, locks the government clerks in a burning house, but risks his life to save a cat from the roof of the blazing building

The novel "Dubrovsky" is remarkable in yet another respect, it evidences Pushkin's interest in the individual nobles who sided with the peasants revolting against their masters.

During the first few years after his marriage Pushkin also wrote the poem "The Bronze Horseman" and the story "The Queen of Spades," two of his most talented works. The main idea of "The Bronze Horseman" is the collision between the awakened individual demanding his right to happiness, independence and liberty, and historic necessity as represented by the autocracy.

The artistic perfection of "The Bronze Horseman" reaches the highest summits of art. "Here one does not know what to marvel at most: the vast grace of the description, or its almost prosaic simplicity, both taken together attain the heights of poetry" (Behnsky).

The poem was not passed for publication by the tsar. He considered impermissible the description of Yevgeni's revolt and threats in regard to the Bronze Horseman, Peter the Great, the tsar. He could not reconcile himself to the portrayal of the autocracy as a portentous inhuman force. And so this poem remained unpublished during Pushkin's lifetime. After his death it was published with distorting changes made by Zhukovsky in order to meet the requirements of the tsar's censorship.

The chief hero of Pushkin's "The Queen of Spades" is Hermann, an army engineer.

Hermann is a man of a cool, calculating intellect and strong passions. "He has the profile of Napoleon and the soul of Mephistopheles," but all of his exceptional faculties are concentrated on one thought—on gaining wealth, on money. Hermann is a tragic figure. He becomes insane in the end, his lust for money manifests itself as a terrific, fatal, destructive force.

Pushkin's attitude towards the rule of money and the early manifestations of capitalism in Russia was negative.

Pushkin's interest in the common people and their life was heightened during this period. It was at this time that he wrote the tales "The Tale of the Fisherman and the Little Fish," "The Golden Cockerel," "The Dead Princess," and others, and translated from the French Merimee's "Song of the Western Slavs."

The tsar treated Pushkin with ever greater mistrust and irritation

The beauty of the poet's wife was in full bloom The tsar wanted her to be present not only at grand social affairs but also at the more intimate evening parties at court, which usually took place at the Anichkov Palace.

On New Year's Eve of 1834 the tsar "conferred" upon the poet the rank of gentleman-in-waiting Nicholas was aiming to attain two things by this "act of grace " He placed Pushkin in a humiliating position, for the rank of gentleman-in-waiting was usually given to aristocratic youths, while Pushkin was 35 years old, was known throughout the country, and was bound to provoke laughter among the court menials in this role On the other hand, her (husband's rank gave Natalia Nikolayevna free access to the tsar's court

This appointment infuriated Pushkin Only with difficulty did his friends succeed in preventing him from running to court and telling the tsar what he thought of him

A series of degrading humiliations began The great poet knew little and did not care to know anything about the fine points of court etiquette He would go to an evening party at the Anichkov Palace in uniform and find everybody in civilian dress He would go home to change his attire, but instead of returning to the palace would go to visit some friend The tsar would order that his displeasure be communicated to Pushkin Pushkin would fail to appear at some court ceremony under the pretext of illness The tsar would inquire every time about the reason for his absence, would even be on the verge of ordering a physician to call on him to find out whether he was really ill

The persecution of the government was becoming ever more insufferable The police again began to intercept Pushkin's letters In one of his letters to his wife, who was spending the spring and summer in the Kaluga province, Pushkin spoke disapprovingly about his court rank, as frankly as in his diary references to the matter This letter was delivered to the tsar, who became furious Zhukovsky had difficulty in arranging matters Pushkin remarked about this episode in his diary "The tsar was displeased by the fact that I spoke about my rank of gentleman-in-waiting without affection and gratitude, but while I may be his subject or even slave, I shall never be a flunkey or a jester even for the king in heaven But how thoroughly immoral are the usages of our government! The police open letters from husband to wife and bring them to the tsar to read, and the tsar is not ashamed to admit it and to permit the development of an intrigue worthy of Vidok and Bulgarin"

In this entry Pushkin repeats the words of another Russian of genius who rose from the lowest strata of the nation Lomonosov, who, having suffered much from the autocracy and aristocracy, once said "I refuse to be a fool not only at the table of illustrious aristocrats or earthly potentates but even before god himself, who gave me my intellect—unless he takes it away from me "

Pushkin lost the liberty of corresponding even with his wife The consciousness of the fact that his intimate letters would fall into strange, dirty hands drove away every desire to write "I did not write to you," he explained to his wife, "because the swinishness of the postal authorities so disinclined me to write that I could not make myself take a pen in my hand The thought that somebody is eavesdropping on us infuriates me *A la lettre* I spend most of my time at home at the club I behave pretty decently, the only thing that is wrong is that my bile disturbs me But you couldn't prevent biliousness here " "It is boresome to live without you and not to dare to write to you of whatever comes to my heart "

At the end of June 1834 Pushkin handed in an application for retirement The tsar became infuriated Under the threat of disgrace and persecution Pushkin was compelled through the mediation of Zhukovsky to take his application back A year later Pushkin asked the tsar for a protracted leave of three or four years, to be spent at his village, where he could work undisturbed The tsar gave a Jesuitical reply, not a straight refusal, but a hypocritical phrase offering Pushkin the choice between residing in St Petersburg or a dismissal with all its consequences

The poet was kept tied up as before He was not permitted to leave St Petersburg

The attitude of the tsar and Benkendorf served as a signal for a campaign of persecution The censor's obstruction of Pushkin's work, bad as it had been, became still worse Pushkin's writings went through a censorship by the tsar and Benkendorf In spite of this fact, Uvarov, the Minister of Public Education, an ardent executor of the reactionary policies of Nicholas, demanded that everything written by Pushkin undergo an additional fault-finding examination by the expert professional censors

The critics and the press, subordinated to the government, also intensified their attacks upon Pushkin, turning from malicious and unjust criticism of his works to direct denunciations

In addition to all his troubles Pushkin was in acute financial difficulties The social life demanded by his court rank, by the tsar and by his wife was beyond his means Pushkin had four children He had also to support two of his wife's sisters, his brother, and contributed toward the support of his parents Society life in St Petersburg prevented him from writing Towards the time when he was refused a leave, his indebtedness

amounted to 60,000 rubles, of which he owed 20,000 to the tsar (1 e to the State Treasury, but the tsar did not differentiate between his own money and the State's) for printing "The History of the Pugachov Rebellion " Driven by extreme need, he applied for an advance of 30,000 rubles on account of his salary. Thus, even financially, the poet was in bondage to the tsar.

It is not surprising that under these circumstances of continual persecution, nagging, financial worries, annoyances, trepidation and the absence of any sympathy or understanding Pushkin could not write. He usually worked best in the autumn His craving for work drove him in the fall of 1836 to Mikhailovskoye, but neither the beloved season nor his native village were of any help. For him there was no peace of mind, which is the main requirement for creative work. "A whole week had passed since I left you, but it is of no use," wrote Pushkin to his wife from Mikhailovskoye "I have not begun to write as yet, and do not know when I shall begin " And ten days later he again wrote to his wife "Imagine—I have not written a line as yet, and all because I am not at ease "

Pushkin was anguished, defenceless and lonely He had no one to turn to, no one to lean upon His few friends, like Zhukovsky, for instance, meant to help the poet by urging him to complete submission,, internal as well as external, to the tsar, the government and society But Pushkin could not and would not submit to the persecutors of his genius He was hated for his independence, for his self respect, love of liberty, for the progressive character of his writings, for his contempt of high society and of servility "It was the devil's trick to let me be born with a soul and talent in Russia!" wrote Pushkin in one of his letters to his wife

In January of 1834 a French emigre, Baron D'Anthes, was admitted as an officer into the Russian Imperial Guards D'Anthes was an extreme reactionary He had been compelled to leave France after the revolution of 1830 This unprincipled adventurer found an influential patron in the Dutch Ambassador in St. Petersburg, Heckeren, with whom he had unnatural sexual relations. Heckeren actually adopted him, and gave him his name D'Anthes now called himself Baron D'Anthe-Heckeren He was handsome and cheeky, and was very successful in St. Petersburg high society He noticed the beauty of Pushkin's wife and the universal attention paid to her, and began to pursue her with importunate advances Society, which hated the poet, began spreading gossip that became fatal to Pushkin Later, after Pushkin's death, the tsar wrote to his brother: "It should have been expected long ago that their embarrassing situation would end in a duel" Hence, Nicholas foresaw the possibility of a duel long before the fateful day, and took no measures for preventing it One of Pushkin's few well-wishers, Count Adlerberg, made an attempt to save Pushkin D'Anthes



Title page of "Dramatic Scenes". 1839

happened to express a desire to go to the Caucasus to fight against the mountaineers Count Adlerberg went to the tsar's brother, Michael, the Commander of the Guards-Corps, told him of his fears concerning Pushkin, and asked him to send D'Anthes to the Caucasus. But the international adventurer, D'Anthes, was dearer to the court and high society than the great poet. The court and high society hoped that in this conflict they would get rid of Pushkin

A savage campaign against the poet was developing, but Pushkin kept working, in spite of it, to the limit of his ability. In 1835 he was granted permission to publish a magazine, *Sovremennik* ("The Contemporary") Pushkin devoted much time and attention to this magazine and printed his works and notes in it. He rejoiced at every success of Russian literature, encouraged beginners and new writers. Pushkin was one of the first to notice Gogol, and encouraged him. He placed serious problems before the young Gogol and proposed themes for his literary work. "Pushkin made me look seriously upon the matter," writes Gogol in his "Confessions of an Author." "He gave me one of his plots, which he proposed to use for something like a poem and which he said, he would not have given to anybody else. This was the plot of 'Dead Souls' (The idea of 'The Inspector-General' also belonged to him)."

Pushkin was also the first to note the main peculiarity of Gogol's art, which was later characterized by Behnsky as "laughter through tears."

"When I began to read to Pushkin the first chapters of 'Dead Souls' in the old version," recalls Gogol, "Pushkin, who always used to laugh at my reading (he always laughed so willingly), became gradually gloomier and gloomier, and finally he became very gloomy. After the reading was over he said in an anguished voice. 'My God, how sad our Russia is!'"

Pushkin strove to break away from his solitude. He was looking for new people with whom he could work. He appreciated Behnsky and intended to invite him to work on the *Sovremennik*. Death prevented him from carrying out this intention.

During the last period of his life Pushkin published in the *Sovremennik* a long novel, "The Captain's Daughter," which he had written some time before, as a result of his study of the Pugachov movement. Pushkin was working on a drama of the epoch of the downfall of feudalism called "Scenes from the Days of Chivalry," in which he depicted a peasant uprising against the feudal lords. He never finished this drama. His novel "Egyptian Nights" also remained unfinished.

Among the lyrical poems of the last period of Pushkin's literary activity, the poem "The Captain" is outstanding. The Captain about whom this poem was written was Barclay-de-Tolli, who had proposed the correct plan of combat with Napoleon. But Barclay-de-Tolli was not trusted, he

was removed from his post, though the defence against the French invasion was as a matter of fact continued in accordance with his plan. Reflecting upon Barclay-de-Toll's fate, Pushkin thought also about his own fate. There are many autobiographical juxtapositions in this poem. It ends with the following lines

O man, o object race that merits tears and laughter,
Priests of the ephemeral who worship those that prosper!
How often do you see a man come passing by,
Reviled and scolded by the blind and hasty age,
Whose nobleness of mind will prove an inspiration
To poets of another, later, generation!¹

Shortly before his death Pushkin wrote the poem "My Monument "

Not wholly shall I die—but in the lyre my spirit
Shall, incorruptible and bodiless, survive—
And I shall know renown as long as under heaven
One poet yet remains alive²
Russia will know my name, familiar it shall grow
In every living tongue throughout her great domain
To Slav's proud son, to Finn, to Tungus, savage now,
And Kalmyk lovers of the plain

DUEL AND DEATH

The harassing of Pushkin and spreading of slanderous rumors about him continued. On November 4, 1836, Pushkin received by mail an anonymous squib reading as follows: "The Grand Cavaliers, Commanders and Knights of the Most Serene Order of Cuckolds, in council assembled under the presidency of the Grand Master of the Order, His Excellency D. L. Naryshkin, have unanimously elected Alexander Pushkin acting Grand Master of the Order of Cuckolds and Historiographer of the Order."

Identical anonymous letters were sent to Pushkin's friends and acquaintances.

The anonymous squib hinted unequivocally at the courting of Pushkin's wife by Nicholas I. Naryshkin was the husband of the favorite of Alexander I. The squib naming Pushkin as the successor of Naryshkin hinted that it was Pushkin's lot to play the same role towards Nicholas I as Naryshkin had played towards Alexander I.

¹ From the translation by Charles E. Turner

² From the translation by Babette Deutsch

The anonymous squib was written by a scape-grace and libertine, Count P. V. Dolgorukov. But Dolgorukov was only one of the perpetrators of this act. Behind him stood the debauched young society men, certain high officials, probably including the Minister of Public Education Uvarov, and certain members of the diplomatic corps, including the Dutch minister, Baron Heckeren.

Pushkin was firmly convinced that the vile squib originated from Baron Heckeren, the foster-father of D'Anthes, who courted his wife. It was not convenient to challenge Heckeren to a duel on account of the latter's position and age. Pushkin therefore sent his challenge to D'Anthes. Ambassador Heckeren was frightened by this challenge sent to his foster-son. Whatever the outcome of the duel might be, he was bound, should the duel take place, to lose his position at St. Petersburg, which he valued greatly. In order to get out of the situation, D'Anthes proposed to Pushkin's wife's sister, Ekaterina Goncharova, who had long been in love with him. This proposal made it possible for him to affirm that he had been showing attention to Natalia Nikolayevna for the purpose of seeing her sister oftener. D'Anthes' proposal proved him to be a coward and made him ridiculous in the eyes of society. The enmity of high society towards Pushkin was so great, however, that there were some people who tried to represent the lowly and humiliating motive of D'Anthes' proposal as a great heroic deed, doing credit to his "nobleness", etc. After the announcement of D'Anthes' proposal, Pushkin withdrew his challenge. Pushkin categorically refused to have anything in common with his new "relative". D'Anthes, however, continued to court Pushkin's wife even after being married to her sister.

Fashionable society began anew to bespatter Pushkin with gossip. Pushkin felt harassed. He was surrounded by enemies. He informed Nicholas about the intrigue and gave him to understand, apparently, that the gossip spread about him stained also the emperor himself. Nicholas ordered him to keep silence.

Then Pushkin sent an insulting letter to Heckeren, after which all ways of retreat were closed. D'Anthes was compelled to accept Pushkin's challenge.

D'Anthes' second was d'Archiac, an employee of the French Embassy. Pushkin's second was his friend Danzas. Pushkin was calm and even gay before the duel. One hour before the duel he occupied himself with matters pertaining to the journal *Sovremennik* and wrote a letter on some business to the writer Ishimova.

The duel took place on January 27, in St. Petersburg, at the Chornaya Rechka, near Komendantskaya Datcha. The field on which they were to fight was covered with snow. The seconds tramped out a path, and laid

their overcoats down to mark the firing lines. As the signal was given the adversaries began to pace towards one another. The first shot was fired by D'Anthes. Pushkin fell, wounded in the abdomen and sacrum. Upon regaining consciousness he expressed the wish to avail himself of the shot to which he was entitled. He raised himself a little and fired at his enemy. The bullet hit D'Anthes, but he was only slightly wounded.

The seconds carried Pushkin to the carriage and drove him home, where his family was expecting him for dinner. Danzas entered the dining-room to inform Pushkin's wife about the duel and Pushkin's wound. Natalia Nikolayevna fainted when she saw her wounded husband. Pushkin was placed in his study. He refused to allow his wife into the study until things had been put in order and he had been undressed and put in bed. He did not want to frighten her by the sight of his wound.

Pushkin's sufferings were unbearable. He understood that he was dying, but conducted himself bravely and calmly. Nicholas I did not leave the poet in peace even on his death bed. He sent Pushkin a letter in which he demanded that Pushkin observe the rites of the Christian religion before his death, making this a condition for ensuring the support of his wife and children. Out of anxiety for the fate of the poet's family and his literary heritage, Zhukovskiy represented the last hours of Pushkin's life falsely. He informed Nicholas that in reply to the question what to transmit to the tsar as his last desire before dying, Pushkin had said "Tell him that it is a pity I must die, I would have been all his."

Pushkin never said these words. When Zhukovskiy was reproached for this phrase he justified it by his solicitude for the fate of Pushkin's wife and children.

Before his death Pushkin took leave of those of his friends who were present, and blessed his children. On January 29 according to the old calendar (February 10 by the new) at 2.45 p.m., he died.

THE GRIEF OF THE PEOPLE

Upon Pushkin's death the newspaper *Literary Supplements to the Russian Veteran* published the following mournful announcement.

"The sun of our poetry has set! Pushkin is dead! Dead in the prime of life, in the midst of his great career! We cannot say any more about it, and no more need be said. Every Russian heart knows the full value of this irretrievable loss, and every Russian heart is bleeding Pushkin! Our poet! Our joy! Our national glory! Is it possible that Pushkin is no longer with us? It is impossible to be reconciled to this thought. January 29, 2.45 p.m."

The editor of *The Literary Supplements to the Russian Veteran* was severely reprimanded for this announcement by the Minister of Public Education, Uvarov. "The sun of poetry, why such honour?" said the minister. "'Pushkin is dead in the midst of his great career' What career? Was he a warrior, a commander, a minister or a statesman?! To write rhymes does not mean to make a great career!"

This episode reflects the attitude of the people and that of government circles towards Pushkin's death

The government wanted to see in Pushkin only a disgraced gentleman-in-waiting. The tsar expressed his displeasure at the fact that Pushkin was laid in his coffin in civilian attire and not in uniform. Almost everybody in high society sided with D'Anthes after Pushkin had been murdered. They called on Heckeren to express their sympathy and to inquire after the health of his so called foster-son.

But the people were stricken with grief. Every stratum of the Russian people whom Pushkin's name had reached was stricken with grief, the people sought for ways of expressing their sympathy for the memory of the poet and their indignation at the crime.

A woman contemporary relates: "During the three days his body remained at his home, a multitude of people of all ages and callings continually surrounded the coffin in a motley crowd. Women, old men, children, students, plebeians in sheep-skin coats and some even in tatters, came to bow to the remains of the beloved national poet. It was touching to see these plebian honors. But in our gilded drawing rooms and perfumed boudoirs hardly anybody deplored the brevity of his brilliant career. One could even hear insulting epithets and reproaches abusing the memory of the renowned poet and unhappy husband who had bravely sacrificed his life to save his honor, and at the same time there resounded praises of the chivalrous conduct of the base seducer and rogue with three fatherlands (France—by birth, Holland—through his foster-father, Russia as his place of work) and two names (D'Anthes—by birth and Heckeren—through his foster-father)."

According to certain information, as many as 30,000 people came during one day to pay the last honors to Pushkin's body. People crowded the street, entered the house, cried and lamented.

This was the first political manifestation of the masses after the Decembrist uprising.

It was still more remarkable that the democratic elements of the city prevailed among the crowds who gathered to express their grief about Pushkin's death. The Minister of Saxony at St Petersburg bluntly reported to his government that sympathy for the deceased poet "was shown by the second and third classes (i.e. middle and lower) of the St Peters-

burg inhabitants." The reports of the German diplomatic agent, Liebermann, whose attitude towards Pushkin had been very mimical, are most characteristic in this respect. He wrote about the irritation of the masses and the popular demands for retribution for the murder of the poet. "These feelings manifested themselves with much greater force among the broad masses of the population of the capital than among fashionable society. Pushkin was more popular and won greater admiration among the lower classes of the Russian people. Pushkin's death is represented here as an incomparable loss for the country, as a social calamity. National pride is the more agitated by the fact that the foe who survived the poet is of foreign origin. These sentiments manifested themselves even during the funeral ceremonies. It is estimated that between the moment of Pushkin's death and the removal of his body to the church about fifty thousand people of various social standing came to his home. Many organizations asked for permission to carry his remains. There were even requests that the horses be unhitched to allow the people to draw the catafalque with the body."

Russian witnesses record similar facts. A. I. Turgenev, a brother of the famous Decembrist, wrote in a private letter. "Students want to attend the burial service in uniform. Most probably they will not be permitted to do so. Only our so-called people of quality, or higher aristocracy, did not pay the last tribute to the Russian genius, hardly any one of the higher court dignitaries or adjutant-generals came to Pushkin's coffin."

The national grief for the poet and the feeling of general popular indignation against the executioners of the national genius were expressed best by Lermontov in his poem "Death of the Poet," which was promptly circulated all over St. Petersburg in hand-written copies.

The poet fell—a slave to honour—
He fell, maligned by slanderous talk;
Lead pierced the heart that craved for vengeance,
The poet's noble head had sunk!
And you, the insolent descendants
Of men notorious for their foul deeds,
Who trampled under foot, with slavish zeal, the remnants
Of families upon whom fortune turned its back!
You stand around the throne, a greedy grasping crowd,
And kill or stifle freedom, genius, fame!
Behind the veil of law you found shelter,
Before you—justice, truth must silent be!
But, myrmidons of vice, there is a court of justice,

There is a sterner judge above,
He waits, no gold can ever tempt him
And all your thoughts and deeds he knows in advance
Oh, then in vain will you resort to your habitual slander,—
It will be of no avail
And all the black blood in your veins will not atone for
The righteous poet's sacred blood'

Stormy manifestations of popular indignation, on a scale unheard-of in those times, frightened the St Petersburg aristocracy. Some of the frightened aristocrats, both men and women, began to turn to Benken-dorf for protection against "the gangs of malefactors". The government and the tsar became alarmed. It was forbidden to write anything about Pushkin in the Russian press. "It was forbidden to write not only about the actual circumstances of Pushkin's death, but also about the significance of his work in the history of literature" (Shchegolev). Pushkin's play "The Covetous Knight" was scheduled to be shown at the Alexandrinsky Theatre on February 1, the benefit-night of the famous artist Karatygin. For fear of a public demonstration the performance was cancelled. Pushkin's apartment was overrun with gendarmes. A cordon was placed about the house in the neighbouring courtyards.

For his poem on the death of Pushkin Lermontov was exiled to the Caucasus, to the front, into the army engaged in war against the mountaineers. In order to avoid a public demonstration, the government changed secretly the place and time of the burial service. The burial service had been scheduled for daytime at the Kazan cathedral. The government ordered that the body be taken during the night and burial services be performed at the Konyushennaya church. Such importance was attached to this measure of police precaution, that the order to carry it out was given to the Chief of Staff of the gendarmierie corps, Dubbelt, who personally, together with his nearest subordinates, conducted this "strategic operation". Even the loyal Zhukovsky lost all patience and became indignant. "The church appointed for the burial services was changed," he wrote. "The body was taken there at night with a secrecy that surprised everybody, without torches, almost without any escort, and at the moment of bearing the body out, When no more than half a score of Pushkin's closest friends gathered, gendarmes filled the room while they were praying for the deceased, we were surrounded, and conducted the body to the church as it were under police guard."

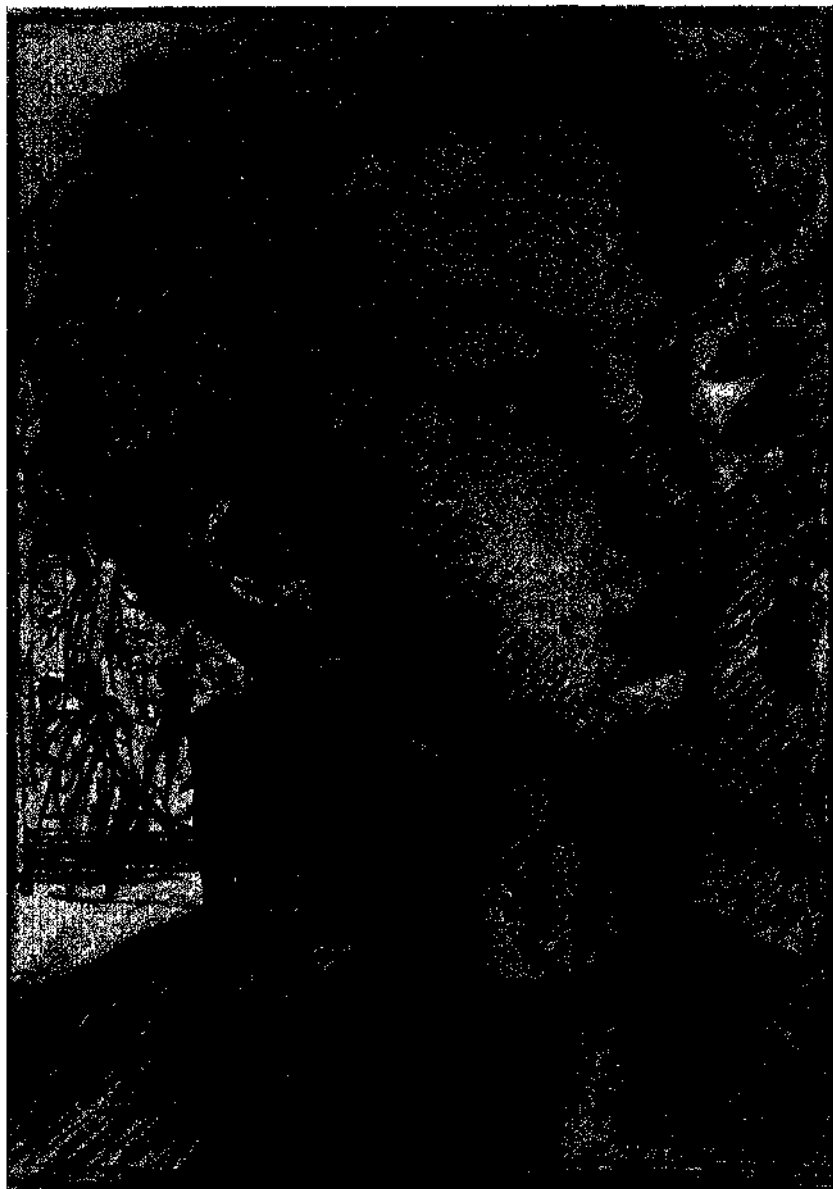
Here is what another friend of Pushkin, Vyazemsky, wrote about this incident. "On the day preceding the night appointed for the burial service, there appeared in the small drawing room of Pushkin's apartment,

where about ten of his friends and relatives were gathered, an entire gendarmierie corps. It may be said without any exaggeration, that there were more gendarmes than friends gathered around the coffin, not to mention the cordon of soldiers placed on the street. But against whom was gathered this military force, which overran the house of the deceased at the moment when about twelve friends and closest acquaintances came there to pay him their last tribute? Against whom were gathered 'those disguised but easily recognizable spies? They were there in order not to let us out of their sight, to overhear our complaints, our words, to witness our tears, our silence."

It was ordered that Pushkin's body be buried secretly and not at St. Petersburg, but at Mikhailovskoye. The governor of the Pskov province, where the patrimonial estate of the Pushkins was located, had also been instructed about keeping the burial a secret. The coffin with the poet's body was hauled on a common sledge, escorted by a gendarme and only one of Pushkin's friends—A. I. Turgenev.

The murdered poet was buried at the cemetery of the Svyatogorsky monastery, near Mikhailovskoye, which he had so often celebrated in song. The coffin was carried from the church to the grave by Mikhailovskoye peasants. Many of them cried:

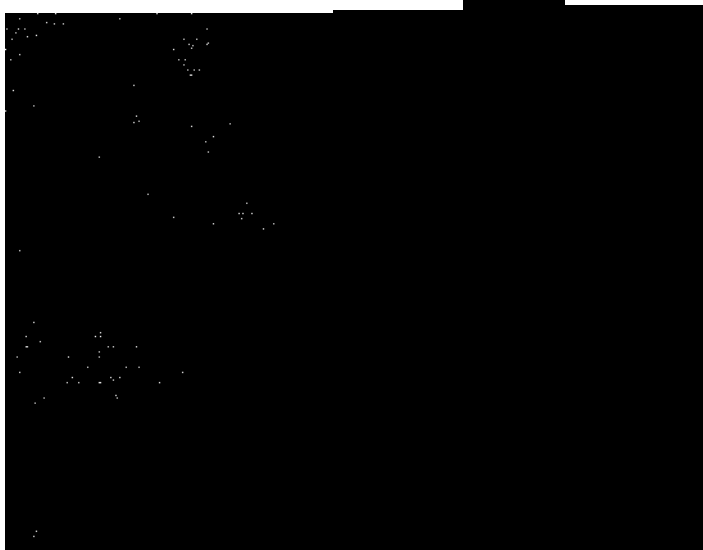
This is how they buried the greatest Russian poet, the national pride of the Russian people, one of the most remarkable geniuses of the world, whose works have established themselves firmly in the international treasure-house of culture.



Pushkin at the Lyceum.
V. Favorsky. Pencil drawing, 1935

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poetry and his anti-government "escapades" as a means of agitation. Nevertheless, he was never enrolled as a member of the society and its very existence was kept secret from him. Pushkin, however, had an inkling of the existence of the society and it gave him much pain to be kept out of it.

One cannot help being deeply moved by the following narrative by Yakushkin, the Decembrist. Once he and his comrades got together and decided to dissuade uninitiated people, including Pushkin, from believing in the existence of the secret society. For this purpose, at a gathering, they started a discussion as to the expediency of organizing such a society. Pushkin spoke ardently in favour of such a society and its importance for Russia. At the height of the discussion one of Yakushkin's group, at a pre-arranged cue, suddenly declared that such a society exists and invited the audience to join it. When those present expressed their consent, the one who made the proposal burst out in laughter, declaring that "of course it was nothing but a joke." All the rest, with the exception of Pushkin, joined him in his laughter. The narrator continues:

"Pushkin was greatly agitated. He had just brought himself to believe that the secret society was either in existence, or was going to be formed and that he would be one of its members. He stood up, all red in his face, and with tears in his eyes said 'I was never so miserable as I am now. I already saw my life in the future ennobled with a lofty aim, and now it all turned out a vile joke!' At that moment he was really superb."

Notwithstanding the fact that Pushkin was not a member of the secret society, the government dealt severely with the poet. Long before his friends who belonged to the secret society paid their penalty, Pushkin was punished by being exiled from Petersburg to a remote place in the South. There the poet came in touch with the more revolutionary circle of members of the Southern Society. It was in the South that the above episode took place.

In 1824, a new charge was made against Pushkin: the poet was accused of atheism and exiled from Odessa to Mikhailovskoye, his parents' country estate.

Life at Mikhailovskoye proved exceedingly burdensome for Pushkin. He was placed under the surveillance of his father who undertook to "act the spy" and watch over the conduct and correspondence of his son. This regime was so oppressive that Pushkin applied to the governor of Pskov with a request to intercede on his behalf with the government. As a "final favour" he asked to be removed from his father's home to some prison. In a letter Pushkin regrets not having committed suicide. Indeed, only the wonderful vitality of the poet, the consciousness of his great destiny, hi-

cheerful spirit and the consolation he drew from his poetical work, which by that time attained complete maturity, saved him

His exile to the village had torn Pushkin out of the social circle that was nearest to his heart. Upon his return from exile in 1826 Pushkin found none of his old friends. The Decembrists had either perished on the scaffold or were immured alive in "the Siberian mines."

Pushkin had lost faith in the success of the Decembrist movement even before it was defeated. The black night of reaction was thickening over Europe and Russia. The European national liberation movements—the uprising in Naples, the Spanish revolution, the Greek uprising—were defeated one after the other.

The defeat of the Decembrists seemed fully to confirm the political pessimism of Pushkin's "The Sower." Pushkin, deceived by the ostentatious "magnanimity" of Nicholas I who allowed him to return from exile, wrote the well-known stanzas "In the Hope of Fame" whereupon some of Pushkin's contemporaries accused him of renegacy and servility.

Nothing is more unjust than this accusation. The "hopes" bound up with Tsar Nicholas I were of course an illusion, but Pushkin's attitude to the fallen "brothers, friends and comrades" was of the noblest. While the overwhelming majority of the nobility, including the nearest relatives of the condemned Decembrists, hastened to renounce them and to emphasize their great indignation at the "crimes" of the condemned, Pushkin in these very same stanzas called for "mercy to the fallen." Such an appeal, virtually the only public appeal in favour of the Decembrists, by Pushkin, who was known to be near to them, showed great civic spirit and courage.

He had indeed the right as a poet and citizen to claim this appeal, as a special merit of his, which he did in his poem "My Monument." Pushkin never hesitated to lend the condemned Decembrists his moral support. Through the wives of the Decembrists he sent them his touching "Message to Siberia."

From then till the end of his life Pushkin could nowhere find a congenial circle. For the higher aristocratic court circles he was a "scribbler", the reactionary government circles never forgot his connections with the Decembrists and the "shocking" poetry of his youth. The "liberals" would not forgive him his "reconciliation with the government." There only remained his home life and a narrow circle of friends. However, even his home life did not turn out to be a happy one.

Pushkin was by nature a cheerful, confiding man of exceptional warmth. On his part the poet felt a great need of reciprocity, he longed for caresses, love and affection, but these were denied him.

Pushkin's biography was bitter. He was exposed to the insults of

"hard-hearted society" from his very childhood. Failing to understand the genius of their child, his parents treated him as if he were a monstrosity.

No one ever wrote more ardent, tender and moving lyrical lines to friends and friendship than did Pushkin. However, along with this, there is in his poetry the persistent ring of other motifs—of "open and covert insults" inflicted on the poet by friends who, in return for the "ardour of a confiding, tender heart" paid with "calumny," "intrigue" and "treachery."

Before Pushkin's exile from Petersburg malicious gossip was circulated by his "friends" to the effect that Pushkin had been flogged at the ministry of police for his "liberty poems." The nervous poet, then a mere youth, with a highly developed sense of self-respect, felt himself hopelessly defamed. He fought duels with those who circulated these calumnious stories and from thoughts about suicide passed to the decision of committing some political act of terror and finally, as he himself confessed, in his relations with the authorities behaved in a most provocative manner, so as to force them to call him to account.

The second fateful period in the life of Pushkin—his exile from Odessa to Mikhailovskoye—was preceded by a new betrayal of a friend. Alexander Rayevsky made use of the poet's confidence in him for personal ends and incited Count Vorontsov, the governor-general of Odessa, against the poet. As a result of this Vorontsov wrote to Petersburg denouncing the poet and demanding his removal from Odessa.

Pushkin had one friend who was devoted to him for life. This was the old Anna Rodionovna, Pushkin's nurse in childhood. She was of serf origin. There were also a few other true friends. However, even such close friends as Pushkin and Delvig in many respects failed to understand Pushkin. Surrounded by a gay and noisy crowd of "friends of the moment" and by a multitude of acquaintances who were ready at any moment "to cut his throat," and by a bevy of deceitful "beauties," Pushkin in his personal life was actually a lonely man.

From a cheerless childhood to married life with a fickle-minded society beauty whose blind and capricious egoism was the direct cause of the poet's death—such was the fatal circle of Pushkin's family life.

The poet was ruined by the new calumnious gossip about an affair between his wife and the tsar, and by the scandalous talk about his wife's misconduct with D'Anthes.

Lonely in society, lonely at home, Pushkin was in fact lonely in that field which was the main thing in his life. He found no due understanding or appreciation of his creative work.

Before the defeat of the Decembrist uprising the critics met his "Ruslan and Ludmila" and "Southern Poems" with warm approval. How-

ever, even this favourable estimation was insufficient by far. The critics did not rise to a real understanding of Pushkin's poetry. P. Vyazemsky, in those days one of the most advanced critics favourably inclined to Pushkin, in his private letters confessed "in confidence" that in his opinion Pushkin's poems "by their spirit and emotions" were inferior to those of I. Kozlov (a second-rate poet of Pushkin's times). The Decembrists Ryleyev and Bestuzhev, both enthusiastic admirers of Pushkin, after reading the first chapter of "Eugene Onegin" tried to persuade Pushkin to return to his romantic poems. They condemned Pushkin's "novel in verse" as "prosaic"—because of its realistic portrayal of surrounding life.

Shortly after Pushkin's return from exile the critics' attitude to the poet entirely changed. The more accomplished and mature Pushkin's poetry became, the less was it understood by the critics of his time. Pushkin's "Poltava" was met with general condemnation. When one of the last chapters of "Eugene Onegin" appeared in print, voices were heard saying that Pushkin's talent had "utterly declined." And "Boris Godunov" was almost unanimously condemned. Even Belinsky, who subsequently gave an analysis of Pushkin's work which is the finest, truest and most profound in Russian critical literature, at that time, in his early essays, wrote disapprovingly of the new creations of Pushkin's genius.

Pushkin needed an inexhaustible fund of moral courage in order not to diverge from the path chosen by him—to accomplish the historical mission of creating modern Russian literature in complete loneliness. Only the poet's gaze became firmer and more severe and his once clear brow grew "clouded."

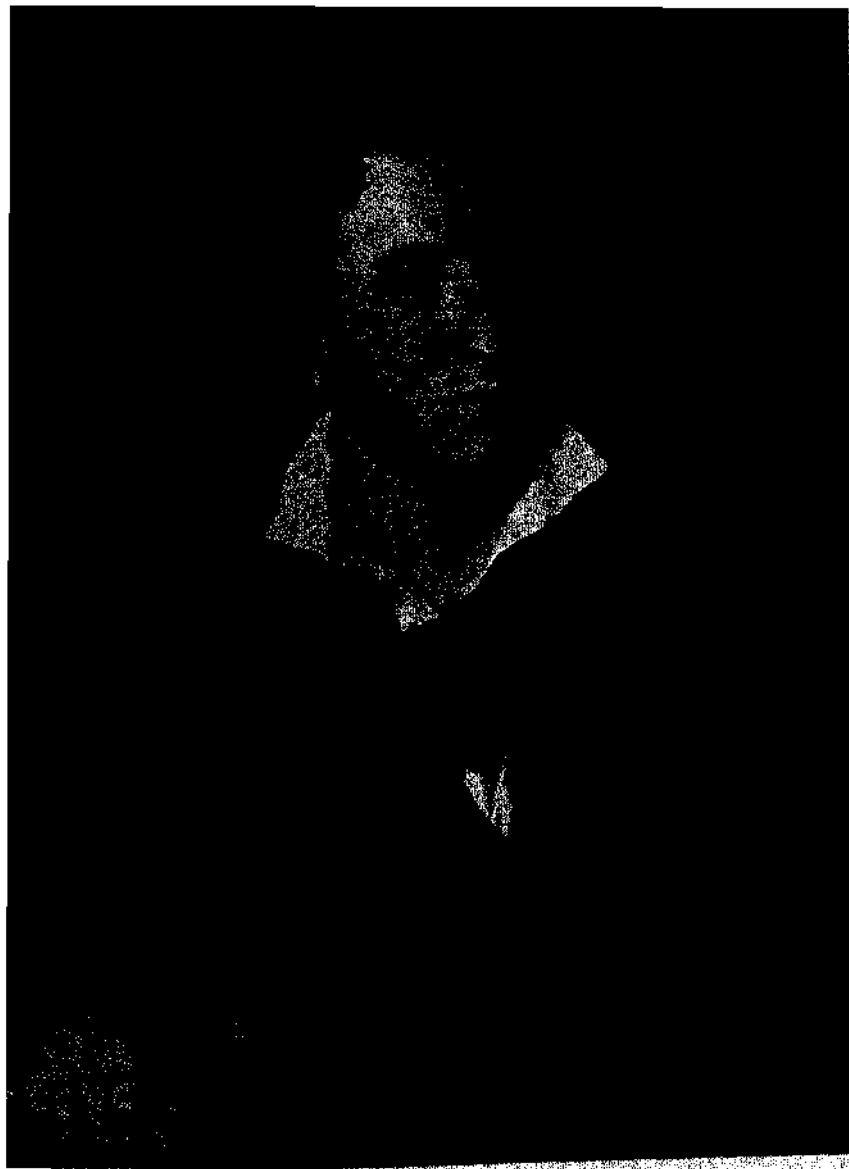
In many of his poems of that period Pushkin persistently returns to the theme of the heroic loneliness of the poet amidst the "obtuse rabble," the "stupid, cold-hearted crowd." Some of the critics, particularly Pisarev, maintained that by his "rabble" Pushkin referred to the people. Plekhanov convincingly refuted this idea, and there is a story told by one of Pushkin's contemporaries which strongly confirms Plekhanov's view. Once, at the fashionable society salon of Zinaida Volkonskaya, Pushkin was asked to recite something. Yielding to the insistent requests, the vexed Pushkin recited "The Rabble." Having finished, he angrily said "Now they will not ask me to recite anything again!" This story shows whom Pushkin really meant by his "rabble."

Moreover, Pushkin openly expressed his opinion of his critics, treating their utterances as "the judgment of fools" and "the laughter of the cold-hearted crowd." In "My Monument," his poetical testament left to posterity, Pushkin contrasts the judgment of fools with the judgment which will be pronounced upon his works by the country, by the many-tongued people.

The great Russian poet was far ahead of his time. He looked into the far distant future for fair judgment by the people. In his times the country was fettered in the chains of slavery and arbitrary rule. True, love for the poet would sometimes break through even in those days, it burst out in a stormy manifestation when the news of Pushkin's death spread through Petersburg. Contemporaries were amazed by the unexampled sight of multitudes of people crowding in front of the poet's house. The foreign ambassadors, greatly astonished, reported to their governments that the house of the deceased poet was visited by about 50,000 people of all classes in the course of one or two days.

Belinsky who in his essays of the 1840's emphasized the "truly popular trend" of Pushkin's works hesitated, however, to call Pushkin a "popular" and "national" poet. A popular poet is one whom all the people know, he wrote. Belinsky was therefore of the opinion that Pushkin was "only by half a popular and national" poet.

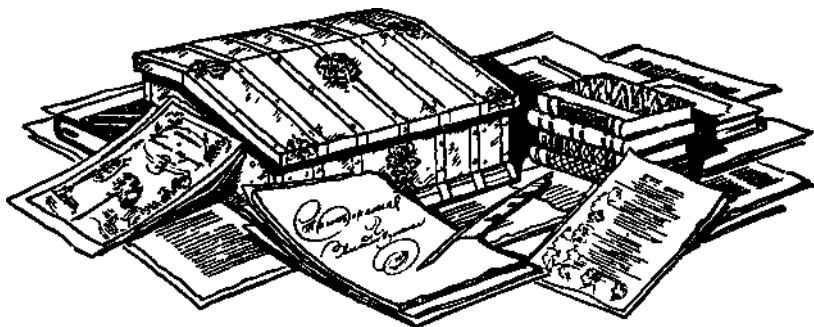
Only the Great Proletarian Revolution made Pushkin's works really the property of the broad masses of the people. In his time he felt himself a stranger in his environment. Today he is familiar and dear to everybody. Pushkin's name and his immortal poetry are on the lips of all the working people. In our time the whole Land of the Soviets is with Pushkin.



Pushkin
V. Tropinin, Oil, 1827

PUS H K I N' S
W O R K





THE FATHER OF MODERN RUSSIAN LITERATURE

By I LEZHNEV

Pushkin's works represented an epitome of all the preceding development of Russian poetic thought. Pushkin was and is an inexhaustible source of its further development. The pure and copious well-spring of Pushkin's works nourished Russian literature throughout the 19th century and continues to do so even at present. For the greatest writers of the country, both past and present, Pushkin was the starting point and it was to him that they constantly reverted.

Lenin defined the boundaries of the modern Russian language with the words *"From Pushkin to Gorky"*.

And indeed Pushkin was the great landmark in the development of the Russian language and literature.

By the titanic power of his genius Pushkin overcame the archaic literary language of the 18th century, broke down the famous "lofty style" of the old poetry and created a new literary language.

Russian poetry before Pushkin was to a large extent a "transplantation from foreign lands" to use Belinsky's picturesque expression. Before the life of the Russian people could find its expression in art it was essential above all to work out a poetical form. This task was accomplished by Pushkin. He created all the prerequisites for the poetic expression of the ideas, thoughts and feelings of the people as well as for the future development of Russian culture. Therein lies the greatness of Pushkin and the immense importance of his poetry. "Pushkin was called upon," wrote

Belmsky, "to be the living revelation of the mystery of poetry in Russia He was destined to conquer poetry for the Russian land, and make Russia forever the possessor of poetry as an art For Russian society the poem ' Eugene Onegm' was an act of gaming consciousness, it was almost its first step, yet what a great stride forward ! It was a gigantic stride After that, marking time became impossible "

The democratization of literature in Russia was begun by none other than Pushkin It was a process which assumed ever greater force, developing along the lines indicated by Pushkin's works Pushkin turned to the people's art of word-building, and drew heavily upon this golden fund in his work of regenerating the Russian literary language In the teeth of the tradition of his time, the great poet ventured to write about the life of common people He began to introduce in his writings types of common people depicted in a manner that was free from any mawkish or arcadian flavour

"Dramatic art," wrote Pushkin, "was born in the market place for the enjoyment of the people What is it that is being developed in a tragedy? What is its object? It is man and the people The fate of mankind, the fate of the people That is why Racine is great notwithstanding the narrow form of his tragedy That is why Shakespeare is great notwithstanding his irregular, slipshod and uncouth finish "

Throughout his poetical work Pushkin aimed at simplicity and clarity And in this he achieved such mastery, that his works are comprehensible to every literate person Pushkin's contemporaries testify to the fact that even during his lifetime Pushkin was widely read by the people

But the great poet was not satisfied with that He saw that the cheap publications of vulgar adventure stories glorifying thieves and scoundrels enjoyed greater popularity and were ruining the taste of readers And Pushkin, the great master of verse, took to prose It was again none other than Pushkin who laid the cornerstone of the great edifice of classical Russian prose Anyone in the least acquainted with the history of Russian literature knows that Pushkin was the immediate predecessor of Lermontov's and Gogol's prose

It should be borne in mind that in Pushkin's time great popularity was enjoyed by the reactionary vulgar novels of Bulgann, Guryanov et al These novels which glorified knaves, scoundrels and rogues, called forth strong protests on the part of Pushkin, Belinsky and Gogol With the object of counteracting this loathsome literature Pushkin conceived the idea of writing a novel about the adventures of a knave painted in his true colours Gogol's "Dead Souls, or the Adventures of Chichikov" was a further development of Pushkin's idea It is known that Gogol read the first chapter of his "Dead Souls" to Pushkin, who was very enthusiastic about it

Saltykov-Shchedrin, another great satirical writer, also borrowed a great deal from Pushkin. This becomes evident when we compare both the titles and structure of Shchedrin's "History of the Town Glupov" and Pushkin's "History of the Village Goryukhmo".

Pushkin's lucid, simple and precise prose style served as a model for the great Tolstoy, who represents, in Lenin's words, "a step forward in the artistic development of all mankind".

Like Pushkin, Leo Tolstoy made a keen study of folklore, of fairy tales, folk songs, popular art. The variants and rough manuscript copies of Tolstoy's novels reveal the great master's method of work. They show the great pains he took to find forms most expressive and ~~and~~ to the language of the people.

Again and again Tolstoy returns to the description of one and the same episode, scene or landscape. He writes and rewrites his works, making every metaphor more precise and every phrase more concise, discarding all that is superfluous and polishing every word like a diamond. This treatment of words and phrases by the greatest Russian writers, Tolstoy and Pushkin, shows that they repeated in an immeasurably shorter space of time the very same process of hewing and polishing the verbal material which may be traced in the historical study of folk songs. Words of a folksong, like the smooth pebbles of whimsical design that one picks up on the sea-shore, are the result of being polished millions of times.

Russian folksongs gladden the heart and gladden the ear. And how many folksongs Pushkin wrote down! What are these songs about? One of these songs—"The rivulet runs along its bed of sand to the mother city of Moscow" deals with Arakcheyev.

"You mister 'Rakcheyev,
All Russia you ruined,
Poor people you hounded,
The soldiers you froze with your look."

Pushkin's popular manner in his creative work is connected with the social tendencies of his art. It is not by mere chance that in his "The Captain's Daughter" Pushkin makes Pugachov speak in the most picturesque language full of the wisdom of the people.

Pushkin was a great landmark in the development of Russian artistic thought. In Pushkin's creative work we find the origin of many ideas which forced their way to recognition at various periods of the century following his death. Moreover, there is scarcely an important problem in Russian literature of the 19th century that has not been discerned or indicated by Pushkin, and hardly a motif that cannot be traced to its

origin in the polyphonic symphony of Pushkin's creative work. It is not without reason that the Communist Party and the Soviet Government call Pushkin "the father of modern Russian literature."

It is surprising how often Pushkin in his analysis of certain problems proves more serious, more profound and nearer to the true solution than his followers.

"Eugene Onegin" was the first of a gallery of heroes of the nobility depicted in Russian literature. These heroes were suffering from boredom and pining away because of the lack of an aim in life. They were a prey to "restlessness" and passion for "a change of place."

Lermontov's Pechorin seems the pale shadow of Onegin, while Turgenev's Rudin and Lavretsky are a later edition of the same "superfluous type of man." There is undoubtedly a difference between these literary characters, but the difference between Pushkin's treatment of characters and the treatment of character by the other classic writers is much more striking.

Pushkin knows that his Aleko, Onegin, and Hermann are defective characters, that Aleko is not worthy of Zemphira, or Onegin of Tatyana or Hermann (in "The Queen of Spades") of a lucky card. He knows well what their real worth is.

In dealing with the creations of Pushkin's genius, Belinsky said, "It is an encyclopedia of Russian life." With equal right one may speak of Pushkin's works as an encyclopedia of the Russian language and as an encyclopedia of poetical motifs.

Read the following lines

The squalid row of huts,
Beyond—black earth, the valley's gentle slope,
Above—a streak of leaden clouds
The cheerful fields, the shady woods—where are they?
Where is the little river? Behind the low fence
But two poor little trees relieve the gloom
Not more than two

In the courtyard not a living dog
There goes a little peasant, two women follow him
His head is bare, under his arm the coffin of a child
He urges on the sluggish boy ahead to call the priest,
His father, the church to open "Make haste I
No time to lose! I would the burial were over!"

Who wrote these lines? Nekrassov? No, it was Pushkin

His poem "Message to Siberia" is eloquent evidence of the tremendous influence exercised by Pushkin on the subsequent development of Russian literature

In the first stanza one perceives the precursor of Nekrasov

"Deep down in the Siberian mines
Your patience keep with proud disdain,
The lofty dreams of your noble mind,
Your grief and toil are not in vain "

By their imagery and structure the last lines of the same poem bring to mind the style of Alexander Blok

and freedom
Joyfully will greet you at the door,
Your brothers will restore to you your sword "

Pushkin's influence on the subsequent development of modern Russian literature, of which he was the founder, was not confined to the suggestion of a new vocabulary, of poetic motifs, themes, and characters. Neither was it confined to the rendering of examples of art as embodied in the harmony of his poetry nor to the artistic rendering of his broad realistic conception of the world and people.

Pushkin possessed a great fund of social-philosophical ideas which fructified Russian literature throughout a century.

As far back as 1819, Pushkin in his poem "Village" reveals his lofty humane sentiments and moral purity. The poem reveals so deep an understanding of humanism as only the most advanced minds of that epoch were capable of possessing.

The following lines brim over with great tension and power

"Oh, if my voice the hearts of people could but wake!
Then why does in my breast a futile fire burn,
Why did not fate endow me with the formidable gift of tongue?"

In these lines one can already hear the full ring of the social motifs that imbued the best works of Russian writers throughout a whole century after Pushkin.

Seventeen years later, Pushkin, at the height of his creative work, wrote his most powerful and brilliant poem, "The Prophet." It is actually the poet's testament bequeathed to the whole literature of the

19th century. Here the poet's plaintive cry that in his heart "a futile fire burns" and that "fate did not endow [him] with the formidable gift of tongue," is no longer heard¹ The poet knows that it is this gift that is most needed

Three-quarters of a century after Pushkin's "The Prophet," in a different epoch and under different conditions, Gorky's "Stormy Petrel" appeared The similarity of the motifs in both these works is obvious

Gorky hailed Pushkin with enthusiasm Gorky relates his first impressions of Pushkin's poems

"I read them all at once I was seized with that greedy feeling one experiences when one happens upon an amazingly beautiful place— one wishes to run through it all at once This is what one feels when after a wearisome walk along mossy hillocks in a swampy forest one suddenly comes across a dry glade covered with flowers and bathed in sunshine For a moment one looks at it in wonder and then with glee one runs and runs, and each time the foot touches the soft grass of the fertile land one's heart is filled with peaceful joy ? The sonorous lines of his poetry are so easily remembered, they adorn gaily everything they deal with All this made me happy, it made my life light and pleasant His poetry sounded like the ringing in of a new life "

To realize the full significance of Pushkin's work means above all to realize the path traversed by Russian literature and social thought from Pushkin to Gorky, from one great landmark to another, nearer to us



"EUGENE ONEGIN"

By A GURSTEIN

"Eugene Onegm" is indisputably the most important of Pushkin's »works

Even while working on this poem Pushkin felt that it was his "best work" He wrote of this in his letters during 1824 and 1825

Pushkin was about 24 years old when he conceived and began to write his "novel in verse" The great poet went through much during the years when he was working on "Eugene Onegin " A dividing line cut through this period, a line which had a great influence on the development of Pushkin's world outlook This dividing line was the Decembrist rebellion of December 14, 1825, which was suppressed by the fire of the tsar's guns With the change in Pushkin's world outlook came a change in the general tone and mood of his work The first chapters of "Eugene Onegin," as Pushkin himself admitted, "bear the stamp of the gaiety characteristic of the first works of the author of 'Ruslan and Ludmila' " But the novel ends with sad and mournful lines lamenting a life that has been lived out

From the very beginning of his work on "Eugene Onegin," Pushkin spoke of this work as a "novel in verse " But the character of the poems did not take shape at once Pushkin himself wrote that he fust saw his Onegin and Tatyana

"Ere yet the crystal with precision
Had shown to my enchanted glance
The vista of a free lomance¹

"I am writing the multi-coloured stanzas of a romantic poem, and taking lessons in pure atheism," he wrote in a letter in 1824 But in the preface to the first edition of the first chapter of "Eugene Onegin" (1825) he called the poem "a satirical novel"

¹ All translations in this essay marked with a ¹ are by Babette Deutsch, and are taken from *The Works of Alexander Pushkin*, published by Random House, New York

Pushkin's sharp satiric strokes—alternating with romance and lyrical digressions, in which his friends recognized the poet's "very self, his very way of talking" — develop, as the narrative progresses, into a realistic picture of the Russian life of those days. Pushkin himself commented on his turn in the direction of realism, of the "Flemish school"

In "Eugene Onegin" we find many conventional literary situations, many traditional poetic modes. Pushkin himself emphasized his closeness to Byron. He consciously took over certain poetic definitions from his predecessors and contemporaries. But the basis for "Eugene Onegin" was the actual Russian life of that period. The best of Pushkin's contemporaries understood this. The poet Baratynsky wrote of "Eugene Onegin" in 1828: "Old and new Russia, life in all its vicissitudes pass before your eyes." The great critic Behnsky saw in "Eugene Onegin" a poetic portrayal of Russian society at one of the most interesting stages of its development.

The action of "Eugene Onegin" takes place in the 1820's. The hero, Onegin, belongs by birth, education, and mode of life, to "higher society," to the elite of Russian nobility. From the very first lines of his novel, Pushkin uses the most biting terms in speaking of this "higher society." But it is significant that Pushkin calls Onegin his "good friend." Onegin was not only a contemporary of the great Russian poet, he was above all a person of Pushkin's class, his circle, his environment. Why then does the poet speak of him as a "strange companion?"

Because Pushkin himself outgrew the environment in which he was brought up. A mighty giant, he rose above his surroundings, above his contemporary Russian society. While the artistic task he set before himself in "Eugene Onegin" was to produce a picture of his times, Pushkin was at the same time attempting to get rid of this "strange companion," who always followed at his heels.

The image of Onegin does not take shape at once. "The child of luxury and play," Onegin appears at first simply as a nursling of "grand society" — its typical representative, flesh of its flesh and bone of its bone. A. Bestuzhev wrote to Pushkin in 1825 regarding Onegin: "a man of whom I meet thousands in actual life, for coldness, misanthropy and strangeness are now dressing table accessories." Onegin's education ("We all studied a little something, somehow"), his entire mode of life were typical for people of his circles.

In approaching closer to the character of his hero, the poet displays a certain hesitation. Onegin's scepticism and indifference are based mainly on his personal experience, they do not go beyond the limits of everyday life. But Pushkin made an attempt at first to broaden these limits, to elevate this scepticism into a world outlook. He makes Onegin think

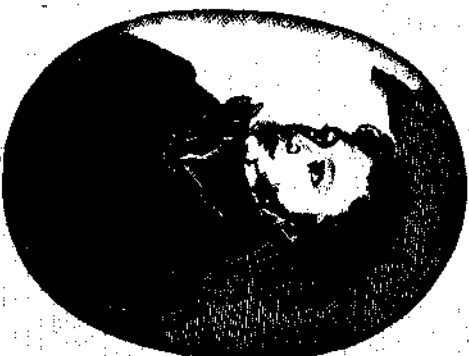


Pushkin in Boldino.
I. V. Rerberg. Wash drawing, 193ti



Pushkin.

F. Konstantinov. Woodcut, 1886



Pushkin.

P. Kizhinsky. Woodcut, 1935

"...That rights and laws,
Love of one's country, virtue—all
Are only words conventional."

We find these lines in Pushkin's manuscript. He did not include them in the printed text—as though afraid that they would make Onegin seem too intellectual. One need only recall the list of books in Onegin's library, however, to realize that Pushkin's hero kept up with the trend of European thought.

Doubt creeps into Tatyana's heart, she is tortured by the question is not Onegin

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? ¹

But Tatyana finds no answer to this question

Has she the answer to the riddle
And has she found *the word*? " ¹

It would have been too simple if Onegin had turned out to be a "parody." Judge him as one may, Onegin was by far not an ordinary man in his circles. The gossip and laughter directed at him by those about him are explained by the fact

"That only mediocrity
Our shoulders firs and is not strange"

At this point we cannot but recall another uncommon man from among the same circles, a contemporary of Onegin. Chatsky, the hero of Griboyedov's immortal comedy, "Wit Works Woe." Pushkin undoubtedly had Griboyedov's characters in mind when he wrote "Eugene Onegin" (Pushkin read "Wit Works Woe" in January 1825). Not only do we find in Pushkin's novel a repetition of Griboyedov's phrase "and that is public opinion!", not only do we find an epigraph from Griboyedov and direct mention of Chatsky ("Like Chatsky, straight from ship to ball"), but whole stanzas of "Eugene Onegin," in which the poet ridicules the Moscow aristocracy or provincial landlords, are cast entirely in the style of Chatsky's caustic monologues.

Beside his wife, that chubby charmer,
 Plump Pustakov strides heavily;
 Here conies Gvozdm, a first-rate farmer,
 Whose peasants live in beggary,
 The two Skotinins, gray as sages,
 Line up with children of all ages
 From two to thirty, in a row,
 Here's Petushkov, a rural beau,
 My cousin, sleepy-eyed Buyanov,
 Down in his hair, with visored cap
 (I'm certain that you know the chap),
 The fat old counselor, Flyanov,
 A gossip, glutton, down, and cheat,
 Who likes a bribe as mucin as meat ¹

But Onegin is not a Chatsky, Chatsky's public-spirited temperament is alien to him But in spite of the fact that he does not resemble Chatsky, Onegin knows the same grief as Chatsky, that "Wit Works Woe " True, this does not appear at once The figure of Onegin grows as the novel develops

At the beginning of the novel, in the first chapter, Pushkin calls Onegin in "a second Chaadayeve " But he calls him so in jest, for the resemblance between Onegin and this man, who later became one of the most progressive Russians of his era, was purely external Onegin dressed as Chaadayeve did Onegin, however, "did not quarrel with the age," as dad Chaadayeve, as did Chatsky Onegin's response to the squalor surrounding him was one of sceptical indifference But this indifference did not always save him

"Thus he grew restless and decided
 That he must have a change of scene " 1

Like Chatsky, Onegin wandered from place to place followed by the same spleen

"Why, like the counselor of Tula,
 Am I not, paralyzed, in bed?" 1

We part with Onegin at a difficult moment, when, as the poet says, "It bodes evil for him " We do not know his further destiny Yet Pushkin intended at first to continue the story of his hero

There was in existence one more chapter of the novel (chapter ten), which was burnt by Pushkin There are left only scattered fragments of

this chapter, written in a special code They were deciphered only in 1910 by P O Morozov, a Pushkin scholar. These fragments are of great interest They indicate that the burnt chapter was replete with contents of a social and political nature

There are political hints scattered all through the novel, but these are merely hints, for the tsarist censorship forbade even the lines in which Pushkin related that Tatyana's and Olga's mother knew

"How to manage one's spouse
Autocratically.. "

In the tenth chapter of "Onegin" Pushkin evidently called things by their names Here is how he characterized Alexander I.

"A weak-kneed, but sly ruler,
A bald dandy, the foe of toil,
Unexpectedly crowned by Glory "

The tenth chapter, it seems, was a chronology of the most important events beginning with the war of 1812 and ending with the Decembrist uprising We do not know what part Onegin was to play in all this But the very mention of the Decembrists in the novel broadens considerably its social perspective

Onegin's social and political behaviour, insofar as it is shown in the main text of the novel, is portrayed by Pushkin in ironic tones We have before us a typical nobleman-landlord playing the role of a liberal

"For the corvee he substituted
Light quitrent " ¹

Onegin's inactivity, his indifference in everyday and public life excluded any volitional interference in the course of affairs Pushkin made his hero resemble closely the characters in the works of his contemporary European literature

Romances, upon every page
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 rest¹

But at the same time Pushkin states that he was friends with his hero, and that Onegin has traits which please him. Onegin's "cold and lazy" soul sometimes awoke to a true feeling of friendship and love, but Onegin was not destined to achieve anything. "The talents of this richly endowed nature," wrote Behnsky, "remained unapplied, his life meaningless." The great democrat and critic saw the reasons for this in the social conditions. Behnsky considered Onegin "an egoist perforce. There is fate here," he wrote "which is contained in the realities of life."

Pushkin contrasts his "strange companion," Onegin, with Tatyana, whom he calls "the true ideal." Tatyana, the direct opposite of Onegin, is the personification of simplicity and sincerity, her feeling is strong and direct. Pushkin wished to emphasize in Tatyana a certain intimacy—a conventional intimacy, it is true—with the people, the very name—Tatyana—had for Pushkin's contemporaries a "plebeian" sound.

What is the essence of Tatyana's spiritual richness, what is the source of the strength of her character? Tatyana, like Natasha Rostova in Tolstoi's "War and Peace," goes through a transformation which changes her entire psychology. Social circumstances transform Tatyana into a society woman, a model of "propriety." Tatyana falls into the power of the false, conventional morals of "society" which consecrated by the "sacrament" of marriage the union of utterly incompatible people.

"But I became another's wife,
I shall be true to him through life " ¹

Tatyana's strength does not, of course, lie in this "faithfulness" to sanctimonious private ownership morality. Dostoyevsky, in his famous speech on the unveiling of Pushkin's monument in Moscow in 1880, glorified Tatyana for the burden of suffering which she took upon herself, for the slavish "meekness" which Dostoyevsky himself preached, proclaiming it the fundamental trait of the Russian people.

Worship of meek acceptance of suffering was entirely alien to Pushkin, as he could not find any justification for slavery. Tatyana's strength lies not in her "meekness," but in the trueness and integrity of her feelings, her strength, as Behnsky expressed it, lies in the "combination of simplicity and truth," in the "integrity" of her character. It is just this "integrity" that Pushkin contrasts with the crumbled-up, fruitless, sceptical individualism of Onegin, who knows only one kind of consistency—the consistency of indifference. Tatyana rejects Onegin's love. Pushkin's idea of historical "retribution" for the social inferiority of this "superfluous man," Onegin, is embodied in this simple human decision of Tatyana.

In Pushkin's portrayal of Lensky we perceive first of all ironical notes But such a perception is, undoubtedly, one-sided We cannot ignore the fact that Lermontov in his poem on Pushkin death's compared the fate of the poet, who perished in a duel, with the fate of Lensky, "the unknown but beloved bard "

Lensky is a romanticist, and this fact alone is sufficient to determine Pushkin's attitude towards him Pushkin speaks ironically of the vagueness of his romantic effusions, of his groundlessness But at the same time Pushkin sums up, so to say, the romanticism of his own recent past and marks gratefully its better aspects

In their further historical development the Lenskys degenerated In the 1840's Behnky derided the Lenskys of his days in whom he rightly saw "the foes of all progress Eternally preoccupied with introspection, and imagining themselves the center of the universe, they look on imperturbably at everything going on in the world around them and keep on repeating that happiness lies within us, and that our souls should strive for heavenly dreams and stop thinking of the vanities of the earth, where starvation and need are present "

Pushkin's Lensky had not as yet outlived himself His romantic sincerity in contradistinction to the general background of "inane society"—with its "indispensable fools" (or "resplendent fools" as Pushkin calls them elsewhere)—disposes us favorably towards him In Pushkin's time, Lensky's fate could shape itself in various manners among other possibilities Pushkin foresaw also the chance

"To be hanged like Ryleyev "

Lensky's "liberty-loving dreams" were especially dear to Pushkin Now and again Pushkin made Lensky voice his own innermost thoughts Lensky believed

that some were marked by Fate
To sacred friendship dedicate
And that this noble, deathless race
Shall lead us to a world of grace,
And that ineffably brilliant rays
Will then illuminate our days

These words about the ultimate triumph of the light,—the humanism, have particularly deep meaning for the citizens of the Soviet Union

The people in "Eugene Onegin" are—using Pushkin's expression—"speechless " But the great poet reminds us in the novel that the people

bound in serfdom are "enslaved " These words are consonant with the scourging lines of Pushkin's "Village" (1819) •

"Where gaunt slaves wither in the reins
Of an inexorable owner "

Pushkin recounted in "Eugene Onegm" of the "pauperized muzhiks," he narrated of the miserable "celebration" by the peasant whose jade "is trudging somehow atrot" The poet tells of the serf-girls who are ordered to sing while picking berries —

"Where the maids sang to keep from cheating
The masters of the berry-crop
They dared not let their voices drop
For if they sing, they can't be eating " ¹

Chastisement by the master awaits these girls The landowner Larina quite often "beats her servant-girl angrily "

Pushkin did not give direct portrayals of the common people in "Eugene Onegin" with the exception of Tatyana's old nurse and Onegm's housekeeper Still Pushkin was justified in speaking of the "common folk" chapters of "Eugene Onegin " There is a popular breath in his descriptions of "low nature " The "serf-boy's" sled and the coachman's sheepskin coat are organically interwoven in Pushkin's landscape

Here and there we find historical recollections of the destinies of the people In "Onegms journey" the poet tells about the *burlaki* (Volga barge-haulers), who "sing in a plaintive voice "

"How Stenka Razin of old
Stained the Volga waves with blood "

The folk motif in "Eugene Onegin" is not exhausted, of course, by the lines where the poet speaks directly of common people These motifs are manifested in the novel indirectly, giving their color to the entire conception of the novel, penetrating its entire artistic structure, its poetic language Belinsky wrote that Onegin "may be called an encyclopedia of Russian life "

Many of Pushkin's innermost thoughts found their expression in "Eugene Onegin " Here was also reflected the heartache of the poet, who was suffocating in the clutches of his contemporary Russian life As he expressed it in a letter in 1824 "Holy Russia is becoming unendurable!"

Marx, who learned the Russian language in order to be able to read Russian literature in the original, valued Pushkin highly. He not only read "Eugene Onegin" but also cited it in his famous work "The Critique of Political Economy." Marx quoted the well-known lines of Pushkin's novel where Adam Smith and political economy are mentioned. Engels also quoted these lines in his letter of 1891 to the first Russian translator of "Capital," H. Danielson.



PUSHKIN'S LYRICAL POETRY

By Prof L TIMOFEYEV

I

There are writers whose works are interesting only as relics of a certain epoch. And there are other writers whose voices, retaining their warmth and freshness, speak straight to us across the centuries. In this peculiar war of a writer against time, lyrical poetry is perhaps the genre most difficult to preserve.

The human characters created by a novelist, the intricacy of a plot narrated by some master story-teller, however remote the described characters and events are from our present-day life, may still be of interest to us. But it is incomparably more difficult for lyrical poetry to fight against the odds of time, harder for it to penetrate into our consciousness and touch chords that will vibrate to its note and awaken in us a live response notwithstanding the historical distance that separates us from the writer.

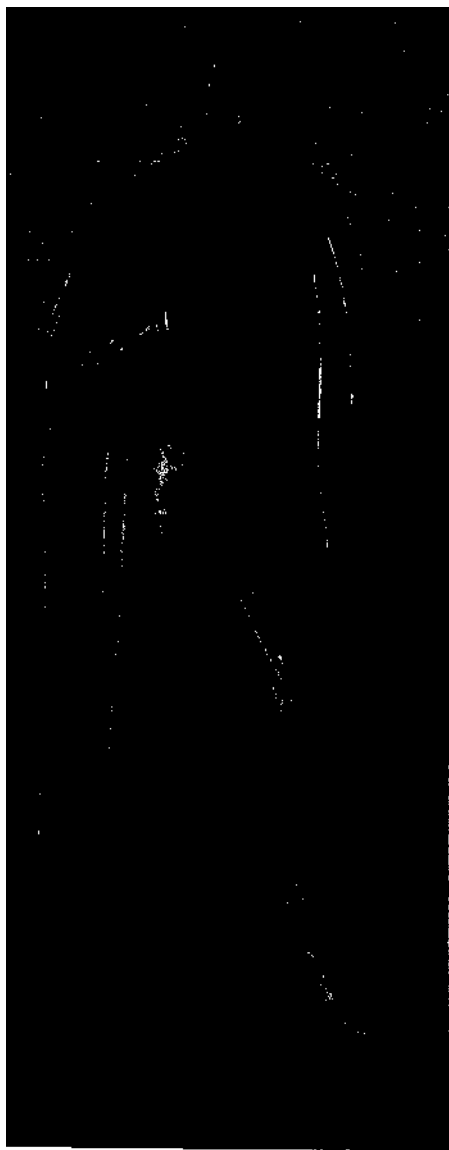
Pushkin is one of the few lyrical poets of world fame who have stood the test of time. He speaks to us across a hundred years "as a living man with the living speaks."

In Pushkin's works and particularly in his lyrics one is struck by the great variety of forms, by the marvellous amplitude of human thoughts and emotions, ranging from the most intimate feelings of love to great political problems, from jocose madrigals to angry satire. In one of his poems Pushkin likened a poet's task to that of an "echo," which gives an answer to everything.

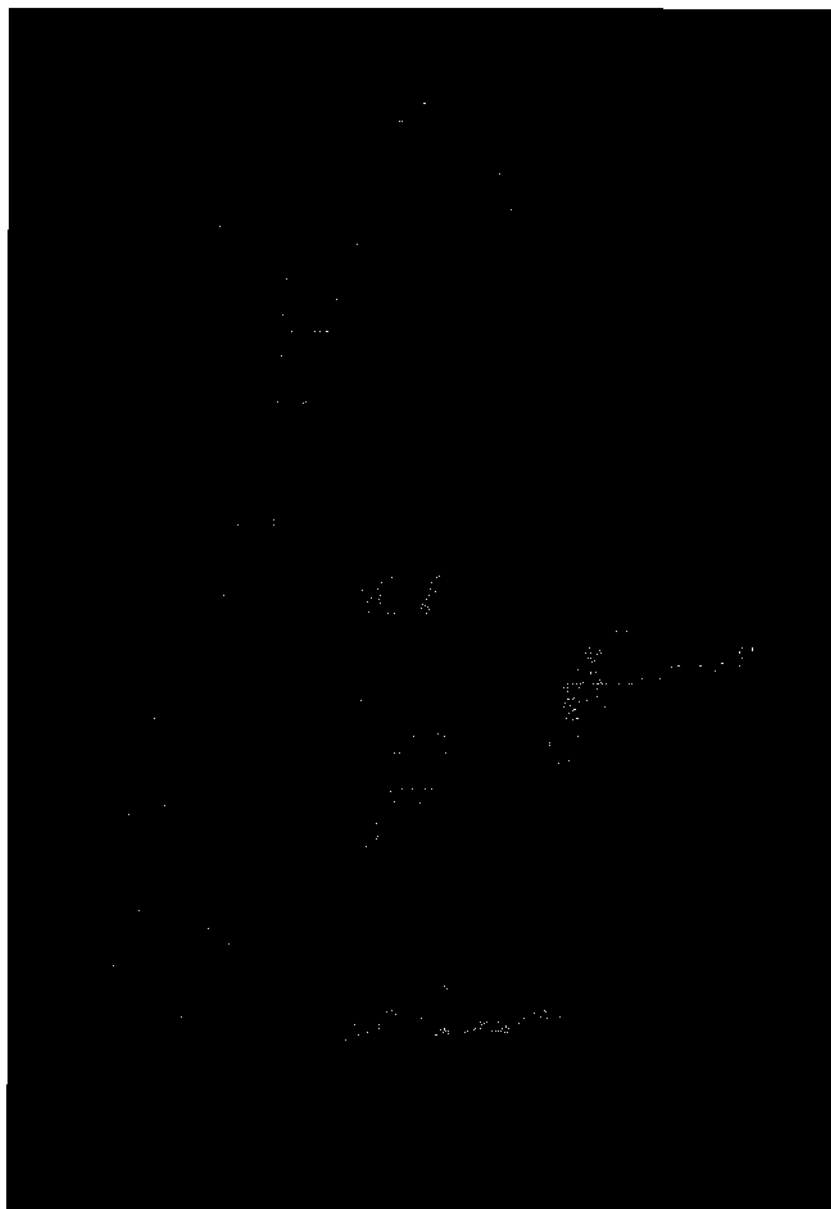
Pushkin possessed the wonderful art of rendering the (most complicated events of social life as if they were his own personal experiences, transforming an epoch into his own biography. And at the same time he reveals his own personal experiences with such profundity that they assume a social significance, and the biography of the poet becomes the biography of an epoch. The afflictions of the poet, his wrath and sorrow, his joys and griefs assume the importance of social events.



Memorial at Dolskoe Selo (now called Pushkin).
R. Bach, 1899

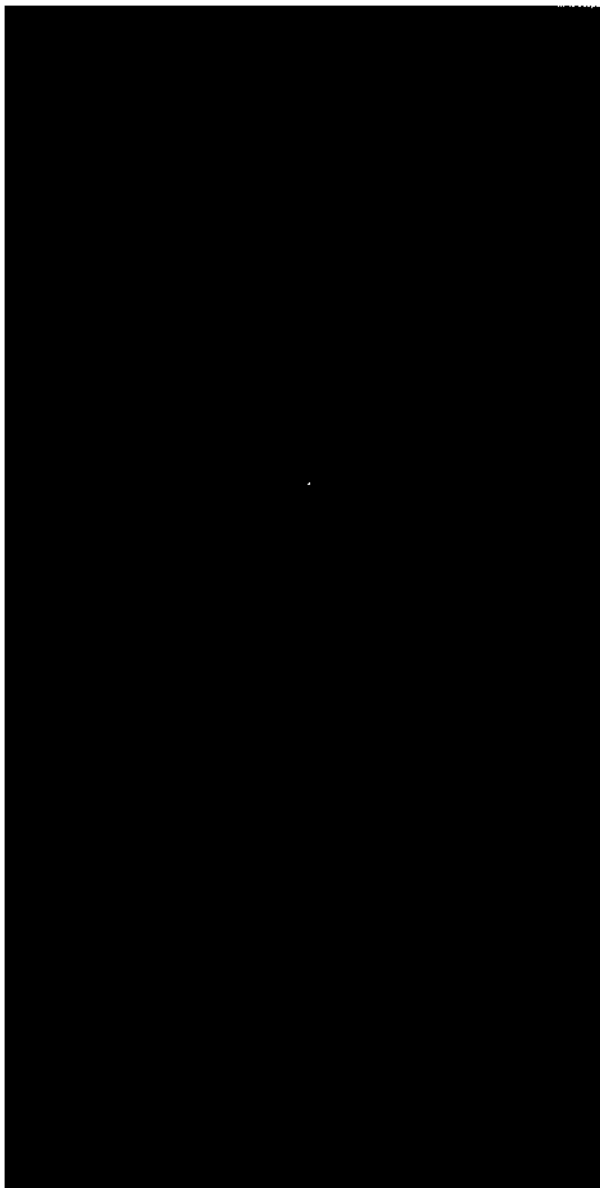


Memorial in Moscow.
A. Opekushin, 1875



Bust.

P. Trubetsky. Plaster, 1899



Statuette.
A. Suvorov. Plaster, 1936

The unfading freshness of Pushkin's lyrical poetry emanates from the deep humaneness and progressiveness of his genius. Pushkin portrays the noble-minded, harmonious character of man with great power. In his poetry are embodied the thoughts and feelings of the finest men of his time. They are rendered with such force that, while they retain their historical colour, at the same time have an immediate effect upon us, deeply stirring our emotions

Pushkin's poems are full of deep social content. Hatred for despotism, warm sympathy with the masses of the people, are organic elements of his lyrical poetry

"Amidst the thriving fields and hills
It grieves the friend of man to see
Everywhere the deadly shame of ignorance
The savage lords, by brutal arbitrary rule,
By whip and birch appropriate
The peasant's labour, property and time "

The expression "friend of man," so typical of the time of the French Revolution, emphasizes Pushkin's intellectual kinship with the ideas of this revolution. One of the predominating themes in Pushkin's lyrics and his works in general — the theme of free man and a free country — was closely connected with the ideas of the French Revolution

"While freedom kindles us, my friend,
While honor calls us and we hear it,
Come to our country let us lend
The noble promptings of the spirit" ¹

A broad social perspective, a desire to develop as fully as possible all the faculties dormant in human nature, the dream of a free man in a free country — all these are essential elements of Pushkin's lyrical poetry.

In his poetry Pushkin writes with equal force and sincerity about the main political problems of his time and about the most intimate emotions. His love lyrics retain all their charming beauty even to-day, because Pushkin imbued them with humanism in the best sense of the word.

Pushkin's lyrical poetry is distinguished by the fullness and vividness of the love sentiments expressed, by chastity in his descriptions of the most intimate human relations, by respect for woman; it encompasses the whole range of human emotions.

Karamzin, whose views predominated at the time Pushkin's poetical genius was maturing, warned poets against "an inflated description of the

horrible scenes of nature " He wrote that "young fosterlings of the Muses had better render in verse the first impressions of love, friendship and the gentle beauty of nature" (1797)

Pushkin did not follow Karamzin's reactionary precepts. He did not hide himself from the world, he never screened the contradictions of that world with "the gentle beauty of nature " He fought bravely against social injustice With deep pain he drew pictures of life, facing courageously the bitter truths of reality

Pushkin's lyrical poetry was the poetry of socially potent realism A close contact with the advanced ideas of his time, a ready response to the principal questions of the epoch—all this is typical of Pushkin's poetical work The experience of the great Russian poet proves the truth of Goethe's saying that "he who forgets the Today will be forgotten by the Tomorrow "

II

Pushkin's great mastery of verse, unexcelled in Russian poetry, consisted in his ability to build up his poetical lines on the living intonations of human speech in full accord with the nature of the depicted sentiments In this respect the form of his lyrical poetry was as realistic as its content For the first time in the history of Russian poetry, verse sounded as living human speech with real intonations of grief and joy, wrath and merriment in accord with the many-sided content of Pushkin's lyrical poetry

Pushkin's verses are full of weighty content, for the peculiar forms in which he clothed them (intonation, rhythm, etc) are in full harmony with the emotions depicted in them We shall adduce only one example showing Pushkin's treatment of "enjambements"¹ In this example Pushkin introduces a highly emotional pause by breaking a closely connected sentence

His poem "Message to Siberia," addressed to the Decembrists who were exiled by the tsar for having taken part in the uprising of December 1825, contrasts the miserable lot of the Decembrists with their future victory In this poem there is only one "enjambement," one break, and when we look closely at this break we can understand more clearly the nature of Pushkin's verse He writes

"The heavy chains will fall,
The dungeons will collapse—and freedom (enjambement)

¹ Beginning a phrase at the end of a line of a poem and completing it in the next

With joy will greet you at the door,
Your brothers will restore to you your sword "

Here at the instant of highest tension, at the most tender word—*freedom*—the voice of the poet quavered, as it were, and broke under the weight of emotion. The line is lighted by an emotional pause showing the sentiments overwhelming the poet and at the same time lending it the ring of profound human emotion. It is this humaneness that underlies Pushkin's mastery of verse.

His poem "The Bronze Horseman" contains an unusually large number of breaks. By studying these breaks carefully one may note the exceptionally fine artistic discretion used in their distribution. Of Peter the First, Pushkin speaks in solemn rhetorical tones, of Yevgeni, in the vein of deep human compassion. In the lines referring to Peter there are almost no breaks. Practically all the breaks are distributed in the lines devoted to Yevgeni.

Thus the humaneness of Pushkin's poetry determines the humaneness of its emotional vibration—its living emotional colour. This was an innovation introduced by Pushkin as a poet who created new forms of poetical expression to correspond to the weighty content of his works.

III

The dark reaction of tsar Nicholas I weighed heavily upon Pushkin. While overcoming the resistance of his environment at the cost of a great expenditure of energy, Pushkin created the character of his harmonious man. The hard struggle waged by Pushkin against his environment could not but have its effect on his lyrical poetry.

At the beginning of his poetical career Pushkin cherished the belief that he would retain his youthfulness until his dying day. But in the 1830's he let fall the words "No happiness on earth, but only freedom and repose." This is not to say that toward the end of his life Pushkin had lost his former power. On the contrary, his epic works of the 1830's display a further development of his creative powers, a widening of his outlook. At the same time, his treatment of social problems is marked by greater acuteness. However, in Pushkin's lyrical poetry more than in any of his other genres were reflected the moods engendered by his oppressive environment, the baiting of the court circles and the poet's loneliness. The poet's dreams of freedom and of the harmonious man came into ever sharper conflict with the reality of his environment.

* * *

Turning to his friend, the poet Delvig, Pushkin asked him to solve this riddle "Who in the Iron Age the Golden Age discerned?"

We are fully justified in saying that by his works Pushkin himself provided the solution of this riddle. In the years of reaction of Nicholas I, moving in circles of society which hunted and baited him with blind stupidity, the doomed poet in his lyrical poetry spoke more of the future than of the present. In a Russia fettered in the chains of slavery he saw in his mind's eye the time when he would be revered by peoples who in his time were too backward because they were bent under the yoke of the colonizing autocracy. In a society where man was subdued and oppressed Pushkin was dreaming of free, harmonious, rational and noble-minded human personality.

Noble-minded man developing his faculties in a free country—such is the key-note of Pushkin's lyrical poetry, which broke through all the obstacles placed in its way by the historical situation of those days. Such is the high bridge that has brought Pushkin over the flood of years to us, to the shores of the country which is realizing his dream of freedom and of real humanism.

Speaking of Tolstoi, Lenin said that the treasures of his writings were known to an insignificant minority of the people and that only the Socialist Revolution would make his works the patrimony of the whole people.

This applies also to Pushkin whose works are now accessible to every cultured person in the Soviet Union.

Only in the Soviet Union, has Pushkin become a really popular and national poet because only now has his poetry become the possession of the masses. Only now has the richness of the inner content of his lyrical poetry become truly appreciated, and is becoming a part of the consciousness and conduct of the free man of the Soviet land.



PUSHKIN'S EPIC POEMS

By Prof M KHRAPCHENKO

Pushkin, the literary master, the man of great sentiment and ideas, with his striking emotional and lyrical perception of life, showed a bent for works involving a broad comprehension of the world. An incomparable lyrical poet, he was at the same time author of remarkable epic works. In Pushkin's view lyrical poetry was not incompatible with epos. In his epic works he wished to remain a poet who expressed much in little, striving to attain the maximum of tenseness and pointedness. These distinguishing features of Pushkin's literary genius made the epic poem his favourite genre, and he wrote epic poems at the various stages of his literary path.

"Ruslan and Ludmila" was Pushkin's first important work that appeared in print (1817—1820). It was written with youthful fervour and played an important part in the history of Russian literature.

In this poem Pushkin discarded the principles of classicism, the dominant literary tendency of the days, and broke with the exuberance and pomposity of the classical style, the poet could no longer be satisfied with the anaemic pallor and dryness of "elevated" poetry, and the conventionality and narrowness of the gallant court literature was foreign to him. The easy flow of poetical narration, concreteness and full-bloodedness in manner of portrayal are the dominating elements in "Ruslan and Ludmila".

"Ruslan and Ludmila" takes the reader into ancient Russia. Prince Vladimir gives his daughter in marriage to a knight called Ruslan. On the wedding night the beautiful bride Ludmila is abducted by the sorcerer Chernomor. Four knights set out, in search of the vanished princess. The description of the "heroic" adventure of the knights is imbued with fine humour and is rendered in a merry, playful tone. The "grand" knights are treated by Pushkin with derision, there is very little "chivalrous" magnanimity and nobility in their manner and neither is valour among their virtues.

"Ruslan and Ludmila" is full of comical descriptions of the world of magic. The poetry of mystery was being grafted on Russian literature at

that period Zhukovsky had done a great deal to develop magic and mystery literature in Russia In his poem Pushkin parodied Zhukovsky's ballad "The Twelve Sleeping Maidens" with its tales of horror The sorcerer Chernomor is a comical personage The "horrors" call forth nothing but a smile The idea of two worlds so typical of the reactionary romanticists is severely condemned by Pushkin* Both heroics and mystery recede to the background before the worldly experiences of man, before the charm of human emotions The humorous narration is very often interrupted by scenes of riotous enjoyment of the good things of life

In "Ruslan and Ludmila" there are strong notes of the hymn of life

A merry host of youthful maidens
Are clustering around the khan
With young sweet smelling birch-tree branches
One of the maidens fans the knight,
And fragrance on the air is wafted
Another one his tired limbs
Soothes with essence of spring roses
And lavishly his curls dark
With aromatic scents perfumes
Enveloped in his blissful raptures
The knight forgot the captive princess
But yesterday so dear to him
Tormented by the sweetest yearnings,
His wand'ring eye is all aglow,
Tense with voluptuous expectation
His heart is melting, he's on fire

Both the manner of narration and the poetical language of the poem were marked by their daring and novelty In this poem Pushkin made ample use of common popular language and of popular tales and legends The popular style of the poem and the new path struck by it gave rise to sharp controversies and served even as a cause of severe attacks on the part of the followers of the old school The poem was the first weighty blow struck by the young poet at the beginning of a literary demarcation between the writers of the pseudo-classical school and the followers of the new tendency in literature

Pushkin called for assertion of life and sang its joys In his "Gavrihada" Pushkin makes even the denizens of heaven partake of the feast of earthly enjoyment Pushkin relates of the love which the lord of heaven, the archangel Gabriel and Satan feel for the virgin Mary, of their rivalry, struggle and love intrigues The influence of Voltaire's

"Maid of Orleans" is here clearly in evidence. However, the peculiar feature of Pushkin's "Gavriiliada" is that its "heroes" are the lords of heaven hence the great expressiveness and keenness of the poem. The poet relates with charming humour how the denizens of heaven fall a prey to mortal feelings, emotions and passions.

Let's speak about the strange affairs of love

You too, o lord, hast known its palpitantion,
You too, o lord, like man, hast known its flame
God, the creator's tired of creation,
He's bored with heaven's sen-ices and prayers—
He psalms of tender love begins to chant
And sing aloud "I love you, Mary,
My immortality in weariness I drag
Where are my wings? To Mary shall I fly
And on her breast shall find my relaxation
Et caetera all that he could contrive
Noticing the angel's gifts and wit
The lord of hosts had lavished on him praise,
Appointed him as confidential envoy
And after dusk to Mary sent in haste

The actions of the gods are in no way distinguishable from those of men. Rivalry, struggle and deceit thrive in heaven as they do on earth. Pushkin in his "Gavrihada" was preaching atheistical ideas and demolishing heavenly idols.

The publication of Pushkin's "Gavrihada" could not even be thought of. In 1828, when manuscript copies of the poem began to be circulated, the tsarist government rightly presuming that the author of this poem could be no other than Pushkin, subjected the poet to an examination. Once more, for the third time, the poet was confronted with the menace of exile. This time it meant remote Siberia. Pushkin preferred to deny his authorship of the poem. Only after the Revolution of 1917 was "Gavrihada" published in full, hitherto only fragments of the poem appeared in print.

Pushkin was dethroning gods and storming heaven, for the sake of man and earthly life. The poet was inspired by the idea of the full development of man. By his whole nature Pushkin was a humanist in the broadest and noblest sense of the word. Having been educated according to the best standards of West-European culture and organically associated with the Decembrist movement, Pushkin strove with all his heart for new social forms of human life.

The autocracy zealously guarded the traditions of serfdom. Free thought was suppressed. The system of feudal hierarchy throttled

the social life of Russia. A man was judged not by his qualities but by his birth, blood and social station. "The uniform, only the uniform" dominated everything Asiatic inertness and stagnation reigned supreme blighting all that was best in society. And in this gloomy atmosphere of the reaction of Nicholas I Pushkin sang his hymn of Man Man was the hero of his poems, Man, free of all hierarchic and social gradations.

In his "The Prisoner of the Caucasus" written in 1821 Pushkin draws a contrast between a proud independent individuality and a society that tolerates nothing new

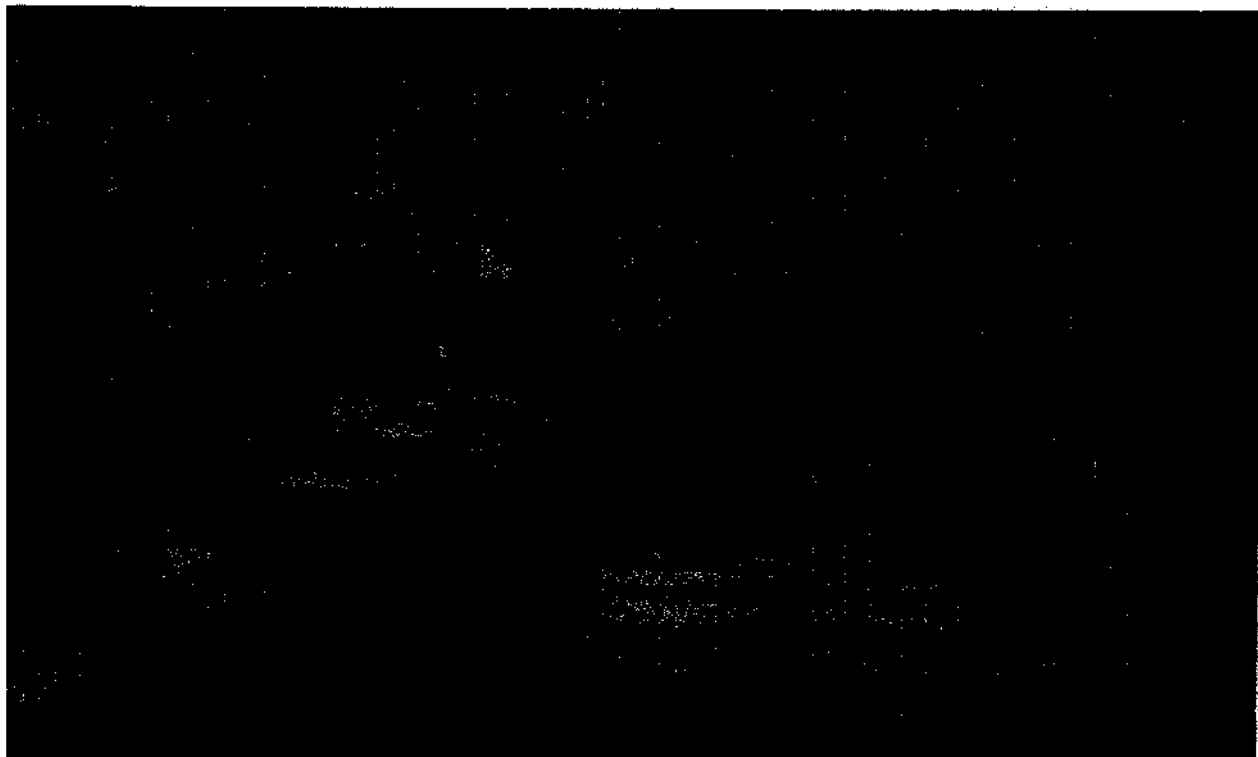
He knew the truth of world and men,
He knew of faithless life the value
Having found treason in hearts of friends
And nightmares in the dreams of love,
No longer willing to be a victim
Of vanity by him so long
Despised, of double-tongued malice
Or simple-hearted calumny,
World's fugitive, the friend of nature,
Departed from his homely bounds
And to a distant country fled
Allured by freedom's joyful vision
O Freedom! It is you alone
He looked for in the world of deserts

The hero of "The Prisoner of the Caucasus" flees to the Caucasus where the wild freedom of primitive, natural life had been preserved. The poet endows his hero, who dared to rebel, with traits of inner greatness and peculiar power

His anguish, his rebellious spirit
He buried deeply in his heart

The captive on a mountain's summit
Alone above a thund'ring cloud
Would the return of sun await,
Beyond the reach of raging storm,
He'd to the claps and howl of tempest
Be listening with a thrill of joy

Disappointed in people, the hero of "The Prisoner of the Caucasus" finds no peace here either. He is indifferent to all that proceeds around him; even the grandeur and beauty of the Caucasus leaves him cold



Pushkin Reciting His Ode at the Lyceum.

I. Repin. Detail of an oil painting, 1911



Pushkin Among the Decembrists in Kamenka.

D. N. Kardovsky. Pen drawing, 1934

This time not one dared to pursue us,
We reached the other shore in safety
And to the woods!

Pushkin saw bow under the conditions prevailing in his days people were thrown on the refuse heap of life and he keenly felt the hatred burning in their hearts Pushkin felt deep sorrow for those whom society was callously mutilating and turning into human waste

Strong characters, people of strong passions, attracted the attention of the poet "The Fountain of Bakhchisarai" is a poem depicting sharp conflicts and great characters The heroes of this poem—Ghirey, Zarema and Mary have the breath of heated passion Mary is placed in the harem She strains all the (power of her will to escape the horrible fate of a concubine Ghirey's love for Mary excites the jealousy of the hot-tempered Zarema In vain did she attempt to regain her place in Ghirey's heart, the khan grew indifferent to her Tormented by jealousy Zarema kills Mary and perishes herself The vivid emotions of these heroes are rendered by Pushkin with great expressiveness

The theme of the Orient, of "free" peoples, was an integral part of all romantic poems depicting extraordinary characters The austere simplicity and naturalness of the East is contrasted with the effeminateness and falsity of upper society

All's scanty, wild and so discordant,
But so alive and full of ferment,
So alien to our lifeless joys
And to our idle mode of living
Just like a tedious tune of bondslaves

In the *romantic* poems of Pushkin one can feel the influence of Byron However, the poems are not imitations, and Pushkin's original talent revealed itself with great power in these poems The boundless pessimism and despondency so typical of Byron is not to be found in Pushkin who had a much broader world outlook, and that is the reason why Byron's influence on Pushkin was not of long duration In his "Gypsies" (1824) Pushkin dethrones Byron's heroes In this poem Pushkin is already entering, so to speak, into a controversy with Byron

The idea of the non-acceptance of a society founded on falsity underlies his poem "The Gypsies"

The vileness of their stifling town!
Where men do herd in crowds, nor breathe
The morning fresh, or mountain free,
Or scent of spring on meadow sweet,

Are shamed of love, and banish thought,
 Consent to sell their freedom dear,
 To fetish idols bow their heads,
 Will sue for pelf, and hug their chains
 What have I left? The falsers' he,
 The smirking bigot's narrow creed,
 The senseless hate of unwashed mob,
 Ranks, orders, titles, bought with shame ¹

Aleko, the hero of "The Gypsies," feels oppressed by his environment and leaves it. He is attracted by the free life of the Gypsies. However, he ignores social ties and places his own will and wishes above them. The personal strivings of the individual are the all important things for him. He cared nothing for the traditions of the Gypsy camp or for the wishes and desires of other people. Zemfira, a free Gypsy girl, was in love with him. But later her love for him passed away and she fell in love with somebody else. Aleko, offended by this "self-will" of Zemfira, kills both, her and her lover. And the old Gypsy says to him:

"Go, leave us now, thou haughty man!
 We wild folk have no law to bind,
 To torture, or to punish men,
 We need no sinner's blood, or groans,
 Nor can we with a murd'rer live
 Thou art not born for wild free will,
 Thou wouldst thyself alone be free,
 Thy voice will strike but terror here
 Among the good and free in soul,
 Harsh thou art and rash so, leave us!
 Farewell, and peace abide with thee!" ¹

Pushkin sang the praises of human individuality, but he was at the same time utterly against egocentrism.

In the Character of Aleko the poet had in fact laid bare the contradictions of bourgeois individualism. A man brought up in a bourgeois environment is prepared to rebel against the handicaps of society, but places his own egoistic aims in the centre of the world. This kind of hero became more and more estranged from Pushkin. From the portrayal of individualistic rebels Pushkin passed to the portrayal of society, to the creation of real characters.

This manner of creative work found its expression in his "Eugene Onegin." Here Pushkin's realistic method fully asserted itself. The origin

¹ From Charles E. Turner's translation

of this method may be traced to his narrative poems in which Pushkin never departed from reality. Underlying his romantic poems is the living sense of a real world. However, in his poems Pushkin expressed the contradictions of reality in an abstract and conventional form. The actual relations were depicted in the form of the relations between an individual and society. The romantic poems represented a stage on the road to realism or the embryonic form of the latter. The further development of Pushkin's realism demanded the inclusion in his poetry of the multiform aspects of life as a whole.

In his poem "Count Nulin" Pushkin, in a humorous vein, depicts prosaic reality.

In th' last dates of September
(Excuse this turn of vulgar prose)
How boring life is in the village—
Cold winds, thin flakes of snow, mud, rain,
The howl of wolves. But how it gladdens
The hunter's heart. He knows no rest,
On horseback in the fields he prances,
He finds his bed where'er he can,
He curses, drenched in rain, and riots
In th' joy of devastating raids
In the meantime what does his wife do
At home alone without her husband?
Well, has not she enough to do?
To pickle mushrooms, feed the geese,
To give the orders for the meals,
To peep into the shed' and pantry
A mistress' eye is sorely needed
To see that nothing is a miss

The poet depicts plain ordinary people who however have a predilection for vulgar romanticism.

In his "Count Nulin" Pushkin depicts a Lucretia of the Russian manor.

"At the end of 1825," wrote Pushkin, "I was in the country. While reading over Shakespeare's rather weak poem 'Lucrece' I thought that had it occurred to Lucretia to give Tarquinius a box on the ear, it would perhaps have cooled his spirit and forced him to retreat in disgrace. Lucretia would not have committed suicide, Publius would not have become enraged, the caesars would not have been driven out and the world and history might have been different."

Lucretia was turned by Pushkin into a lady dying of ennui in the country and Tarquinius into Count Nulin who happened to pass that country place. The "heroes" of this poem, possessing no outstanding qualities, appear before us with all their simple sentiments and actions. The tragedy is gone and there only remains a vulgar incident depicted in an artistic manner with unusual wit, lightness and brilliance.

The reactionary critics of that time wanted the poet to educate people in a "conservative" spirit. His retort in the form of avoidance of moralization is typical of both "Count Nulin" and "A Little House at Kolomna." Pushkin achieved the needed effect in spite of the censorship. He wrote:

And blessed is he who of his tongue is master,
Who firmly holds his inmost thoughts in leash,
Who in his heart becalms, subdues of stifles
The serpent's sudden hiss that there resounds
"No moping" is my doctor's strictest order
So if you please, I'll rather drop this subject !

The poem "A Little House at Kolomna" is interesting because in this poem Pushkin depicts a new social environment. From the inmates of manors and outcasts Pushkin passes to the democratic sections of society. Pushkin takes his heroes from among the "poor" people who live on the outskirts of the city. The poet is attracted by the type of a plain girl who is leading a life of toil.

Parasha (so was our bonny (maiden called)
Could scour, wash and iron, sow and plait

The poet compares this plain girl with a countess, a beauty of vain and haughty demeanour.

I recollect the countess often here
Would come (her name I do not now remember)
Compared with her
Parasha seemed a poor, poor thing indeed

And nevertheless Pushkin gives all preference to the modest Parasha who with her simplicity of manner and her natural beauty is placed above the countess.

But happier a hundred times was she
With whom, my reader, you have made acquaintance
My simple-hearted, dear good soul, Parasha

Time essential mark distinguishing "A Little House at Kolomna" from the other poems and particularly from "Count Nuhn" is the representation of types of plain people, the portrayal of the life of toilers

While working on "Eugene Onegin," a novel in verse, and on "The Negro of Peter the Great," a historical novel of social life, Pushkin was at the same time writing his epic "Poltava." The pivotal idea of this poem is the contrast between the unity of the state and the mutinous attempt at dismemberment and disunion. The poem depicts one of the most interesting stages in Russian history, viz. the period of Peter I who effected the reform of the country and consolidated its power and unity. The central figure of the poem is Mazeppa, hetman of the Ukraine. Entering upon his struggle against Peter, Mazeppa concludes an alliance with the Swedes, with Charles XII. Pushkin condemns the traitor to his country. Mazeppa is stimulated in his actions by his insatiable ambition and his lust of revenge. Mazeppa is urged into the fight not by ideas of freedom or of the welfare of the people but by purely egoistical motives.

Not many probably do know
That he's a man of tameless will,
That he by hook or crook prepared is
His enemies to trap and down,
That till his death he would bear malice
To those who slighted him but once,
That gratitude is not his virtue,
That there is nothing he holds sacred,
That in his heart there is no love,
That human Mood he'd spill like water,
That he despises and mocks freedom,
That "fatherland" is nought to him

Mazeppa sacrifices the interests of the country and the life of those near to him to his personal ambition. Mary, the daughter of his friend Kochubey, secretly leaves her parents' home to share with the intrepid old man, Mazeppa, unequal love and the dangers of heroic battles. But Mazeppa was a base and treacherous man. Without any hesitation he executes Kochubey, her father, being fully aware that this act meant the doom of Mary who left her parents for his sake. Thus the figure of the traitor to his own country stands revealed before us in its disgusting nakedness.

In contrast to the type of the cunning traitor Mazeppa Pushkin depicts Peter I as the embodiment of the idea of the unity of the country.

Peter I is also depicted in Pushkin's poem "Bronze Horseman," but here a conflict of a different nature is developed

In his "The Bronze Horseman" Pushkin sings the praise of culture transforming human activity

Where once, by that low-lying shore,
In waters never known before
The Finnish fisherman, sole creature,
And left forlorn by step dame Nature,
Cast ragged nets—today, along
Those shores, astir with life and motion,
Vast shapely palaces in throng
And towers are seen from every ocean,
From the world's end, the ships come fast,
To reach the loaded quays at last ¹

Human labour brings life where there was none Wilderness and waste are changed by creative work In the course of man's persevering struggle with nature wonderiul objects are being created In the poem Petersburg is taken as the symbol of all-conquering culture

A century—and that city young,
Gem of the Northern world, amazing,
From gloomy wood and swamp upsprung,
Had risen in pride and splendor blazing ¹

In this connection the personality of Peter I, the founder of Petersburg, is shown in a very favourable light

However, the culture grafted upon the country by the will of the autocrat benefited only the upper classes while the lower orders had to suffer all the privations and bear all the sacrifices For these orders this culture was the source of incalculable suffering

Yevgem, the hero of "The Bronze Horseman," is of the common people He works in some chancery, "shunned the presence of the great" and "cared not of forebears dead and rotten, or antique matters long forgotten " Life made him no presents and "he had to win for himself independence and honour by his own labour " With bitterness in his heart Yevgeni thought of the "idle folk" who "lived easily and lightly " He was not looking for fortune but hoped to gain for himself some modicum of

¹ Translations by Oliver Elton, London, Edward Arnold and Co

happiness. However, reality shattered all his hopes. During the terrible Petersburg flood the people dear to him perished and with them the girl he loved. Happiness proved impossible. The loss of all that is dear to Yevgem is perceived as a symbol of the sacrifices which again and again are being brought for the glory of the autocrats. Shaken by the fateful events Yevgeni went mad. But his thoughts begin to clear when he happens to come across the statue of Peter I. Yevgem recognizes the "potentate", the "lord of doom." In his soul there awakens the feeling of protest, Yevgem is full of indignation and hatred. Yevgem blames Peter for the miserable life man is forced to lead in the city, which bears his name and which he founded for the well-to-do. In the accusations of Yevgem one hears plainly the voice of the lower orders, of the disinherited.

Pushkin saw the contrasts of the city, he felt the growing wrath of the common people and the coming struggle against social inequality.

Where leapest thou? and where, on whom,
Wilt plant thy hoof?—Ah, lord of doom
And potentate, 'twas thus, appearing
Above the void, and in thy hold
A curb of iron, thou sat'st of old
O'er Russia, on her haunches rearing !¹

With Yevgeni the poet introduced into Russian literature a new hero. He is of the common people, a man of toil, a representative of the democratic sections of society. His attitude to despotism, state and culture is revealed in the poem. The new democratic hero so far lacks confidence in his powers and in the justice of his protest. The greatness of Peter overwhelms Yevgem. But when he came to his senses he began to understand the causes of the social evils. Pushkin foreshadows the inevitability of a sharp struggle.

In his "The Bronze Horseman" Pushkin takes an interest not so much in the outward life of his new hero as in his inner world, in the awakening of the spirit of protest, which is revealed by Pushkin with extreme brilliance. The description of his new, democratic hero is warmed up by deep sympathy. The upper circles of society consider the lower orders as mere building material of history. Pushkin, however, was indignant at this barbarous attitude of exploiters and displayed his own attitude of deep humanism. In "The Bronze Horseman" one can hear the echoes of Pushkin's other works such as "The Station-master" and "The Captain's Daughter" in which he denounced slavery and cruelty.

¹ Trans. by Oliver Elton

This poem is distinguished from Pushkin's other works (by the exceptional depth and laconic manner in which the dramatic fate of the people on the lower rungs of the social ladder is depicted

"The Bronze Horseman" has greatly influenced the subsequent development of Russian literature. The types of "poor" men with which our literature teems take their origin from the hero of "The Bronze Horseman."

The poet's palette is exceedingly rich in colour. Pushkin possessed the remarkable art of ironic narration. Introducing lyrical elements in his poetical story and imbuing the latter with his impetuous passion, Pushkin created poems of great power. One is struck by the austere pathos and serene grandeur of this "Poltava." In "The Bronze Horseman" it is the masterful psychological sketch, as well as the monumentality of the epic scenes that make an irresistible impression.

Throughout all his works Pushkin appears before us as a poet who was closely connected with the people. The reason for the great popularity of his works is to be found in the true picture he gives of society and its lower orders and in the great liberationist ideas with which his works are imbued. His penetrating mind of a thinker and his poetical genius have created pictures and images which will stir the emotions of man for a long time to come because they reflect the great truth of life.



PUSHKIN'S PROSE

By V SHKLOVSKI

I

In Pushkin's days Russian prose was chiefly imitative. In 1834 Pushkin wrote an article of which the title alone "The Paltriness of Russian Literature"—is sufficient to show how matters stood. In this article he wrote

"Voltaire and the titans have not a single disciple in Russia, but un-gifted pygmies, fungi that grew up at the roots of the oaks. Dorat, Florian, Marmontel, Guichard, Madame de Genlis, hold sway over Russian literature. Sterne is alien to us all except Karamzin."

Pushkin strove to be a philosophical and literary influence in the country. He wrote for his readers and he was not content with writing poetry only. In an anonymous article published in the third issue of *Sovremennik* (The Contemporary) Pushkin wrote in the name of "Reader from Tver"

"You say that of late an indifference on the part of the public towards poetry, and a preference for novels, stories and the like has been noticeable. But is not poetry always an enjoyment for a few chosen ones while stories and novels are read by all kinds of people everywhere?"

Pushkin began his prose work with an historical novel. The first notes for "The Negro of Peter the Great" were jotted down in 1827.

It was the age of the great historical novels of Walter Scott, and also the age of new ideas on history. The different countries in their struggles against one another during the epoch of the Napoleonic wars were becoming conscious of themselves as nations. The great struggle was giving rise to a feeling for history.

"In our days," wrote Pushkin, "the word 'novel' means an historical epoch developed in the form of an imaginary story. Walter Scott gave rise to a whole throng of imitators."

Novels were written by Bestuzhev, Polevoi and Zagoskin.

The biography of one of Pushkin's ancestors lies at the basis of Pushkin's unfinished historical novel "The Negro of Peter the Great." Peter I bought a Negro called Hannibal. The boy came from Northern Abyssinia.

Peter sent him to Paris where the young man studied and served as an officer in the sappers. The tsar had a high opinion of him and wished to establish a position for him among the snobbish aristocracy. In the fragments of his novel Pushkin described his great-grandfather's life in Paris as that of a young man of society. In actual fact Hannibal, while in France, lived the hard life of an impecunious officer. In taking this subject Pushkin wished to tell a somewhat remarkable story. The fact is that Pushkin's great-great-grandfather on his mother's side was also a Pushkin and in the novel he apparently wished to represent the rivalry between his two great-grand-fathers, the Negro and the Russian, over a Russian woman.

The novel was written quite realistically. Pushkin avoided the danger of giving a conventional picture of the past. Instead he gave an exact description of Peter's society "assemblies," contrasting the life of old Russia with the semi-Europeanised court of Peter.

In "The Negro of Peter the Great" Pushkin strove for a new understanding of history. He brought history nearer to himself and to his reader by making it, as it were, part of his own biography.

Pushkin's serene and objective art is always deeply personal.

"Tales of Belkin" begin with an introduction giving the biography of an imaginary character, Ivan Petrovich Belkin. Belkin is described as an unassuming man of no great education who acquired what learning he had from a village deacon. All the stories of Belkin were written by Pushkin in the autumn of 1830. They include "The Station-master," "Mistress into Maid," "The Shot," "The Snowstorm," and "The Undertaker." There was to have been another story of the series called "Notes of a Young Man." In this unwritten story Pushkin wanted to give a picture of the mutiny of the Chernigov regiment in 1825. But he was obliged to choose more innocent subjects.

The "Tales" were coldly received by the critics. People even spoke of Pushkin's decline. However, the story called "The Station-master" influenced Gogol and Dostoyevsky.

Pushkin does not tell the reader what his attitude should be toward the station-master. He does not make a hero of him nor does he solicit tears. The station-master's daughter, seduced by the hussar, does not come to grief. And yet the reader's sympathy is wholly with the old man and not with the hussar.

Pushkin contrived not to humiliate his hero with pity and it was for this reason that Dostoyevsky ranked "The Station-master" higher than Gogol's "The Greatcoat".

The "Snowstorm" and "The Shot" belonging to the same series are more traditional but are remarkable for their skillful plot.

The author of "History of the Village of Goryukhino" is, like Ivan Petrovich Belkin, a native of this village

In the guise of the history of the village, written by a landowner, Pushkin parodied "The History of the State of Russia" by Karamzin

By reducing the scale of history, he depicted the peasant perfectly naturally. The realistic presentation of the muzhik destroyed the conventionality of the usual presentation of the State. Pushkin strove to give the picture of a village being ruined by the land-steward under the owner's instructions. This is how the "history" ends.

"The meetings of the peasants were abolished. He (the land-steward) collected the quit rent in small installments all the year 'round. In addition he collected unforeseen levies. The peasants did not seem to be paying very much more than formerly but however hard they tried they could not earn or save enough money. In three years Goryukhmo became entirely destitute.

"Goryukhmo was a dismal sight, the market place empty, the songs of Arkhip the Bald were heard no more and the children went out begging. One half of the peasants was busy in the fields and the others became farm hands. The day of the patron saint became in the words of the records 'not a day of rejoicing but an anniversary of sorrows and of prayers of distress'."

It was impossible to continue in this strain. This would have been still more unacceptable to the censor than the story of a mutiny in the army.

The work was abandoned. Many years later our great satirist Saltykov-Shchedrin wrote "The History of a Certain Town" which clearly echoes Pushkin's "History of the Village of Goryukhmo."

Of all Pushkin's prose works the one that was most popular during his lifetime was the story entitled "The Queen of Spades."

People wrote enthusiastically about it and declared that in it the Russian literary language had been created.

This was perhaps the only one of Pushkin's later works that met with success. Pushkin wrote:

"My 'The Queen of Spades' is in great fashion. Card players punt on the three, the seven and the ace. At court a resemblance has been detected between the old countess and princess Natalia Petrovna, and apparently no offense is taken."

This story has a perfectly worked-out plot and is remarkable for its economy of words and the range of its dramatic action.

It cannot be doubted that when he wrote it Pushkin knew Stendhal's "Red and Black." The type of the young man out for success was bound up in those days with the figure of Napoleon.

The idea of the "Napoleon" who considers himself above good and evil is met with again in Raskolnikov in Dostoyevsky's "Crime and Punishment"

"Napoleonism" as an exaggerated thirst for personal success was a typical phenomenon in Pushkin's time as well

Pushkin makes Hermann resemble Napoleon and at the same time describes him as a mean character

"The Queen of Spades" is an independent solution of those problems with which European art was then concerned. The solution of these problems and the method of solving them differs profoundly from those resorted to by Stendhal and Balzac

In "The Queen of Spades" Pushkin attained the greatest simplicity of language. He uses the shortest possible sentences and hardly ever resorts to the use of adjectives

The following is a passage from this story¹

"It was a terrible night. The wind howled, wet snow fell in large flakes, the street lamps burned dimly, the streets were deserted. From time to time a sleigh driver, looking out for a belated fare, went slowly by, urging on his wretched nag. Hermann stood there without his overcoat, feeling neither the wind nor the snow. At last the Countess's carriage drew up. He saw the old woman in a sable coat being lifted into the carriage by two footmen, then Lizaveta, in a light cloak, with fresh flowers in her hair, flitted by. The carriage door banged. The carriage rolled heavily, over the wet snow. The porter closed the doors. The lights in the windows went out."

II

The circumstances under which "The Captain's Daughter" was written were extremely difficult. Pushkin wrote under the eye of four censors.

The scene of the story is an out-of-the-way fortress somewhere in the steppes not far from present-day Soviet city Magnitogorsk.

The fortresses on the river Yaik were utterly insignificant from the military point of view. They were commanded by officers who, as Catherine herself said, were large landowners tilling the land with the labour of their garrisons.

One of these officers, Stupishin by name, commanding the Verkhneyaisk fortress, wrote to the Bashkirs during the insurrection

¹ From Natalie Duddington's translation, Everyman's Library

"Bashkirs, I know all that you are planning. Know this, however, if any rumours come to my ears that you—thieves and rogues—are waiting for those other thieves to come to you and are supplying them with cattle and food and yourselves with arms. I shall come out against you with my men and shall punish you with cannons and hang you up by the legs and by the ribs and shall burn your houses, corn and hay and destroy your cattle. This day a Bashkir has been caught near Verkhneyaitsk with thievish Tatar letters from the miscreant and this Bashkir has been brought before me and I have commanded that the nose and ears of this Bashkir thief be cut off and I (am sending him to you thieves with this letter from me."

Stones of the cruelties of Russian colonizers (remained in Pushkin's notes but could not be included in the text owing to the censorship

In the notes presented to Nicholas I as material which Pushkin hesitated to publish, there was the following passage. "The punishments inflicted in Bashkiria by the general Prince Urusov were unbelievable. About 130 persons were put to death by every kind of torture." After this Pushkin crosses out the following words which remained only in the rough copy: "Some had stakes driven through them, others were hung up by the ribs on hooks, others were quartered."

"The remainder," continues Pushkin in the clean copy, "to the number of about a thousand, were pardoned after their noses and ears had been cut off. Many of these must have been alive during Pugachov's rebellion."

The old Bashkir who brought the anonymous letter to the Belogorsk fortress is one of these pardoned rebels.

The old man was caught. The question arises as to what is Pugachov's strength.

"We are just going to find out his real strength," said the Commandant, "Vasilisa Yegorovna, give me the key of the storehouse. Ivan Ignatyich, bring the Bashkir and tell Yulai to bring the whip."

"Wait, Ivan Kuzmich," said the Commandant's wife, getting up. "Let me take Masha out of the house, she will be terrified if she hears the screams and, to tell the truth, I don't care for the business myself."

We see from this that torture was frequently inflicted in the fortress. It is shown what an everyday matter these frightful things were.

When the Commandant orders the Bashkir to be tortured, Grinev, who is telling the story, remarks.

"The Commandant's order did not surprise or alarm us."

Pushkin did not describe the torture scene, but he gave an exact description of the Bashkir. This is one of the most detailed descriptions in Pushkin's works.

"I glanced at him and shuddered I shall never forget that man He seemed to be over seventy He had neither nose nor ears His head was shaven, instead of a beard, a few stray gray hairs stuck out; he was small, thin and bent, but his narrow eyes still had a gleam in them

" 'Aha!' said the Commandant, recognizing by the terrible marks one of the rebels punished in 1741 'I see you are an old wolf and have been in our snares Rebelling must be an old game to you, to judge by the look of your head Come nearer, tell me, who sent you?' "

The scene ~~itself~~ is not given although it is said that tortures and ex-tortion of evidence were regularly practised in the fortress The inclusion of a torture scene would not have been permitted But instead of it Push-kin gave a description of unparalleled power

"But when the old man was made to put his hands round a pension-er's neck and was lifted off the ground and Yulai brandished the whip, the Bashkir groaned in a weak, imploring voice and, nodding his head, opened his mouth in which a short stump could be seen instead of a tongue

"When I recall that this happened in my lifetime and that now I have lived to see the gentle reign of the Emperor Alexander, I cannot but marvel at the rapid progress of enlightenment and the diffusion of humane principles Young man, if my notes ever fall into your hands, remember that the best and most permanent changes are those due to the refinement of manner and morals and not to any violent upheavals "

This sentiment has frequently been ascribed to Pushkin himself, but quite falsely, Pushkin has an ironic attitude towards Grinev This last pas-sage is of the nature of an insertion required by the censor Its meaning would be clear to Pushkin's contemporaries as torture had not been abolished in his time

The story of the Commandant ends as follows when he is brought to the gallows

"The old Bashkir, whom we had questioned the night before, was sit-ting astride on the cross beam He was holding a rope and a minute later I saw poor Ivan Kuzmich swung in the air "

The fact that the execution of the Commandant was carried out by the same Bashkir who had been tortured brings out Pushkin's idea of retribution

The hero of the story, the young nobleman Grinev, is a simple lad Pugachov comes into the story and saves the hero who has once done him a service This service was a very small one Properly speaking it was not Grinev who saved Pugachov in the snowstorm but Pugachov who saved Grinev Pugachov is simply and good-naturedly grateful for the hareskin jacket which the young lieutenant had given him

The epigraph at the head of the chapter entitled "The Rebel's Camp" is worth noting.

"The lion has just had a meal
Ferocious as he is, he asked me kindly
What brings you to my lair?" "

Sumarokov

Actually this is not Sumarokov's text but Pushkin's. Pushkin wrote these lines himself. With the help of these lines Emelyan Pugachov is called a lion. In this chapter Emelyan tells a story about himself in which he compares his fate to that of an eagle. Pugachov is given the attributes of a leader and is described with the imagery of folk song. Pushkin sees in him a leader of the people. He describes him in detail and with affection. In the following scene a picture of Pugachov is given.

"We were left alone. We were both silent for a few minutes, Pugachov was watching me intently, occasionally screwing up his left eye with an extraordinary expression of slyness and mockery. At last he laughed with such unaffected gaiety that, as I looked at him, I laughed, too, without knowing why."

Pushkin in this story does not arouse any ironical feelings with regard to Pugachov nor any pity for him because his Pugachov himself is cheery and has a sense of humour.

Pushkin shows Pugachov in an environment of the folk song of which he himself was so fond.

In the "History of the Pugachov Rebellion" Pushkin links up Emelyan with (Stepan Razin, whom he himself called "the only poetical figure in Russian history."

Another link between the Pugachov and Razin rebellions was given by Pushkin in his history and met with the disapproval of Tsar Nicholas.

"Wives and mothers stood on the banks trying to recognize among them their husbands and sons. In Ozemaya an old Cossack woman (Razina) wandered along the banks of the Yaik pulling in floating corpses with a boathook and muttering 'Are you my child, my own little one? Are you my Stepan, my Stepushka? Are those your raven locks that the fresh water laps upon?' And seeing the face of a stranger would quietly push the corpse away from her."

The Cossack was given the name of Stepan Razin and this was evidently not by chance.

Nicholas also knew what he was about when he wrote in the margin. "Better omit, has no relation to the matter in hand."



Decembrists on the Senate Square.
D. N. Kardovsky. Water Color, 1926



H. H. Gav. Oil, 1875

In another place Pushkin associates three names — those of Razin, Pugachov and Peter I

Here is this curious passage*

"When Pugachov sat in the Exchange Court idle Moscovites, during the afternoon, came to have a look at him to try and catch some saying of his so as later to spread it 'round the town One day he sat thinking The onlookers stood 'round in silence waiting for him to say something.

Pugachov said The saying goes that Peter I during the Persian campaign, learning that Stenka Razin's grave was not far distant, made a special journey to it and ordered the mound to be dug up, so as to see something of him, if only his bones . ' It is well known that Razin was quartered and burned in Moscow. Nevertheless, it is a remarkable story, especially Pugachov telling it"

Pushkin could not give a full picture of the Pugachov rising in "The Captain's Daughter " He did not show the generalship displayed in Pugachov's battles or the bravery of the Bashkirs about whom he wrote in the "History of the Pugachov Rebellion" saying that "in one battle they were all killed, all except one man who was forcibly spared."

But Pushkin succeeded in giving the characters of Pugachov's followers. One of Pugachov's captains was the miner Khlopusha who was branded and had had his nostrils cut out This Khlopusha, in answer to Pugachov's remark that he would order Shvabrin to be hanged, raises the following objection " You were in a hurry to put Shvabrin in command of the fortress and now you are in a hurry to hang him You have already offended the Cossacks by putting a gentleman over them, do not now frighten the gentry by hanging them at the first accusation "

In order to satisfy the requirements of the censorship it was necessary to refer to Catherine in the story Pushkin hated and despised Catherine. He was well read in the literature about her, however, and in depicting the empress he described her according to the most official notions and thus satisfied the censor.

It must be remembered that when Mironova came to St Petersburg it was probably the middle of September (according to the old calendar), and that the weather was so cold that the lady with whom she was staying was afraid that the young girl would catch cold after her early autumn walk

Nevertheless the empress took a morning walk in the garden dressed in a light summer dress.

Why had she to run the risk of catching cold? Because she had stepped straight out of her portrait and Pushkin did not want to change her dress

It would have been impossible to write a story about the times of the Pugachov rebellion without bringing in Catherine, especially as Nicholas held his grandmother's memory in great respect. The engraver Utkin was presented in 1827 with a valuable signet ring for an engraving of the portrait painted by Borovikovsky in 1791.

The landscape on the engraving was the work of Cheskin. The picture portrayed Catherine with a dog. When still unfinished it was sent to the English artist Scott, who corrected the dog's legs.

The picture was an entirely official portrait of Catherine and was known to everyone at the time.

Pushkin described Catherine exactly according to this portrait, although in it Catherine is shown as she was in 1791, while the supposed meeting between her and Mironova must have taken place about the year 1774.

Pushkin, in my opinion, purposely did not add anything to or take anything away from the portrait and he wanted to make this obvious.

Catherine, according to Pushkin's description, was "wearing a white morning dress, a night cap and a warm jacket" just as she is in the portrait. Pushkin added only a single detail, the warm jacket.

The jacket worn out of sight under the dress enabled Pushkin to dispense with giving her a dress suitable to the season, thereby preserving a description of her that was the official one, and not his own.

The consequence is that Catherine remains a portrait and all the reader's interest is centered on Marya Ivanovna who has come to ask the Empress for her lover's pardon.

The Captain's daughter herself is very charmingly described, but she is not, however, the real centre of the story. The story ends with Pugachov. With a nod of the head he bids farewell to Grinev from the scaffold. Pugachov dies calmly and heroically.

We have seen that Catherine is just indicated in Pushkin's story as a silhouette after Cheskin's official engraving. But the raft of hanged men floating down the Volga is described in detail and with feeling. This new drift of ideas in the story evinces itself also in the style. The whole story is full of ballads.

The folk songs in the story are centred around Pugachov. The fortress is described in an old soldier's song. For Masha Mironova there are mournful marriage songs and a new folk song which shows, as Pushkin rightly pointed out in some of his rough notes, the influence of artificial songs, in particular those of Sumarokov.

Each group of people thus has its environment of song. Pushkin's simplicity becomes the simplicity of the people. The story ends with an ironical description of the flourishing of the Grinev family. Their family

estate is in the hands of ten joint-owners The picture given of this village seems to hint at his picture of the "Village of Goryukhmo "

"The Captain's Daughter" has become a popular classic in Russia It is universally known In it Pushkin succeeded in making his reader feel the same towards its heroes as he does himself

His new, historically correct understanding of the peasant rising placed Pushkin outside the set of people with whom he was connected socially And it was at this point that his life was cut short



PUSHKIN AS A PLAYWRIGHT

By G. VINOKUR

I

Throughout his life, Pushkin was attracted to dramatic writing. Unfortunately, none of the dramatic attempts made by the poet in his childhood and youth have been preserved. We have learned of them only from memoirs of his contemporaries.

It is known that Pushkin closely followed Russian dramatic literature even as a school boy at the Lycee in Tsarskoe Selo¹ (1811—1817). In 1815 Pushkin jotted down a note, "What I think of Shakhovskoy" in which he subjected the then great celebrity of Russian comedy to bold and severe criticism. In the course of the three years spent in Petersburg after he graduated from the Lycee and before he was exiled to the south of Russia (1817—1820), Pushkin frequented the theatre and contracted friendships with a few prominent playwrights of those days. The theatrical impressions of these three years left a distinct mark on Pushkin's works and were of great importance in furthering his development as a playwright and in stimulating his appreciation of the art of the drama.

Russian dramatic literature of that time was at a low level. This applied particularly to tragedy which, at the beginning of the 19th century, suffered from the severe decline that had set in after the hackneyed Russian imitations of Racine, of which there was a large repertory produced in the second half of the 18th century, had ceased to answer the needs of the time. In the first decades of the 19th century very few new Russian tragedies were produced. The most prolific writer of tragedies in those days was Ozerov who, by innovations after the manner of the sentimentalists, attempted to put some life into the dying traditions of classicism. His efforts, however, led to no significant results.

For some time Ozerov enjoyed notable success among his contemporaries, but Pushkin was always critical of this mediocrity. He considered,

¹ On February 10, 1937, on the 100th anniversary of the great poet's tragic death, the former Tsarskoye Selo, later Detskoye Selo, was renamed "Pushkin," by a decree of the Soviet government.

and rightly too, that Ozerov failed to rid Russian drama of its main defect—imitation. Pushkin regarded with more favour the comedy of those years among the founders of which was the young Griboyedov who later immortalized himself by his famous comedy "Wit Works Woe"

Pushkin's first attempt at play writing, traces of which have been found among his papers, was in the field of comedy Pushkin worked on his first play in 1821 when he was in exile at Kishinev. It was, however, soon abandoned by him About thirty lines of introductory verse and a detailed plan is all that has reached us of this comedy The chief character of the comedy was to be a worldly young man whose passion for cards led him to stake his old devoted servant—a serf It is evident that the comedy was conceived as a play to expose the evils of society Here, social motives were to play a great part, which is quite in keeping with the whole political biography of Pushkin It is known that in the first years of his exile to the South, Pushkin professed views similar to those of the left Decembrists

The radical political ideas shared by Pushkin in those years found a still more remarkable reflection in another dramatic attempt of his—the unfinished tragedy "Vadim" (1822) The subject of the tragedy is the legendary Novgorod uprising led by Vadim, the champion of national-republican ideas, against the foreign conqueror Rurik in the ninth century The choice of the subject itself shows the great influence which the ideas of the Decembrists had on Pushkin For the Decembrists, Vadim was a historical symbol of the struggle for political freedom The text of this dramatic essay shows that Pushkin conceived his tragedy as an agitational production since it is full of transparent allusions to the political situation of his time The text speaks of the universal hatred of the population for the government, of "young citizens" who are seething with indignation On the other hand it is worth noting that in these fragments Pushkin still clung to tradition as far as dramatic technique is concerned The two manuscripts of this piece are written in classical iambic hexameter

II

Pushkin's very first completed dramatic work, the famous tragedy "Boris Godunov," revealed the poet as a mature and original dramatic playwright "Boris Godunov" was written in 1825 at the village of Mikhailovskoye where Pushkin was in exile from 1824 However, on account of censorship difficulties which dragged on for years, "Boris Godunov" was published only in 1831 in an expurgated form and with alterations that were forced upon the author by the censor.

Pushkin never saw his tragedy staged It was not before 1870 that

permission was given by the tsarist censorship to stage an expurgated version of this classical Russian drama. Many parts had been suppressed and certain alterations had arbitrarily been made in the text.

"Boris Godunov" is a work to which Pushkin attached great literary and social significance. The drama was dear to the heart of its author for two reasons: first, as a fully-formed answer to the important problems of history and politics that agitated him, and second, as the product of a deliberate and well-thought-out decision to overturn Russian dramatic traditions and effect a thorough reform of Russian dramatic literature.

The historical aspect of "Boris Godunov" is closely associated with Pushkin's studies of Russian history, in the materials of which Pushkin sought an answer to the question of the historical meaning of his own time and of his own fate. The historical theme of "Boris Godunov" has nothing in common with the historical convention of the tragedies of the classical school, for whom history was important because of its decorativeness and the traditional nature of its subjects.

The study of Shakespeare was a real revelation to Pushkin and in "Boris Godunov" he continued Shakespeare's methods. "What a man this Shakespeare was!" Pushkin exclaimed, "I cannot overcome my amazement! How small Byron, the tragedian, looks in comparison to him!" Shakespeare's full-blooded realism, the living sense of historical concreteness permeating his historical dramas, helped Pushkin finally to rid himself of the "Byronic" ideas of his youth and at the same time suggested to him the methods of struggle against the traditions of French classicism in Russian drama.

While retaining all his respect for the poetical genius of Racine, Pushkin nevertheless definitely turns to Shakespeare. The latter influences not only the literary ideals of Pushkin but the poet's entire outlook. In February 1826, after the defeat of the movement of the Decembrists, Pushkin while waiting in great agitation for news concerning the fate of his friends, whose ideas he shared, wrote to Delvig: "Let us not be like the French tragedians, either superstitious or one-sided, let us look upon the tragedy with the eyes of Shakespeare."

This Shakespearean view of history, the endeavour to regard history as an objective process subject to natural laws, and of which the content is "the fate of man, the fate of the people," was typical of Pushkin. Similar feelings pervaded Pushkin when at the end of 1824 he was perusing the tenth and eleventh volumes of Karamzin's "History of the State of Russia" which had then just appeared. These volumes dealt with the tensely dramatic events which took place in Russia in the 16th and 17th centuries. Pushkin availed himself of this very interesting material and wrote one of his monumental works revolving upon the momentous question of the

fate of Russia. It is this question that Pushkin attempts to answer in the form of a dramatic story of tsar Boris

The tsar, the aristocracy and the people are depicted by Pushkin in a state of inevitable antagonism. And in this historical conflict it is the movement of the people that plays the decisive part. The people, the masses, in Pushkin's drama are not introduced for mere stage effect, they take an active part in the events and have a direct influence on the issue of the conflict. The mass, or crowd, scenes in "Boris Godunov" are the most original to be found in any dramas in the world. There is no doubt that in these scenes Pushkin went further than Shakespeare.

The reform of Russian dramatic style which Pushkin set as his object in "Boris Godunov" is closely linked up with the historical conceptions which Pushkin embodied with such great poetical skill in the remarkable characters of this drama. Following Shakespeare, Pushkin renounced the three classical rules of unity and used blank verse in pentameter instead of the traditional Alexandrine verse. Pushkin also introduced a few prosaic scenes into his drama, and enriched its language by many forms of popular speech. However, these changes had a greater significance for Pushkin than the mere change of form. The various styles of dramaturgy and of theatrical presentations meant for Pushkin various outlooks and various solutions of the question as to the relation between art and life.

Pushkin gave expression to these ideas in the following remarkable words. "I am firmly convinced that the popular rules of the Shakespearean drama, not the court usage of the Racine tragedy, are suitable for our stage." Thus Pushkin associates the question of dramatic style with the character of the audience for whom the dramatic performance was intended. Pushkin set before himself the question of whether a popular tragedy was possible in Russia. He was inclined to answer this question in the negative. The unfavourable reception accorded "Boris Godunov" by the majority of Pushkin's contemporaries shows that indeed Russia at that time was uncongenial to the development of genuinely democratic dramatic art, and that Pushkin towered high above his readers and critics.

Pushkin had a premonition that his tragedies would not be understood by his contemporaries. He expressed the fear that the failure of his "Boris Godunov" might delay the reform of Russian drama. In this respect Pushkin's fears proved ungrounded—there was no returning to the past. But for a long time Russian drama produced nothing that could be compared to Pushkin's "Boris Godunov". However, Pushkin had begun to look for new paths in the dramatic genre even before "Boris Godunov" was first published.

In the autumn of 1830, within a short space of time, Pushkin wrote a cycle of small tragedies. They vary in length from 200 to 500 lines of verse and the number of scenes from one to four. The cycle consists of the following four pieces: "The Covetous Knight," "Mozart and Salieri," "The Stone Guest," and "Feast During the Plague." These small 'tragedies, the most peculiar creations of Pushkin's genius, constitute a special stage in Pushkin's evolution as a dramatist.

The distinguishing feature of these small tragedies is, above all, the fact that their subjects have been borrowed from Western European life and literature. Pushkin took special care to lend his small tragedies a Western European appearance. The first of them is provided with a subtitle: "Scenes From Chenstone's Tragi-comedy, 'The Covetous Knight'." Pushkin evidently had in mind Shenstone, but there is nothing in the works of the latter even suggestive of "The Covetous Knight."

The leading characters in this tragedy are a medieval baron by the name of Philip (who is obsessed by a passion for hoarding) and his son Albert. The cupidity of the baron leads to a sharp dramatic conflict between him and his son.

Pushkin's second small tragedy is based on the legend that Mozart was poisoned by Salieri, who envied the former's genius. At one time Pushkin had an idea of calling this play "Envy" and intended to present it as a translation from the German.

"The Stone Guest" is Pushkin's version of the undying theme of Don Juan. The subject of this tragedy was taken by Pushkin from the famous comedy of Moliere, and from Mozart's opera.

The subject of the fourth small tragedy is given in its title. It is a translation or rather a dramatic adaptation of part of Wilson's tragedy, "The City of the Plague."

To a certain extent Pushkin's small tragedies are in contrast to "Boris Godunov." In the former, the broad historical theme of the popular theatre gives way to the poetical treatment of a particular (moral and psychological) problem. They form a series of very fine, masterly studies of cupidity, envy, love and death.

In choosing West-European material for his themes, Pushkin was no doubt guided by the wish to raise his works to the level of world tradition and free them from the imprint of national exclusiveness. If it is true that the whole of Pushkin's works represents the highest synthesis of the national and European elements in Russian culture, then his small tragedies should be regarded as the most graphic and brilliant demonstration of this synthesis.

From the point of view of literary and dramatic technique the small tragedies represent but a development of particular scenes in the style of "Boris Godunov." The rapidly changing scenes of "Boris Godunov" (the action is set in Russia, then in Poland, now in the tsar's chambers, the public squares, at the monastery, then on the battle-field) in large measure possess independence and inner completeness. Each such scene contains, as it were, the kernel of an independent work.

It is known that Pushkin intended to write a few more small tragedies, including two under the titles "Kurbsky" and "Dimitry and Manna." These tragedies would undoubtedly have been a development of the respective scenes and characters of "Boris Godunov."

Having conceived the idea of experimenting in the new genre of small tragedies, Pushkin chanced to read Barry Cornwall's "Dramatic Scenes." This finally made him determine to carry out his idea. Pushkin highly valued the masterful originality of this English poet, but did not follow him in the construction of his scenes. The main distinction between the small tragedies of Pushkin and the respective works of Cornwall is the former's richness of dramatic effect and complete absence of rhetoric which often overburdens even great dramatic works of world-literature.

It is difficult to find anything equalling Pushkin's small tragedies for beauty of language and verse. In them charm, vigour, musical elegance and brilliant, passionate expressiveness are combined into one harmonious whole.

Among Pushkin's great achievements is the hymn to the plague sung by the toastmaster of the public feast in "Feast During the Plague." In Wilson's tragedy there is no such hymn.

In "The Covetous Knight" an unforgettable impression is left by the monologue of the old baron when he descends to the cellar to feast his eyes upon his treasures, as he opens all his coffers and brilliantly illuminates the vault.

In "Mozart and Salieri" Pushkin contrasts two types of artists—the "idle rake" Mozart who is free from all reflection, to whom his envious interlocutor says: "You, Mozart, are a god and know it not!" and Salieri who had made "handicraft a pedestal of art" and put "harmony to the test of algebra." "Mozart and Salieri" is one of Pushkin's most profound poetical generalizations and is an integral part of Russian culture.

However, the most brilliant example of this genre is "The Stone Guest" which many authorities on Pushkin consider the most accomplished of all his works. There is no denying the subtleness of Belinsky's well-known utterance to the effect that according to Pushkin's idea the Nemesis of Don Juan is contained in the first genuine passion which he conceived for a woman—for Dona Anna. This passion, though it is not unrequited,

is Don Juan's rum The scene of Don Juan's death in Pushkin's "The Stone Guest" is full of powerful, poignant tragedy

IV

Pushkin had the idea of writing a few more small tragedies of which we know only the titles. In addition to "Kurbsky" and "Dimitri and Marina," which were mentioned before, Pushkin intended to write "Romulus and Remus," "Jesus," "Paul I" and a few others, but they were left unwritten In the course of 1829—1832, while he was working on his small tragedies, Pushkin wrote "The Water Nymph," a drama in verse, which was left in an unfinished and unpublished state However, we have most of it in Pushkin's handwriting

By its structure "The Water Nymph" reminds us of Pushkin's small tragedies, but it is distinguished from them by its Russian national colour "The Water Nymph" was built up by Pushkin on material from Russian folklore The heroine of the drama is a miller's daughter who is seduced by a prince When heavy with child, she learns that the prince is marrying someone else, and throws herself into the Dnieper The old miller goes mad The daughter of the Water Nymph comes to the shore and entices the prince to the bottom of the river The manuscript breaks off on the monologue of the prince who by some "unfathomable power" is drawn to the familiar spot on the bank of the Dnieper and as met by the little nymph emerging from the water

In a few instances the folklore material in "The Water Nymph" had been removed by Pushkin from the dramatic dialogue and given separately in the form of songs in which all the lingual and rhythmic peculiarities of folksongs are retained To date literary scholars have not been able to reach a final decision on the question of whether the Water Nymph's plaintive song (in the scene of the prince's wedding) is a genuine folksong or is merely Pushkin's stylization

The small tragedies and "The Water Nymph," which should be included in the same category, notwithstanding their masterful dramatic style, form only a stage in the history of Pushkin's dramatic works Pushkin himself regarded this genre as an experiment Among the various covering titles which Pushkin wished to give to all his works of this genre, one was "Experiments in Dramatic Studies" The monumental forms of drama continued to attract Pushkin and he returned to them not long before his death

In 1835 Pushkin made several attempts to write a drama in prose, in monumental style, with a subject borrowed from Western European history of the late period of feudalism Pushkin's premature death pre-

vented the full realization of his idea. Apart from a few small drafts and an outline of a drama with the well-known legend of the woman pope Jeanne as the subject, Pushkin completed about one half of a great drama which the publishers agreed to call "Scenes from the Days of Chivalry."

The hero of this drama is Franz, the son of a clothier. Franz feels oppressed by his low station and cherishes the idea of becoming a knight. He leaves his father, by whom he is disinherited. The knight Albert makes Franz his squire, but soon afterwards drives him out for his rudeness. Franz places himself at the head of a peasant uprising against the knights, is taken prisoner and awaits the gallows, however, at the request of Clotilde, Albert's sister, Franz's sentence is commuted to life imprisonment. To judge by Pushkin's notes Franz was to gain freedom and attain his goal in the further course of the drama.

The struggle of the peasants against their feudal lords and the disintegration of feudal society form the main historical background of this drama. Interesting details in Pushkin's plot are references to the invention of gun-powder and printing. The concluding part of Pushkin's outline of the drama reads: "The piece ends with the appearance of Faustus on the devil's tail (invention of bookprinting and new artillery)."

According to Pushkin's idea this fantastic scene was to symbolize the serious turn in the course of European culture which forms the principal subject of "Scenes from the Days of Chivalry."

There is not the slightest doubt that Pushkin was guided here by definite analogies between Western European and Russian history. In the 1830's Pushkin considerably enlarged the range of his historical studies and was constantly reading all the latest publications of Western European historical literature. As an outcome of these studies we find various notes and fragments in which Pushkin made attempts to form a clear idea of the Russian historical process in the light of the history of the Western European peoples. The decay of the nobility, the rise of the bourgeoisie, the tense struggle between the landlords and the serfs—these were all subjects from the very substance of life around him.

"Scenes from Times of Chivalry" was not completed. It is therefore difficult to form an opinion as to the conclusions which Pushkin would have drawn in this drama. There can be no doubt, however, on one point—the sense of historical objectivity and development according to natural laws would have been revealed in this last play of Pushkin's, with still greater clarity than in his former historical works.

It is worth noting that Pushkin wrote his "Scenes from the Days of Chivalry" in prose. This should be ascribed to the general prose tendency which he developed in his last years of life. Merimee's "Jacquerie" was mentioned long ago as one of the patterns by which Pushkin might have

been guided while working on this drama, but it is easy to see the essential difference in the style of the two writers notwithstanding the similarity of their subjects. The main difference lies in the fact that in Pushkin's "Scenes from the Days of Chivalry" the idea of the historical regularity underlying the depicted events and the drama as a whole is brought out with much greater clarity. Pushkin in this drama is to a lesser degree than Merimee taken up with the picturesqueness of some of the episodes and with the typical details or "local color" of the life of those times. The action in Pushkin's "Scenes from the Days of Chivalry" centres around one group of ideas, and the whole piece, written in the usual, restrained, terse and lucid language of Pushkin's prose, is sustained in an original tone of historical generalization.

Thus we see that Pushkin's career as a playwright was versatile and rich with content.

It must be admitted that the development of Pushkin as a playwright never reached its culminating point. One may say with certainty that Pushkin's premature death deprived Russian drama of a number of important dramatic works which would have been written by Pushkin had he lived longer. But even the work done by him in the field of drama in his short life is more than sufficient to accord him an honourable place in the pantheon of the great dramatic writers of the world.





PUSHKIN AND FOLKLORE

By Prof M AZADOVSKI

From his early childhood, Pushkin was familiar with folklore in one form or another. In 1816, reminiscent of his childhood years, he wrote:

"Shall I refrain from speaking of my nurse,
And of the charm of the mysterious nights
When she, in cap and ancient garb,
Would pray to keep the sprites away,
Would cross me ardently,
And whispering begin to tell
Of dead men, and the feats of Bova ..

And off I went in raptures of sweet thoughts:
In thickets or in deserts close to Murom
The bold Dobrynyas and the Polkans would I meet—
My youthful mind would soar in fancy. ."

The family traditions of the Pushkins tell of a certain Nikita Timofeyevich, one of the Pushkin's serfs, who was a rhymester and composed something in the nature of a ballad adapted by him from the fairy tales of Solovei the Highwayman, of the broad-chested giant Eruslan Lazarevich and the golden-haired princess Militrissa Kirbityevna. At a very early age Pushkin made his acquaintance with cheap editions of fairy tales and their adaptations in the collected volumes of Chulkov and Popov. This found its reflection in Pushkin's "Bova" in which one can hear echoes of Voltaire's "Virgin," along with the popular motifs, and particularly in his first poem "Ruslan and Ludmila."

"Ruslan and Ludmila" may be grouped with the numerous romantic fairy-tale poems of that epoch, such as Karamzin's "Ilya Muromets," Radishchev's "Bova" and various poems by Zhukovsky, Batyushkov and others. True, Pushkin introduces here certain new features: he rejects the es-

lablished canons and brings in colloquial expressions ("vulgar words" and "muzhik rimes" as the hostile critics of Pushkin charged) Nevertheless this poem was far from being true popular poetry

The period of Pushkin's exile to Mikhailovskoye, where he had the opportunity of coming in direct contact with popular lore, is usually considered to mark the turning point in this respect However, there is reason to believe that by that time Pushkin's ideas of folklore had already been formed and that the folksongs and fairy tales written down by him were not casual discoveries, but the result of study and research

During his exile in the South, finding himself amid unusual ethnographical surroundings, Pushkin eagerly applied himself to Russian folklore and to the folklore of the local nationalities He listened to the songs of the Don Cossacks, brigand songs, national Caucasian songs, Gypsy songs, and many others At first it was merely the traditional romantic trait—a search for the exotic and for local colour, but even at this period the foundation was laid for a new conception of and a new attitude toward folklore

Exile had exceedingly broadened Pushkin's outlook His meetings and conversations with N. N. Rayevsky, Junior, with Pestel, with the Kaimenka Decembrists and with V. F. Rayevsky, had taught Pushkin a great deal and made him turn over in his mind a number of questions quite new to him In this respect the influence of V. F. Rayevsky, a great authority on history and Russian historical epos, was of particular importance Pushkin's historical studies and his attempt to write historical plays during his Kishinev period are to a large extent the effect of V. F. Rayevsky's influence Under the influence of Rayevsky, a change begins to manifest itself in Pushkin's approach to folklore, he now sees in folklore not merely amusing old fairy tales but also poetical material that throws light on the past of Russia It is precisely at this period that Pushkin began to understand the historical significance of Russian popular literature

Pushkin began to think of the significance of national literature and national language He made a comparison between Russian and French literature and tried to find in folklore elements which he could not discover in the literature of his time

"I cannot decide what language to prefer," wrote Pushkin, "but we have our own language—customs, history, songs, and fairy tales" And almost at the same time, evidently under the influence of his chats with Pestel, Pushkin formulated his attitude to the Russian language "Only revolutionary minds like those of M. Orlov and Pestel can love Russia as only a writer can love her language All our work must be done in this Russia and in this Russian language "

Pushkin's ideas of folklore are closely connected with his ideas of language, of love for one's native country, "national character" and its

forms of expression At Mikhailovskoye the poet displayed a particular interest for songs of Stepan Razin whom he calls "the only poetical character in Russian history " Pushkin wrote down a number of folksongs on the theme of Razin and asked his brother to send him "historical material" about Razin Finally he himself began to work up the songs about Razin

At this time Pushkin took a great interest in folk tales "I listen to folk tales and in this way am making amends for the shortcomings of my accursed education," he wrote to his brother The poet plunged into the world of folklore, a new world, which opened before him at Mikhailovskoye He wrote down the fairy tales narrated to him by his nurse and by other narrators, he listened to stories told by blind beggars at the monastery, he collected and wrote down folksongs at markets and fairs. In this same period Pushkin began to work on his folklore material.

He introduced folklore material in his "Eugene Onegm " He based "Tatyana's dream" on this material He wrote the ballads "The Bridegroom" and "The Drowned Man" and finally the Prologue to "Ruslan and Ludmila," where the various motifs of Russian fairy tales are grouped together with wonderful mastery The new edition of "Ruslan and Ludmila" which appeared at that time included the Prologue Pushkin thus gave the poem the key-note which it lacked before By his Prologue Pushkin made the subdued folklore notes in the poem ring out the louder Folklore motifs are clearly in evidence also in "Boris Godunov "

The interest taken by Pushkin in folklore ran parallel to his interest in popular language, or "common language" as it was called in those days Pushkin wrote an article for the *Moscow Telegraph* about Lemon te's preface to the French translation of Krylov's fables In this article Pushkin formulated his ideas of the historical development of the Russian language. "The dialect of the common people had to be separated from the language of books, but later on they approached each other and *such is the element that is given us for the purpose of communicating our thoughts*" (Emphasis by Pushkin)

Toward the end of the 1820's Pushkin jotted down some polemical notes concerning the critical remarks on ' Eugene Onegm " These notes are in the full sense of the word an apology for popular language and folklore "The study of old songs, fairy tales, and the like is essential for a thorough knowledge of the Russian language Our critics are wrong in* scorning them " And further he continues "Young writers, read popular fairy tales so that you may perceive the attributes of the Russian language "

During the same period Pushkin made up his mind to set to work on a scientific study of Russian folksongs In the beginning of the 1830's the poet Yazykov wrote to his brother "Pushkin made a comparison of all the printed folksongs and put them into shape, as hitherto they were pub-

lished indiscriminately in utter disorder" That Pushkin intended publishing folksongs is confirmed by P Kireyevsky In a letter to Yazykov written in 1832 Kireyevsky says. "Pushkin intends publishing as soon as possible Russian songs, of which he has accumulated quite a large collection " However, Pushkin did not publish his collection since at that time Kireyevsky's big scheme of bringing out an edition of Russian folksongs had matured and Pushkin handed over his collection to Kireyevsky. Among Pushkin's papers there was found a plan of a publication of Russian historical folksongs and also the draft of a foreword with an interesting and penetrating characterization of wedding songs

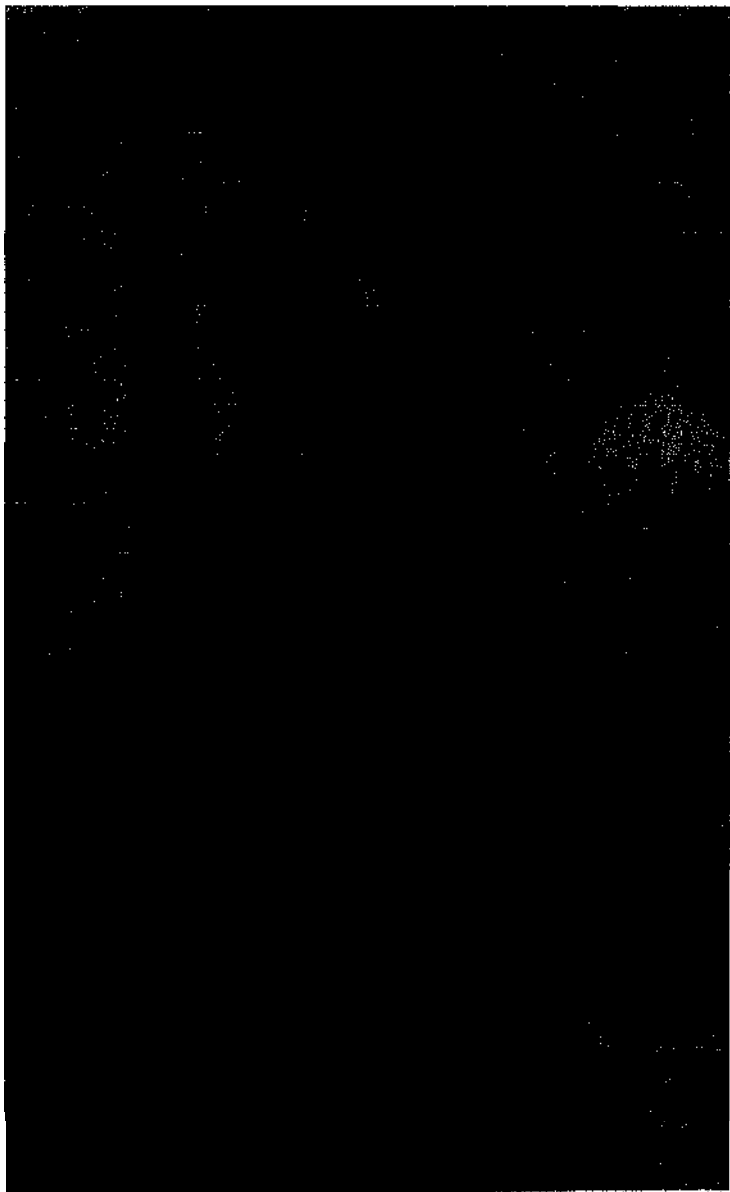
The last period of Pushkin's creative work may be truly called his folklore period Folklore not only entered into his poetry as an element but began to predominate in his work Thus in 1831 he wrote his "Tale of the Tsar Saltan" and the "Tale of the Pope and his Workman Balda " In 1832 he wrote his "Songs of the Western Slavs" In 1833 he wrote "The Tale of the Fisherman and the Little Fish," and "The Dead Princess " In the following year he wrote "The Golden Cockerel" In that period Pushkin wrote also "The Hussar," the beginning of the fairy tale "The She-Bear," a humorous play called "Match-Maker Ivan," a number of unfinished fragments including the beginning of the folklore story "Ilya Muromets' ("In the glorious Murom Land') and the unfinished "The Water Nymph", the latter an experiment in popular drama This period came to a close with "The Captain's Daughter," a story imbued with folklore, and "Scenes from the Days of Chivalry "

Pushkin used themes both from Russian and West-European folklore Investigations made in recent years have shown that the range of these sources was a very wide one The French translation of a German tale in the collection of the brothers Grimm served as a source for Pushkin's "The Tale of the Fisherman and the Little Fish" "The Dead Princess" is also based on Grimm The "Tale of the Golden Cockerel" is an adaptation of a story by Irving The "Tale of Tsar Saltan" is based on various oral and written sources, both Russian and West-European

Thus, this period of Pushkin's work is marked by his extensive use not only of Russian but also of West-European folklore The use of West-European folklore is evident in his "Songs of the Western Slavs" and "The Water Nymph " The theme of the latter is borrowed from the comical, romantic fairy tale of the German writer Hensler (in a Russian adaptation by Krasnopolsky) Another example is "Scenes from the Days of Chivalry" with Martin's song based on a Scottish folksong.

This wide use of West-European folklore reflects an essential aspect of Pushkin's folklore tendency connected with the general character of his poetry, namely, his national character





Pushkin in Mikhailovskoye.

N. P. Ulyanov. Pencil drawing, 1936

The problem of "national character" (in Russian, *narodnost*) was the centre of discussion in the '20's and '30's of the last century. Even Bulgárin regarded himself as a champion of "national character". The discussions on this subject were in essence discussions on literary tendencies, on the main elements that should serve as the foundation of a national literature.

Pushkin joined in these discussions many times. In an unpublished note of 1826 Pushkin wrote:

"For some time it has been our habit to talk of 'national character,' to demand 'national character,' to complain of the absence of 'national character' in literary works, but nobody has even attempted to define what is to be understood by 'national character.'"

"One of our critics seems to believe that 'national character' consists in taking subjects from Russian history, others see 'national character' in words, i. e. they take delight in the fact that speaking Russian as they do, they use Russian expressions.

"But it would be idle to deny Shakespeare the merit of great 'national character' in his 'Othello', 'Hamlet', 'Measure for Measure' and other plays. Vega and Calderon every now and then carry us to all parts of the world, borrow subjects for their tragedies from Italian and French novels among others. Ariosto sings of Charlemagne, the French knights and of a Chinese beauty, while Racine's tragedies have been taken from ancient history.

"It would be idle, however, to deny the merit of great 'national character' in any of these authors. On the other hand, is there any 'national character' in the Russian tragedy, or in Ozerov's 'Xenia' who, in Dimitry's camp, reasons with a confidante about parental authority in iambic hexameter. Derzhavín rightly drew attention to this.

"'National character' in a writer is a merit to be fully estimated only by his countrymen. For others it either does not exist at all or may even seem a vice, the learned German grumbles at the courteous behaviour of Racine's heroes, the Frenchman laughs at Calderon's Cononius challenging his rival to a duel. All this, however, bears the imprint of 'national character'.

"There are varieties of thoughts and feelings, there are traditions, beliefs and habits which are typical of one people only. Climate, system of government and religion lend each people its particular features, which are more or less reflected in the mirror of poetry."

It may seem from this note that Pushkin was treating the problem of "national character" only from the aspect of literary significance. However, the scope of the note is deeper and wider than that. It was an attack upon **the** official patriotic formulas and upon all manifestations of pseudo-*narodnost*. In this note one may discern echoes of his biting "Examples

of Discourteous Behaviour," which as it were is complementary to the note Among the examples of "discourteous behaviour" Pushkin quoted also patriotic "discourtesies " He wrote. "Some people care nothing for the glory of their fatherland or for the disasters that visit it they know its history only from the times of Prince Polemkin and have some notion of the statistics of the province where their estates are located, and for all that they consider themselves patriots because they are fond of cold beet soup and their children run about in red blouses "

Pushkin many times returned to the subject of "national character " Later, in the 1830's in a conversation with Dal, he repeated that "national character" does not consist "in choosing subjects from the history of the fatherland" or "in words, phrases and expressions" He opposes the attempts to limit the meaning of "national character" to the narrow circle of national themes and refers to the great works of Shakespeare, Calderon, Racine, who broke these national limits and nevertheless remain great national writers

The import of these utterances of Pushkin is revealed fully when put side by side with his remarks on folklore and popular language quoted previously His folklore and "common language" tendency on the one hand and, on the other, his ideas of the great West-European writers whom he held up as a model, were organically connected in his consciousness and could not be separated "National character" he regarded above all as a historical category, as an outcome of all the historical development of the Russian people and Russian literature According to his ideas the development of Russian literature had to proceed on the broad lines of West-European education accompanied by a mastery of national culture. National form should express the international wealth of ideas The advanced ideas of world literature must become the property of all the people Hence the tendency towards simplicity upheld by Pushkin

Pushkin's use of popular language and folklore signifies that he had in view as his readers the broad (masses of the people, and this was a stage on the road of the democratization of Russian literature Therein lies the fundamental meaning and significance of Pushkin's folklore tendency



GORKY ON PUSHKIN

By Prof S BALUKHATY

Pushkin was Maxim's Gorky's life-companion. In his numerous articles, memoirs, letters and even in some of his literary works Gorky never tired of writing about the great charm of Pushkin's poetry, about the spirited mind of the poet, about Pushkin's exceptional importance in the history of Russian literature and the Russian literary language.

At the age of 12, Gorky began to read Pushkin. He also read the poet's biography around that time. Since then Gorky always considered Pushkin's bright, joyous poetry, with its deep content and simplicity of form, as work of unexcelled mastership.

In his autobiographical novel "In Service," chapter X, Gorky picturesquely describes his first acquaintance with Pushkin's poetry.

"I was so struck by the simplicity and music of Pushkin's poetry that for a long time prose appeared to me as something unnatural and it seemed awkward to read it. The prologue to 'Ruslan and Ludmila' reminded me of my grandmother's best stories, they were wonderfully condensed into one, and the clear-cut truthfulness of some of the lines amazed me.

And there, on paths unnoted, thickens
The slot of beasts to man unknown'¹

Mentally I repeated these wonderful lines and saw these paths, so familiar to me, yet scarcely discernible, I saw the mysterious footprints in the trampled grass with the dew drops, heavy as quick-silver, still on them.

"Pushkin's admirable fairy tales came to be close to my heart and mind. Having read them a few times, I knew them by heart. When going to bed I would mutter some pieces of poetry with my eyes closed until I went off to sleep. Often I would relate these stories to the male servants. They would listen and laugh and curse good-humouredly. Sidorov would pat me on the head and quietly say 'That is fine, eh? O, heaven

¹ Trans by Oliver Elton

"My agitated state of mind was noticed by my master and mistress The old woman began to curse. 'You little scamp, you dote on your books, but the samovar has not been polished for four days! I'll go for you with the rolling-pin!'

" 'What? With the rolling-pin?' And I defended myself against her with verses

'With sullen soul and evil-loving
The old witch

And further Gorky writes in his reminiscences that his passion for Pushkin gave rise to the wish of acquiring a small volume of Pushkin's poetry to be put side by side with the little volumes of Beranger and Heine which he had in his possession But his wish could not be realized for "the only second-hand book-dealer in the town, a vicious old man, demanded too high a price for Pushkin "

As a lad Gorky learnt by heart Pushkin's poems and carefully wrote down in a copy-book those he loved best "Ruslan and Ludmila" was among those he copied into his book

As a youth Gorky tried his hand at poetry Pushkin was his standard In his reminiscences Gorky writes "I wrote poetry with ease, but I saw that my production was hideous and despised myself for my lack of skill and talent I had read Pushkin, Lermontov, Nekrasov, Kurochkin's translations of Beranger and I saw quite well that in no way did I resemble any one of these poets "

And later, till the last years of his life, Gorky in his literary works and memoirs again and again returns to Pushkin and discusses the various merits of Pushkin's works and personality

Gorky valued Pushkin very highly "There is nothing greater and dearer to us than Pushkin and Tolstoi," he said He called Pushkin "the greatest master in the world," "our great poet," "our giant" He also wrote. "Pushkin in our country is the beginning of all beginnings," "Pushkin most beautifully expressed the spirit of the people with the greatest force and amplitude"

In dealing with more remarkable aspects of Pushkin's poetry, Gorky above all noted the exceptional breadth of the poet's genius, unusual even in great poets Gorky wrote, "Look, how broad the range of his interests in life, how wide his compass of earthly things He writes with equal mastery Russian fairy tales and 'The Covetous Knight,' 'Boris Godunov' and 'The Workman Balda'—this is how life is to be taken" Gorky speaks of the exceptionally high level of Pushkin's education and his profound mastery of world culture. Gorky called Pushkin "a European "

Gorky also valued Pushkin for his excellent knowledge of both the bright and dark aspects of Russian life in the past, which in no way hindered the poet from maintaining a sober attitude towards it. "Pushkin knows the past of his country, but is not poisoned by it"

Because of the poet's exceptional and varied knowledge and keenness of feeling, Gorky called Pushkin "omniscient" For his depth of thought clothed in wonderfully exquisite and picturesque literary form, Gorky styled the poet a "wizard" "I find greater wisdom and living beauty in a small volume of Pushkin's poetry or in a novel by Flaubert," wrote Gorky, "than in the cold glimmer of the stars, in the methodical breaking of the waves, in the murmur of the woods or in the silence of the desert"

Pushkin with his great mind, his indomitable will to live, his healthy psychology and inexhaustible creative powers was in Gorky's estimation the embodiment of an accomplished man Gorky said "Defoe, Lomonosov, Rousseau, Pushkin, Byron, Mendeleyev, Lesseps, and hundreds of their stature — that is what man is by nature "

In a number of his articles Gorky gave an appreciation of the historical literary value of Pushkin He noted above all that Pushkin was one of the first Russian writers to pay attention to folklore and folk songs, that Pushkin availed himself of the material of Russian fairy tales and set them as an example Gorky drew a line between the treatment of folklore and folksongs by the romantic school of the "Lake Poets" and by the sober, critical realist Pushkin "The Lake Poets never touched such themes as, for instance, 'The Tale of the Pope and his Workman Balda' Pushkin never distorted the real meaning of a fairy tale, whereas Wordsworth and his group preferred to take from folklore all that savoured of the preternatural and the miraculous — ideas and superstitions which the church with its hypocrisy introduced into the healthy, heathen creative art of the people "

Pushkin built up the Russian literary language on the foundation of popular language In this connection Gorky wrote "It should be remembered that language is created by the people All that division into literary language and popular language means is that there is linguistic raw material as it were, and language which has been treated by writers The first to perceive this was Pushkin and he was the first to show how the linguistic material of the people is to be used and how it should be treated "

Emphasizing the great part played by Pushkin in the history of the literary Russian language, Gorky wrote "Beginning with Pushkin our classical writers were picking out from the lingual chaos the most precise, clear-cut, weighty words and created the 'great magnificent language'

It was to the further development of this language that Turgenev entreated Tolstoi to devote his energies " And in 1900, when he began to write his critical essays, Gorky in analyzing the works of the Russian classical writers said "When the future historian of literature will deal with the development of the (Russian language he will say that this language was built up by Pushkin, Turgenev and Chekhov "

Gorky saw the great importance of Pushkin's literary work in the fact that he, like the other great literary masters, offered a sharp criticism of his contemporary life and with great truthfulness, insight and severity laid bare the hideousness of the social system that was based on the oppression of the people Gorky wrote "Swift, Rabelais, Voltaire, Lesage, Byron, Thackeray, Heine, Verhaeren, Anatole France and a few others — they, all of them, with irreproachable truthfulness and severity, exposed the vices of the ruling class In our country it was done by Griboyedov, Gogol, Leo Tolstoi, Saltykov-Schednn and the incomparable Alexander Pushkin, a man of amazing talent"

According to Gorky Pushkin produced remarkable models of art — not of a mere observational, petty-realistic nature, but such as give generalized, synthesized pictures Gorky said that Pushkin was a master of that "art of fiction" which enabled him to depict life in a most convincing manner and which led to the creation of such works as "The Covetous Knight" and "Eugene Onegin "

"Art," wrote Gorky, "always typifies—that is, it exaggerates—it takes the typical traits of many people and concentrates them into one, thus giving us types, as for instance, the type of a miser — Balzac's Father Grandet, Pushkin's covetous knight and Gogol's Plyushkin "

Gorky advises the student of types and characters created by the literary masters and in particular by Pushkin, to note their succession in literature "Taken in such succession these types should show the effect which the various epochs had on the formation of characters, also the power of portrayal possessed by each author and the succession of ideas that fed literature " Taking as an example this sequence of the best ideas produced by mankind as revealed in the works of Pushkin, Gorky illustrates the close connection between Russian and world literature "One should also know the history of foreign literature, since literary work is in its essence one and the same in all countries and among all peoples It is not a question of mere formal ties, the fact that Pushkin gave Gogol the theme of the 'Dead Souls,' and that Pushkin himself probably borrowed this theme from Sterne's 'A Sentimental Journey' is immaterial What is important is to know that since long ago, everywhere a net has been and is being woven 'to catch the human soul,' that always and

everywhere there were and are people who set themselves the aim of freeing man from superstition and prejudice"

In addition to the cursory notes and opinions on Pushkin to be found in Gorky's numerous critical and journalistic articles Gorky has woven into the texture of his literary works, his novels and stories many passages devoted to Pushkin. Gorky has heroes speak of Pushkin, of the popularity of his works, he has them quote some of Pushkin's poetry or to refer to one or another of Pushkin's characters. Such references to Pushkin we find in his novels and stories, "The Book," "It's All the Same," "The Story of a Timid Love," "The Story of a Hero," "The Rehearsal," "The Business of the Artamonovs," "Cockroaches", that is, mainly in those of his works in which he portrays various types of intellectuals

Here, for instance, as a reference to Pushkin by Novak, one of the characters in Gorky's "The Story of a Hero," an admirer of Carlyle's "On Heroes and Hero Worship," who advocates the superiority of the individual to the collective body "Without Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great, without the German princess Catherine, without Pushkin, Gogol, Dostoyevsky, the world would not know and would not feel Russia. History is always the work of individuals, the effect of the action of heroes. Italy was created by Dante and Petrarch, England by Milton, Hume, Hobbs "

Gorky's ideas of Pushkin are reflected in many of his literary works, but particularly striking are the passages relating to Pushkin in his novel "The Life of Khm Samghin" (translated in English as "The Bystander"). In this novel Gorky portrays a large circle of intellectuals who in their conversations refer to various types of world literature. A considerable place in these conversations is occupied by Pushkin. We shall quote a few examples

Bragm carries on a conversation with Depsames (vol III)

While helping Barbara carry the plates and bottles from the sideboard to the table, Bragm peremptorily remarked that the intellectualsia was organizing no pogroms

"No, you say? But what about your nihilists, your Pisarevites, have they not organized a pogrom against Pushkin⁹ Why, it is the same as spitting at the sun "

"Zakhar Bonsovich is an inordinate admirer of Pushkin", said Bragin, this time abashed

Here is a conversation between Valentin Bezbedov and Samghin (vol HI)'

"She would not have gone, perhaps, had I had the sense to get her interested in something living—chickens, cows, dogs!" said Bez-

bedov and then energetically continued "Well, you see, I have found my vocation in pigeon hunting, I have hit upon the song which I am destined to sing The essence of life is precisely such a song which one must sing with all one's heart Pushkin, Chaikovsky, Miklukha-Maklay, they, all of them, lived in order to devote themselves to their favourite employment—is it not so?"

Here is a conversation between Samghin and Barbara during their journey along the Georgian Military Highway when they were descending into the valley of Aragva (vol II)

"It is somewhere here," said Barbara, "that Pushkin was admiring the Aragva Do you remember, 'On the Hills of Georgia'?"

" 'You, you alone'," he muttered.

Barbara firmly pressed his hand.

"Incomprehensible, what great meaning the poet may encompass in three words!"

"Yes," said Samghin

Gorky wrote down in his memoirs and reminiscences the utterances of various people concerning Pushkin Thus, for instance, Gorky quotes Leonid Andreyev's words—uttered in a conversation with him

"Books are to you what a fetish is to the savage This is because your trousers have not been worn threadbare on the benches of the Gymnasium and you have not come in touch with university learning But for me the Iliad, Pushkin and all the rest has been beslobbered by teachers and prostituted by haemorrhoidal bureaucrats "

Gorky quotes Tolstoi's words said in conversation. "One must learn from Pushkin how to write poetry "

II

We have given the most important references to Pushkin as man and poet that are scattered through the numerous works Gorky wrote in the course of the 45 years of his literary career

However, this is not all The great proletarian writer had given his thoughts to the creative work of Pushkin as a whole and to its many qualities, and he shared the views formed by him as a result of his studies of Pushkin with a proletarian audience in a lecture which he gave in 1909 at the school on the island of Capri The lecture was entirely devoted to Pushkin and was part of a series of lectures which he gave on the history of Russian literature.

In this lecture Gorky noted above all the fact that the appearance of Pushkin, an event of exceptional importance in the history of Russian

literature, was not so sudden; it was prepared by the previous development of Russian literature. This is by no means a depreciation of the exceptionally high qualities of Pushkin Gorky said

"Pushkin is broader, wiser, more talented than Zhukovsky—he is more talented precisely because he is broader, he is wiser and more talented because he is imbued with great knowledge, he is a master of verse surpassing in the technique of poetry all his predecessors, he is such a master because he had predecessors who had worked out their technique each in his own way, while he, Pushkin, succeeded in combining in his poetry all the novelty and plasticity of this technique "

Further Gorky said

"Many of Pushkin's contemporaries had as ready and as masterful a command of language as Pushkin, but none of them combined in their poetry the simplicity and lucidity of language with its music, none of his predecessors and contemporaries had risen in their poetry to such heights as Pushkin's 'The Prophet' "

Passing to the description of Pushkin's social principles, Gorky shows that Pushkin was highly conscious of his position as man, citizen and poet Pushkin was a nobleman, but in his poem "My Genealogy," as Gorky says, there is the ring of something new, namely, the ring of confidence in the right of man to honour, not on the merits of his forebears, but on the merits of his own personal services to society Under the conditions prevailing at the time of Alexander I, who surrounded himself with Germans to the exclusion of Russians, the word "nobility" had for Pushkin the meaning of "self-esteem, the consciousness of one's human worth and inner freedom."

Prior to Pushkin, literature was regarded as a pastime for high society while writers were regarded as petty clerks, as, for instance, Fonvism and Ryleyev, and at best as courtiers, as, for instance, Derzhavin and Zhukovsky "Pushkin was the first to perceive that literature was of first rate national importance, that literary work was much superior to the work of an official or to service at court Pushkin was the first to raise the calling of a writer to heights hitherto unattained In Pushkin's opinion the poet was called upon to express the thoughts and feelings of the people, to apprehend and portray all the events of life "

Gorky deals with Pushkin's opposition to the government, to Nicholas I and. to the court aristocracy of his time Gorky says that in his relations with the government Pushkin was quite frank while the powerful representatives of upper society were treated by the poet with contempt and derision

Gorky devoted particular attention to the question of Pushkin's contempt for the "rabble " It is known that on the ground of Pushkin's con-

tempt for the "rabble" the reactionaries classed Pushkin among their own ranks, while radicals like Pisarev denounced him as a poet of no significance. Gorky showed that the attitude of contempt for the "rabble," for the people, was common to all romanticists who maintained that a poet was a being of a higher order, absolutely free and independent of the state or the people. The romantic predecessors of Pushkin had no idea of the people, took no interest in their fate and seldom wrote about them.

Pushkin's attitude to the people was something quite different. True, like the poets of the romantic school, he, in a number of his poems, speaks of the poet's independence, of "the judgement of fools and of the laughter of the cold-hearted crowd," he even expresses himself in most disparaging terms about the "rabble", but Gorky insists that the word "rabble" used by Pushkin did not refer to the people, to the Russian peasants. Gorky says, "Pushkin was the first Russian writer to pay attention to folklore and the first to introduce this folklore in literature. Pushkin lent the Russian folksong and fairy tale the brilliance of his talent but left intact their meaning and force. Take 'The Tale of the Pope and his Workman Balda,' 'The Golden Cockerel,' the 'Tale of Tsar Saltan,' etc.—in all these tales Pushkin never attempted to hide or gloss over the people's disrespectful, mocking attitude to the clergy and the tsars, but on the contrary put all the more emphasis on it." Pushkin translated from the Serbian language a number of pieces of folklore. During his travels he wrote down fairy tales and songs, collected folksongs about Stepan Razin, studied the life and language of the people, described village life in his "History of the Village Goryukhino." Gorky draws attention to the fact that Pushkin "learnt the Russian language from Krylov and still more from his nurse and from coachmen, street vendors, and soldiers at taverns and inns," that very often Pushkin "would leave the capital and go to the country there to 'enjoy' simplicity of speech and mind and popular games." And Gorky concludes "This man could not refer to the people when he spoke of the rabble. Pushkin respected the people and with his inner sense perceived its force."

"Who then is this 'rabble' that so disgusted the poet?" asks Gorky and answers "There is no doubt that Pushkin used the word 'rabble' with reference to high society, to the society among whom he lived in the capital." Gorky, having made a study of Pushkin, traced the poet's attitude to the high society of his time, and from Pushkin's biography traced the hostile attitude of high society to the poet, which finally led to his tragic death. Gorky says "His fate coincides with the fate of all great men who by the whim of history were forced to live among petty, vulgar and self-seeking people. Remember Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo."

Gorky sums up his opinion of Pushkin in the following words "There is not a single aspect of life which has not been lit up by Pushkin's talent, his range of interest, his breadth of knowledge remain even now unsurpassed. He gave us models of all forms of literary work: dramas, novels, poems, fairy tales, sonnets, and so on." Or "The magnitude of Pushkin in Russian literature is on the same level as that of Leonardo da Vinci in European art."

Gorky concluded his paper on Pushkin by defining the value of Pushkin's works for proletarian readers. Gorky says "In Pushkin we must separate all that is of a casual nature, all that may be explained by the conditions of his time and by his personal inherited qualities — all that comes from the nobility, all that is transient, is not ours, is alien to us and is not needed by us. But when we have thrown all this away there will appear before us the great Russian popular poet, who has given us fairy tales of charming beauty and wit and was the author of 'Eugene Onegin,' the first realistic novel, the author of 'Boris Godunov,' our best historical drama, — the poet who remains to this day unexcelled for the beauty of his verse and for force of expression of feeling and thought, — the poet who is the father of the great Russian literature."

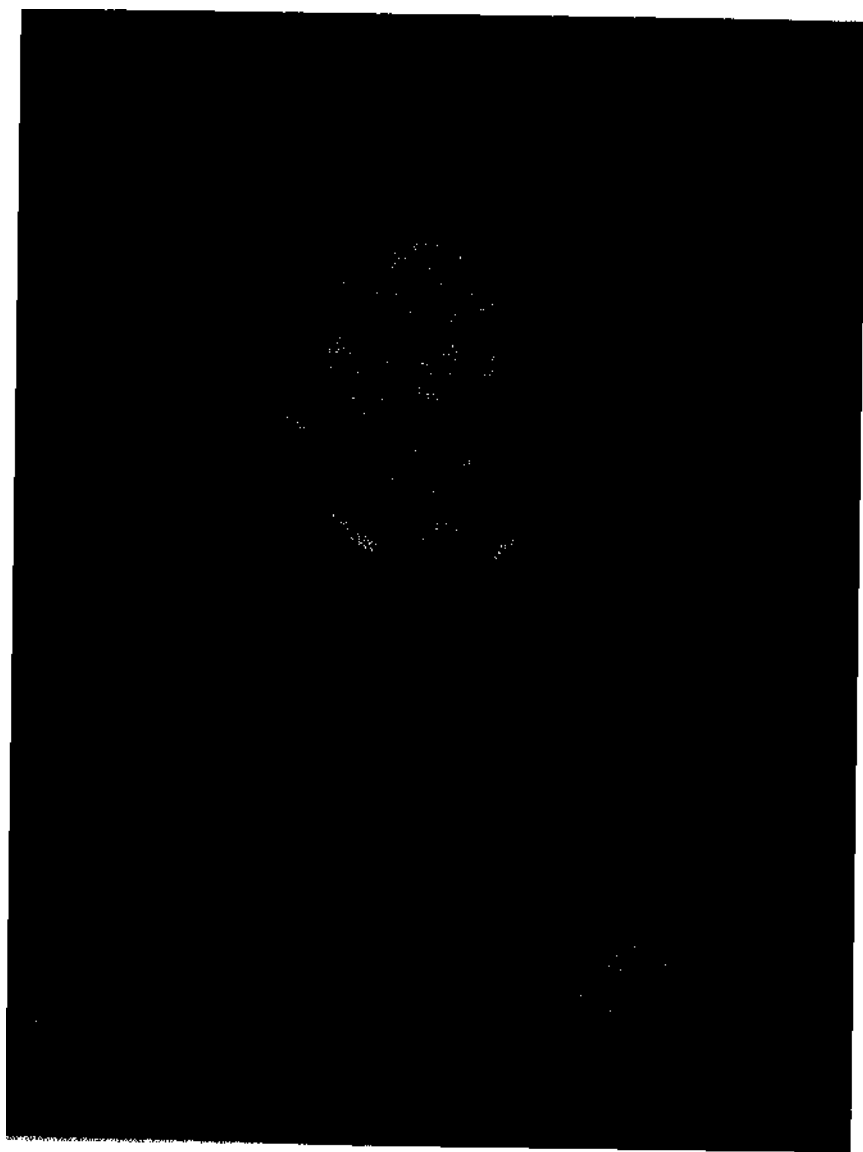
Gorky sees the importance of Pushkin's works for proletarians in the following "On the example of Pushkin's works we see that in his literary generalization a writer with a rich knowledge of life goes beyond the limits of class psychology, he rises above the tendencies of his class, and gives us an objective representation of this class. Pushkin was certainly a nobleman; but what is of importance for us to know is that even as a youth Pushkin felt the stifling effect of the traditions of the nobility, he understood the intellectual poverty and cultural weakness of his class and gave a remarkably true picture of the whole life, of all the vices and weaknesses of the nobility. Pushkin offers us an example of a writer who was full of impressions of life and endeavoured to render them in poetry and prose with the greatest truthfulness, with the greatest realism, and as a genius succeeded in his aim. His works represent valuable evidence of a clever, educated and truthful man, of the characters, manners and ideas of a certain epoch — they are all brilliant illustrations of Russian history." The great merit of Pushkin was that he "loved freedom sincerely and ardently." True, "in those days he was not the only one who was waiting for the time when the dawn of 'enlightened freedom' would finally rise over his native country, but he was waiting for it with such longing and passion as nobody before him had ever experienced."

The passages quoted above complete Gorky's most important utterances on Pushkin as man and poet. What is remarkable in these utterances is that, in the light of the Socialist analysis of the great, complex

and varied literary heritage left by Pushkin, Gorky, the great proletarian writer, the brilliant representative of revolutionary consciousness, the talented son of the labouring people, revealed and defined with unusual clarity, vividness and precision the objective significance for Russian and world literature of one the (greatest poets of modern times. With the conviction of a revolutionary and with the inner sense of an artist who felt an insatiable love for literary art, Gorky showed us which of the aspects of Pushkin's rich poetry will always be dear to the proletariat

Gorky wrote "Read Pushkin more often, he is the founder of our poetry and is always the teacher of us all. Do not believe those who shout that Pushkin is out of date—the form may be out of date but the spirit of Pushkin's poetry is immortal "

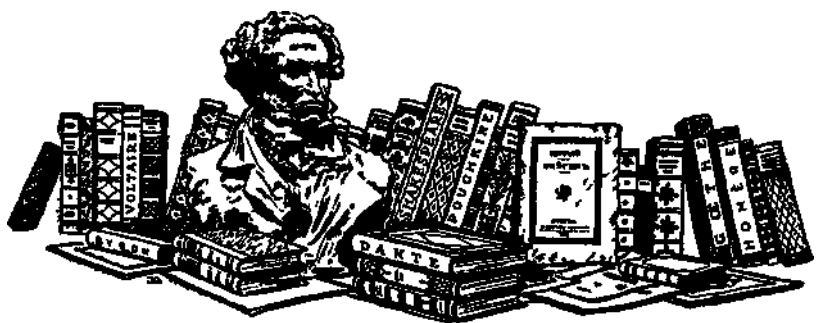
While speaking of the passion shown by the bourgeois West for another Russian writer, for Dostoyevsky, Gorky said "I would prefer that the 'cultural world' should be united on Pushkin and not on Dostoyevsky, since the great and universal genius of Pushkin is psychologically a healthy one and is productive of healthy effect "



Pushkin.
O. A. Kiprensky. Oil, 1827

*A CENIUS OF WORLD
SIGNIFICANCE*





WESTERN EUROPE AND PUSHKIN

By Prof V NEUSTADT

1

Until the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the elements of Russian popular lore played no part in the development of European literature. Pushkin was the first to introduce the treasures of Russian popular lore, embodied in masterful images, into world literature which traces its origin to Homer. As Gogol said, a poet arrived who looked upon the world he described with the eyes of the whole people and at the same time "was equal to the culture of his age," that is, he reached the very apex of the European culture of his time.

Was it possible for Western Europe to pass by without noticing this "extraordinary phenomenon," was it possible for her not to feel the refreshing fragrance emanating from Pushkin's poetry?

The very first translations of Pushkin's works which began to appear in 1823 were received by West European critics with surprise and admiration. Pushkin's "Ruslan and Ludmila" was regarded not as an imitation but as an emulation of Ariosto — an emulation from which the young poet emerged with honour. The West-European critics immediately noted the originality of the poem, an originality which sprang from the spirit of Russian folk poetry. And, in 1826, when Pushkin's "The Prisoner of the Caucasus," "The Fountain of Bakhchisarai," the first chapter of "Eugene Onegin" and some of his lyrical poems became available in translation, the critics of Western Europe began to recognize in the Russian poet a rising light of world importance.

"How many hopes it kindles in one's heart when one realizes that the author of so many magnificent works is only twenty-seven years old! How promising is the muse of this young poet Whose works display creative power, correctness of style and maturity of taste—qualities which even the most outstanding poets usually acquire at a much later age" This is what Professor Eguin de Guerle wrote in 1826 When Pushkin was killed, the European press lamented his death as a heavy loss for mankind

Shortly after Pushkin's death a number of critical essays dealing with his creative life and ranking him highly among poets were published in the West These critical reviews emphasized above all Pushkin's great originality which enabled him to show his mastery in any literary subject The West-European critics were amazed at Pushkin's deftness in giving an old, seemingly worn-out, subject a new turn, and his ability to discover "new colours in images that are as old as the Grecian gods " Indeed, was not "Eugene Onegin" bound to seem an old acquaintance to the reader in the West? Nevertheless the German critic Varnhagen von Ense, the author of one of the most brilliant essays on Pushkin (written in 1838), said of Pushkin's novel that it was "incomparable" and that "when you read it you are obliged to say that it is Pushkin you have before you and nobody but Pushkin "

Thirty-five years later the French critic Buchner in analyzing "The Stone Guest" likewise expressed his amazement at Pushkin's marvellous gift of giving a new turn to an old subject, a gift which Goethe considered the attribute of true genius "How was it possible," wrote Buchner, "to take up this subject after Tirso de Molina, Moliere, Mozart, Byron and that fantastic German, Grabbe? Pushkin proved that it was possible "

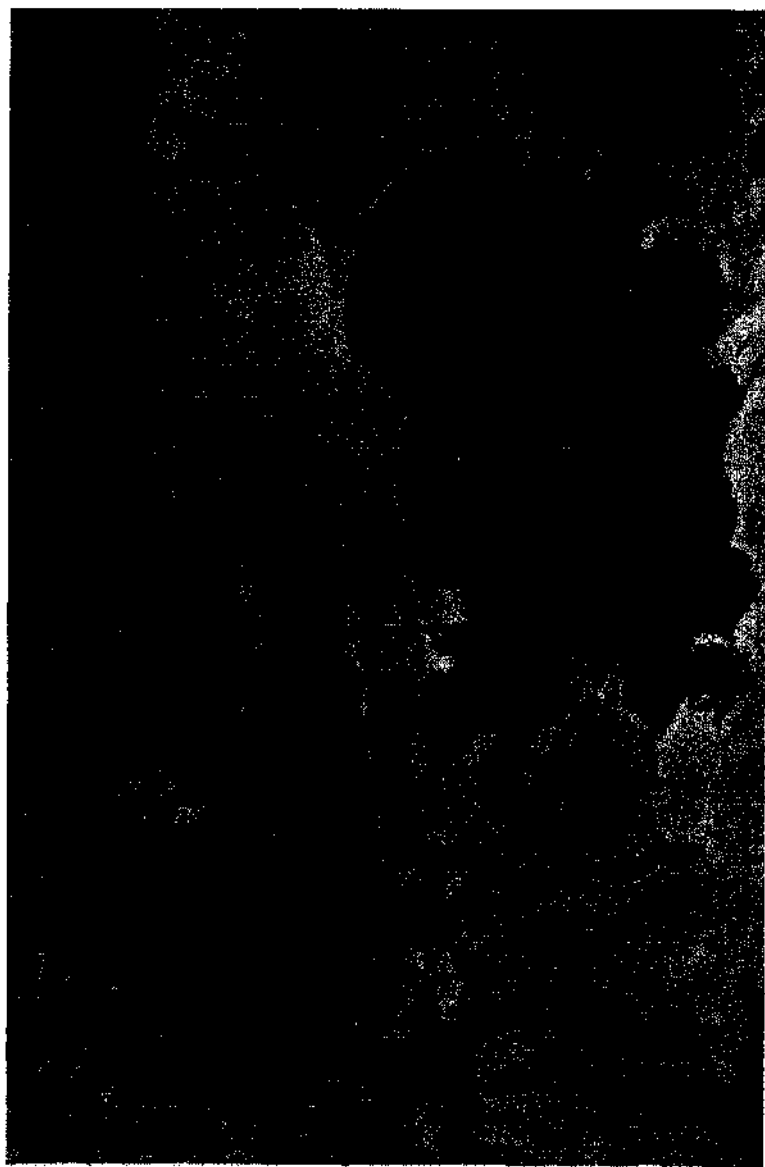
That is why Varnhagen, in (refuting the attempts of the Russian critics of the 1820's and 1830's to dub Pushkin a "Byronist," said "He may have borrowed one form or another, he may have chosen a path trodden before him, but *the life depicted by him is a thoroughly new life* " That is why the London "Athenaeum" in 1855 ridiculed some of the "super-wise" critics who attempted to treat Pushkin as an imitator

It is this recognition of the originality of the great Russian poet that enabled Emile Hauman, the French historian of literature, to draw the conclusion that "Pushkin, while belonging to Russia, belongs also to France and to the whole world" (H Hauman, "Pouchkine," Paris, 1911)

In the opinion of the West-European critics this originality of Pushkin has its roots in his "national character," in the fact that he is thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the people This true national character was also noted by Mickiewicz in his obituary of Pushkin in 1837 The idea



Pushkin With His Wife Before Mirror. (Arrival at a Court Ball),
N. P. Ulyanov. Oil, 1936



was further developed by Varnhagen von Ense. Later, in 1847, the French critic Saint-Julien wrote on this subject. A number of other critics of the nineteenth century made the same point. But side by side with the true nationalness of Pushkin the West-European critics noted his all-embracing Europeanism, and in this combination they saw the great significance of Pushkin for world literature. "In the very national uniqueness of Pushkin," the Hungarian *Pester Lloyd* wrote in 1880, "lies his great significance for non-Russians, to say nothing of the interest presented by his works for Europe as a whole."

Three aspects of Pushkin's works were considered by critics of Western Europe to be of general European significance. In the first place, Pushkin's great mastery and his accomplished style which by the unanimous opinion of a number of critics was unsurpassed. Writing on "Boris Godunov" Varnhagen von Ense characterized the essence of Pushkin's style in the following words: "Particularly amazing is the scantiness of the means he uses to achieve his object. In this respect he is an unsurpassed master: everything in his works is so laconic and vivid, hits the aim and rapidly too, there is nothing superfluous, nothing drawn out." V. Bendl, a Czech critic and translator of Pushkin, writing in 1854 said that Pushkin was superior to Byron in the matter of form. Bendl saw the perfection of Pushkin's form in its unusual simplicity and in the *scantiness* of the means he used.

In 1868 Prosper Merimee speaking of Pushkin's "The Gypsies" said: "I know of no other work that is more *scanty*, if one may use this expression in praise, not a single line and not a single word can be thrown out of this poem, and it is all done with perfect simplicity and naturalness."

The French academician E. Faguet in his Study of Merimee written in 1887 said: "What is it that attracts him in the Russians? Above all it is the laconic manner of expression (don't smile, so far I speak of Pushkin); indeed most remarkable is this Russian poet's art of expressing deep passion in few words."

And twenty-five years later, Emile Haumant, Professor of the Sorbonne and author of an interesting work on Pushkin, admiringly notes the finely polished laconic style of his poetry and prose.

Why do they all so persistently use the word "scantiness" in their praise of Pushkin? It is because Pushkin's poetical style was so new to European literature, because this style was an inalienable characteristic of the Russian poet distinguishing him from all his predecessors and contemporaries. It was an unsurpassed mastery, which, later on, many European writers, including Merimee, were striving to gain.

The second and more important aspect of Pushkin's work, which

was also considered of general European significance, was his artistic method itself. For a long time the question as to who of the romanticists **had** the greatest influence over Pushkin engaged the attention of Russian bourgeois critics. Was it Byron, Chateaubriand or somebody else? In the West there were also some attempts to represent Pushkin as an exponent of the romantic school. However, such opinions were not predominant. Already in the 'forties of the last century West-European critics definitely characterized Pushkin as a *realistic* writer. "It is seldom a poet possesses such a keen sense of reality and such (mastery in representing real life," the French *Illustration* wrote in 1845 in speaking of Pushkin. The previously mentioned critic Saint-Julien refused to draw a parallel between Byron and Pushkin because, as he said, "the English poet in depicting images drew upon his fancy, whereas Pushkin embodied in his images real life." In 1855, Friedrich Bodenstedt, the well-known German poet who translated Pushkin, characterized Pushkin's poetry in the following way: "Whatever may be said of Pushkin's poetical works, from whatever aspect one may discuss them, there is one thing all are agreed upon: every one of his works fulfils the noble aim of poetry—to represent in artistic form a piece of human life."

After the cold conventionalities of classicism and the demonic trappings of romanticism ("fantastic deserts and caves" in Mickiewicz's words), Pushkin was decidedly a renovator of European poetry. The German critic Honegger expressed this idea in his book "Russian Literature and Culture" which appeared in 1880. "Pushkin," he wrote, "was the greatest Russian poet. However, inasmuch as, owing to his masterly poetical form, *he was the originator of a new poetical current (realism) not only for Russia, but for the whole of Europe as well, he belongs to world literature and not to Russia alone.*"

The third aspect of the works of the Russian poet which, in the opinion of foreign critics, is of general European significance refers to Pushkin's world outlook. It is Pushkin's attitude to man, his lofty humanism and his harmonious and optimistic view of life.

The bourgeois critics were of course unable to understand the nature of the social conflicts which were reflected in Pushkin's works, the essence of the conflict between the poet's humanitarian ideals and his environment. Moreover, the critics of that time never troubled their heads with these questions. They realized that there was some discord between the poet and reality, but they gave this discord the meaningless name of *Weltschmerz*. By this term they sought to link up Pushkin's world outlook with the "general trend of mind of the epoch," as expressed by Byron and Schiller. According to Varnhagen, Pushkin's poetry resembles that of Byron and Schiller because "it contains the same discord between dream and reality,

the same anguish, the same sorrow for lost or unattainable happiness " "There is, however, one characteristic trait in Pushkin's poetry which distinguishes him from all his great contemporaries," Varnhagen continues, "the freshness and spiritual harmony which like bright sunshine warm up all his poetry and always, even in the darkest moments of terrible despair, offer consolation and hope "

In the opinion of the West-European critics the vein of optimism and harmony in Pushkin's works makes the Russian poet akin to the greatest poets of the world As is known, Goethe denied this honour to Byron because, as he said, only those could rank with Shakespeare and the ancients who were free of melancholy and negation

Pushkin's poetry "awakens thought, brings tears into one's eyes and smiles on one's lips wherever there breathes man," says the French critic *Vogue* (1886) His poetry "penetrates the soul, charming it with its flowers, of purest beauty," says the Polish professor *Zdziechowski* (1887) This charm of Pushkin's poetry is ascribed by *Zdziechowski* to the fact that while depicting the sorrows and joys of men Pushkin at the same time strikes the balance between the cold objectivism of Goethe and the passionate subjectivism of the romanticists

And epitomizing as it were a centenary of the recognition of Pushkin in Western Europe, the German critic *Johannes F Guenther* in 1923 characterized the great Russian poet in the following words "In our epoch we know that Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin belongs to the immortals, who besides Homer in antiquity include in Europe Dante, Shakespeare, Calderon and Goethe To these immortal five there is added a six Hi — Pushkin "

II

A poet of such power and significance as Pushkin could not but attract the attention of the foreign literary world Naturally, there was a desire on the part of literary circles abroad to transplant into their own soil "the flowers of purest beauty" cultivated by the Russian poet For this it was necessary in the first place to have Pushkin translated

Notwithstanding the great difficulties attending such a task, translators have many a time tackled Pushkin's works Thus we find that there are twelve German, eight French, eight Czech, seven English, four Italian translations of Pushkin's "The Captain's Daughter," and twelve German, ten Czech, seven French and six English translations of "The Queen of Spades " The same applies to "Tales of Belkin " Of "Boris Godunov" there are ten French, nine German, and four Italian translations Of "Eugene Onegm" there are six German, five French, three Czech and three Italian translations Of "The Fountain of Bakhchisarai" there are

thirteen French and seven German translations Of "The Gypsies" there are nine French and seven German translations, and so on

However, the interest taken in the Russian poet abroad was expressed not only in the fact that his works were translated, it manifested itself also in the poet's ideas and images finding their reflection in the literature of the West We find a reflection of Pushkin's lyrical themes in the works of a number of foreign poets The well-known German poet Adalbert Chamisso in his poem "Die zwei Raben" (The Two Ravens, 1839) was imitating Pushkin's "Scottish Song" (1830) The same "Scottish Song" was imitated by another German poet of note, Hoffmann von Fallersleben, in his poem "Der erschlagene Ritter" (The Fallen Knight, 1839) The poem "Welke Rosen" (1884) from the pen of the famous German poet Lenau is undoubtedly based on Pushkin's "The Flower "

Very noteworthy is the reflection of Pushkin's themes in Heine's poem "Wo," written in the middle of the 'thirties of last century

Wo wird einst des Wandermuden
Letzte Ruhestätte sein?
Unter Palmen in dem Süden?
Unter Linden an dem Rhein?

Werd' ich wo in einer Wüste
Emgescharrt von fremder Hand?
Oder ruh' ich an der Küste
Ernes Meeres in dem Sand?

Immerhm! Much wird umgeben
Gotteshimmel, dort wie hier,
Und als Totenlampen schweben
Nachts die Sterne über mir¹

It is quite obvious that in these lines Heine reflected Pushkin's "Traveler's Complaints" and his elegy "Along the Noisy Streets I Wander" Heine's "Wo" reminds one of the stanzas of Pushkin's elegy

And when fate strikes, where will it find me?
In battle, on the road, at sea?
Will that near valley be assigned me
Where my cold clay at home may be?

¹ Where will the weary wanderer find his final place of rest? Under palm trees in the South? Under the elm trees on the Rhine? Shall I be buried in a desert by some stranger? Or shall I on a seashore lie buried in the sand? What matters! There as here the sky will be around me and in the night like pale lamps the stars will hover over me

The witless body's unaffected,
Nor reck's where it decays, 'tis clear,
Yet in my heart I have elected
To rest near places once held dear

At the grave's portals, unrepining
May young Me play, and where I lie
May heedless Nature still be shining
(With beauty that shall never die ¹

I want to emphasize that I bring these comparisons not as an example of Pushkin's influence on these poets but as evidence of the interest taken by them in the works of Pushkin. The borrowing of an image or of a lyrical theme does not necessarily signify influence, but at the same time it shows clearly that the works of the poet from whom the borrowings are made have become the property of the whole world, that 'his literary images, as Varnhagen von Ense says—"have passed into the general poetical atmosphere where they have dissolved, and are breathed in by other poets."

Many such instances may be quoted of German poets utilizing Pushkin's themes, just as Pushkin utilized the themes of his great predecessors and contemporaries. Even in the works of latter day poets one finds here and there echoes of Pushkin's images and themes. Thus in the works of Reiner Maria Rilke we find a number of poems with Pushkin's titles. Such coincidence in titles of poems does not necessarily imply borrowing. Any poet, irrespective of any literary influences, may write a poem entitled "Autumn" or "To the Sea", but when you have before you a string of identical titles—"Angel," "The Beauty Before the Looking Glass," "Leda," "Autumn," "To a Poet," "To the Sea," you are bound to say. This poet read Pushkin's works attentively and thought a great deal over them.

However, Pushkin exercised much greater influence than that on some of the West-European writers. Pushkin's influence on the Croatian poets Stanko Vraz (1810—1851) and D. Demeter (1811—1872) is dealt with by Professor Mikvoi Schrepel in his work "Pushkin and Croatian Literature." Pushkin's influence on Stanko Vraz is also confirmed by Josip Badahc in his article "Pouchkine en Yougoslavie," published in *Revue de Literature Comparee*, No. 1, 1937: "Among the Croats it was Stanko Vraz who most deeply sensed the charm of his (Pushkin's) poetry. This influence manifests itself particularly clearly in his ballad "Veronika Desinicka" who is clearly related to Zarema .."

¹ From Babbette Deutsch's translation of Pushkin

Speaking of the Serbian poets Badahc refers to Vojislav Ilic as to a direct follower of Pushkin. "As far as Vojislav Ilic is concerned Pushkin's influence is beyond question, everything in Ilic's verses, their rhythm and power of expression remind one of Pushkin. The critic Skerlic reproached him for that, but Ilic himself never made a secret of it and openly avowed in one of his poems that he was a pupil of Zhukovsky and Pushkin. Besides Ilic there are other Serbian poets of note, such as Njegus and Zmaj Jovanovich, who have been influenced by Pushkin. It was Pushkin who put these poets on the right path of development, for by his works he prompted them to study folklore.

Bulgarian lyrical poetry was also influenced by Pushkin. This influence is seen in the works of one of the greatest Bulgarian poets, Ivan Vasov (1850—1921). I. D. Shishmarov finds in Ivan Vasov's works the reflection of a number of Pushkin's Lyrical themes and in addition shows the influence of Pushkin's Pimen in "Boris Godunov" on Vasov's "Father Paisiy."

The remarkable Czech poet Jaroslav Vrchhcky (1853—1912) who by the way wrote two fine poems on Pushkin, was inspired by Pushkin's lyrical poetry. A. Stepovich points out the influence of Pushkin's fairy tale themes on Vrchhcky's fairy tale "O zlatem klici."

Pushkin's strong influence on Czechoslovakian poets in general is quite widespread. Gr. Taborsky in an interesting article "Pushkin and Havhcek" (*Prager Presse*, Februar 7, 1937) shows how Halvick's satirical talent developed under the influence of Pushkin's epigrams and satire. Taborsky concludes his article as follows: "In fine we see that we owe Pushkin much more than the jejune Czech imitations of 'Onegin', that we have to thank him for the luxuriant, fruitful and vital power with which he endowed Havhcek, the congenial satirist, whom he helped to develop and to find his way to truth and justice."

The fruitful influence of Pushkin's "The Gypsies" on Prosper Merimee's "Carmen" and on the development of the characters in this novel is quite obvious. This influence is not denied by many French critics. Were it not for Pushkin's "The Gypsies," "Carmen" would probably have been written by Menmee in a different manner.

The Czech poet Carl Macha who died very young (1810—1836) was charmed by Pushkin's "The Gypsies" even earlier than Merimee. Karl Macha gave his poem the same title—"Gypsies." The Czech critic Machal points out certain features in Siegfried Halek's poem "Goar" which are similar to Pushkin's "The Gypsies." The German poet Muller von der Wehr (1823—1881) in his poem "The Gypsies" frankly imitated Pushkin.

Pushkin's "Poltava", although coldly received by West-European critics, gave rise to several dramatic works. Thus, for instance, it was under

the influence of "Poltava" that the German poet and playwright Rudolf Gottschall wrote his tragedy "Mazeppa "

Pushkin's most important works had an even more marked influence on the literature of Western Europe. Many West-European scholars admit that "Boris Godunov" exercised a great influence on European drama, particularly on German drama. Here we wish to emphasize the fact that the dramatic works bearing evidence of the influence of Pushkin's "Boris Godunov" include "Godunov's Children," a drama by the German playwright Henry V. Heiseler written in 1923. From this one may draw the conclusion that Pushkin's influence on West-European literature is alive even today, which is hardly the case with regard to Byron.

Exceptionally strong was Pushkin's influence on Gustav Pfleger, the Czech poet. The beginning of Pfleger's poetical career was marked by the influence of Byron and it is curious to note that it was Pushkin who, as Pfleger himself admits, liberated him from that influence. This admission should be particularly edifying for those literary critics who class Pushkin among the Byronists.

Pushkin's "Eugene Onegin" made a great impression on Pfleger. For his novel in verse "Pan VySinsky" Pfleger is indebted to Pushkin's "Eugene Onegin." This is what Pfleger writes about it in his memoirs: "One evening I was reading over Pushkin, namely his 'Onegin.' And suddenly an idea dawned upon me. I realized what I needed. Reality, ideal reality, the rendering of objects and thoughts such as they are, only presented, as it were, in exalted garb. Formerly I thought of writing something in the vein of 'Childe Harold.' Now I have thrown out of my head the idea of a Czech 'Childe Harold.' That very evening I wrote down the first verses of 'Vysmsky.'"

By the traits of his character the hero of Pfleger's novel, Vladimir, reminds one of Onegin. Similarly, Vladimir's friend Jaroslav is quite akin to Lensky, while the heroine Lidka reminds one of Tatyana. The composition of the novel is built up on the pattern of "Eugene Onegin"—the development of the plot is interrupted by interpolations in which the author dwells on his personal experiences and criticizes literary and social relations. In his novel Pfleger portrays Czech life, and the fact that the construction of this novel in verse, as well as some of the traits of his heroes, reminds one of Pushkin's novel and Pushkin's heroes only emphasizes the European significance of Pushkin's work.

Not only the poetry of Pushkin but also his prose attracted great attention in the West. Some of the themes of Pushkin's prose found their reflection in the prosaic works of West-European writers, as for instance, the theme of "The Queen of Spades" in Henri de Regnier's story "The Secret of Countess Barbara." Other themes of his were utilized for drama-

tic adaptations, as, for instance, "Mistress Into Maid" which was adapted by several writers for comedies

However, the main significance of Pushkin as a writer of prose, at least for France, lies in the fact that many great writers learned from Pushkin the art of the short story. Merimee was the first to admit it. Several French scholars also pointed out the influence of Pushkin's prose on Merimee.

Among the latter-day writers there is Marcel Prevost who made the following noteworthy admission. Recalling his first impression of Pushkin's "The Queen of Spades," he wrote in 1899. "I see myself again in youth, carried away by literature, anxious to learn from the masters the art of narration. I see myself again studying this short chef d'oeuvre in my leisure hours at school, meditating over it until I almost knew it by heart. Certainly, Merimee himself to a small extent owed to Pushkin his art of simple and intense description. And neither was Maupassant unrelated to the author of 'The Queen of Spades'; he, too, undoubtedly read and meditated over it." ¹

Henri Mongault in dwelling on this assertion of Marcel Prevost with regard to Maupassant, notes in his article "Pouchkine en France" (*Revue de Littérature Comparee*, NO 1, 1937) "Here we have an interesting indication! but unfortunately there is no proof to support it"

Marcel Prevost's assertion, insofar, at least, as it refers to Maupassant's acquaintance with Pushkin's works, is corroborated by the fact that Maupassant was a close acquaintance of Turgenev who, as is well known, was indefatigable in popularizing Pushkin in France. Here is a characteristic fact. In 1880 Maupassant wished to write an article; on Turgenev, but the great Russian novelist wrote him a letter in which he said. "If you insist on publishing in *Gaulois* a series of articles on (great foreign writers, an idea which I very much approve of, I will ask you to leave me out. Begin, for example, in Russia with Pushkin and Gogol."

It stands to reason that Turgenev and Maupassant had many conversations on Pushkin and Gogol, whose works Maupassant had undoubtedly read on Turgenev's recommendation.

As to the possible influence of Pushkin on Maupassant, such influence need not have manifested itself in borrowed themes. We saw, for instance, Marcel Prevost admit that to a certain extent he owes to Pushkin his art of narration. In this respect the great Tolstoi also learnt from Pushkin. The same Tolstoi, however, tells of even a deeper influence which Pushkin's prose had on him. He writes "It was with a feeling of joy not expe-

¹ Cf E. Semenoff, *Alexandre Pouchkine*, Paris, 1899, p. 36. In this book the reader will find utterances of various French writers on Pushkin in connection with the 1899 celebration of the centenary of the Russian poet's birth.

rienced for a long time that I was lately re-reading Tales of Belkin,' for the seventh time in my life A writer should constantly study this treasure I did it the other day and I cannot express what a beneficent effect it had on me "

Such a "beneficent effect" Pushkin's prose may have had also on Maupassant. The greatness of Pushkin's prose has long since been appreciated by the French mind This was recently well expressed by Charles Braibant, the French writer, in his article "Pouchkine et nous" (*La Lumiere*, Jan. 30, 1937) "Inasmuch as we may judge by the translations that we have, his (Pushkin's) prose possessed that mysterious unity, that kind of mutual fructification of reality and poetry that is the mark of genius "

III

By the end of the eighties of the last century Pushkin's works were more or less completely translated into all the European languages except Portuguese, and also into Persian, Turkish and Japanese Before the revolution Pushkin was translated into fifty-five languages including fifteen languages of peoples inhabiting Russia At present Pushkin is known in ninety-four languages, including fifty-three languages of peoples inhabiting the Soviet Union

The geographical limits of the distribution of Pushkin's works are very wide. But what is the extent of Pushkin's popularity abroad? In the East Pushkin is so far very little known In America, judging by the number of translations (about ten), Pushkin has hardly reached the broad reading public However, in a number of West-European countries Pushkin is evidently known not only to the select circles of literary experts In Czechoslovakian, French, German and Yugoslavian there are hundreds of translations of Pushkin In Bulgaria, Poland, England, and Italy there are scores of them

Very significant for certain countries are the figures of the number of repeated impressions of Pushkin's works In France, for instance, there were 26 impressions of "The Captain's Daughter" (since 1853), nineteen impressions of "The Shot," seventeen impressions of "Boris Godunov" and so on It may also be noted that in Germany the volumes of Pushkin embracing almost all his works were published in popular pocket editions by both F Reklam and the Bibliographical Institute These cheap editions enjoyed great popularity Similar popular editions of Pushkin were brought out in Czechoslovakia. The popularity of Pushkin was greatly furthered in Germany, France, Czechoslovakia and Serbia by the works of the poet being included in anthologies, textbooks and, in Czechoslovakia, even in

calenders It is quite customary for Czech popular calenders to give portraits and biographies of the great Russian poet It seems that Pushkin enjoys the greatest popularity in Czechoslovakia This is to a large extent due to the Czech writers Many Czech poets who were inspired by Pushkin wrote poems about him One of the best poems devoted to Pushkin was written by Jaroslav Vrchlicky, one of the most significant Czech poets Many Czech novelists quote Pushkin in their works I will refer to the popular novel "Svejk" written by Hasek Svejk after his arrest enters into a conversation with another soldier, a fellow prisoner, about the fate of the Austrian monarchy Svejk's interlocutor says to him "Dear friend, when you consider our dear monarchy you inevitably come to the conclusion that it is in the same situation in which the uncle in Pushkin's novel found himself And it is left to us as Pushkin said

"To sigh, and think with furrowed brow —
Why can't the devil take you now?!"

That Pushkin is very popular among the reading public in Czechoslovakia is corroborated also by the following fact During the Pushkin celebrations of 1899 the Russian Academy of Sciences received many congratulatory messages and telegrams from scientists, literary societies, newspapers, etc in Western Europe But from Czechoslovakia telegrams were sent not only by literary and scientific organizations but also by many associations of handicraftsmen in small towns

In various countries of Western Europe and America interest in Pushkin has evidently grown In England, for instance, new translations of Pushkin appeared recently These include his fairy tales, which were never translated before 1918 Moreover, the new English (Oliver Elton) and other translations are by far superior to the old ones — for the first time the English poets translating Pushkin succeeded in approaching the melodious expressiveness of Pushkin's verse

In our days the interest in Pushkin is spreading throughout the world. Indeed, who but the fascist barbarians can resist the joy of Pushkin's immortal poetry?



PUSHKIN AND WESTERN LITERATURE

By **Prof** ZHIRMUNSKI

I

Pushkin was the parent of the new Russian literature. The roots of his literary work are to be found in Russian history and in the creative genius of the Russian people. However, the national development of Russia did not take place in isolation, it was linked up with the development of Europe as a whole, and Russian national literature developed as a province of world literature. Thus Pushkin, the great Russian poet, was at the same time an active participator in the literary life of the West. His literary career was bound up with both European and Russian literary development.

Pushkin had a different attitude to the various writers of the West at the different stages of his career. The names of Voltaire, Byron, Shakespeare and Walter Scott are the (milestones marking the successive literary influences which were assimilated by Pushkin and metamorphosed in his poetry. While the French influences to which he was subject during his Lycee period and up till his exile to the South (1820) were absorbed for the most part passively, Pushkin's interest in Byron during the years in the South (1820 to 1824) very soon developed into a wrestling match with the English poet as a result of which he succeeded in rising above the limitations of the latter's romantic individualism. His response to the influence of Shakespeare and Walter Scott from the time of his exile at Mikhailovskoye onwards, took the form of creative emulation in solving literary problems similar to those with which they had been faced, connected with a realistic portrayal of life.

But Pushkin did not merely learn from Western writers. He took part with his Western contemporaries in evolving European literature. Pushkin's "Byronism," his "Shakespearization" in drama and his experiments in historical novels of the Walter Scott type, have analogies in other European literatures. Other similarities accompanied by no less profound differences can be detected between Pushkin's work and that of the French romanticists. Pushkin drew chiefly on the realistic tendencies

in the romanticism of his time Hence his polemics with the "erratic and crude" Victor Hugo and his marked antipathy to Lamartine's pious dreaming which he described as "meagre and monotonous," "limp and colourless" Pushkin's leanings towards realism also explain his approval of the first poems of Joseph Delorme (nom de plume of Sainte-Beuve) which he praised for their "realistic treatment of emotional experiences," "sincere inspiration" and simplicity of verbal expression Pushkin's realistic tendency explains also his high opinion of the narrative prose of Merimee and Stendhal ("Red and Black")—writers who, although they belonged to the romantic school, were akin to Pushkin in their classical realism Merimee himself was one of the greatest exponents of Pushkin in the West He translated Pushkin into French and imitated Pushkin's "The Gypsies" and "Carmen"

An equally marked characteristic of Pushkin was his critical attitude to German philosophic-poetical idealism, to what he described as "visionariness and German ideologism" The opinions expressed by Pushkin on Goethe showed an attitude of cold respect rather than any feeling of artistic kinship Pushkin's "A Scene from 'Faust'" is not so much an imitation of Goethe as an attempt on Pushkin's part to give his own interpretation of "Faust"

Pushkin jokingly referred to himself as the "minister of foreign affairs" on the Parnassus of Russian literature Russian literature of the 19th century, chronologically the last of all the national literatures of Europe, made its appearance, in the person of Pushkin, as the heir of all the cultural riches accumulated by man in the past Hence the universalism of Pushkin's poetry and the exceptional breadth of his cultural horizon which included the Ancient World and the Orient, the Middle Ages and his contemporaneous Europe, as well as the treasures of folk art, not only of Russia but of the whole world

Antiquity is represented in Pushkin's work by translations from Anacreon, Xenophon, Horace, Catullus, and others It is sensed by Pushkin in the French elegies of that "true Greek and classicist of classicists" A Chénier, and in Victor Aurelius' anecdote about Cleopatra which gave Pushkin the idea for his "Egyptian Nights" Through adaptations from the Bible and the Koran Pushkin came into contact with ancient Hebrew and Arabian poetry, not only religious but also love poetry ("The Song of Songs"). In "The Covetous Knight" and "Scenes from the Days of Chivalry" a picture is given of the medieval West at a time when feudal relationships were falling into decay

In imitations of Dante and translation from Ariosto, Italy during the Renaissance is recreated, as is also the case in the poem "Angelo" which gives the plot of an Italian short-story through Shakespearian eyes. Spanish

themes are found in Pushkin's romantic songs ("I am here, Inesilla", "The Night Breeze") and in "The Stone Guest"; Slavonic themes in the Mickewicz ballads, his translation of Mickewicz's "Conrad Wallenrod," and in "Songs of Western Slavs" in which Pushkin succeeded in recreating the national spirit of the Serbian epos which was familiar to him from the songs of Wuku Karadszicz and was in many respects akin to the Russian traditional ballad (*bylina*)

In his adaptations and translations, and also where he makes more indirect use of a borrowed plot or lyrical motif, Pushkin took only the subject matter from his predecessors and then entered with them into a kind of literary competition as to who would best bring out the artistic idea intended. It is this that accounts for the unusual intellectual penetration and objectivity of his treatments of themes from world literature ("Don Juan," "The Covetous Knight," "Angelo," "Faust" etc). It is therefore not surprising that the period of Pushkin's greatest maturity as a writer was when he was making greatest use of the artistic heritage of world literature

II

Like most of the young members of the nobility in his day Pushkin was given a French education. Pushkin's first attempts at writing as a child were made in French: the comedy "L'Escamoteur" written in imitation of Molière, and "La Tolyade" intended to be a parody on Voltaire's "Hennade". Among the lyrics written by Pushkin at the Lycée, a few French poems have been preserved. Many of Pushkin's letters were written in French (e.g. to Rayevski, Chaadayev, and A. P. Kern). It was chiefly in French translation that Pushkin read for the first time the English and German writers with whom he was familiar. Russian literature during the 18th century being comparatively poor in quality and chiefly imitative, French literature played a particularly important part in Pushkin's development as a poet in that it served as the literary and cultural tradition which formed the groundwork for his education, but which he afterwards superseded.

French literary education at the beginning of the 19th century was based on the "Great classicists" of the 17th century, that is to say, those creators of French national literature who had not yet been disturbed by the literary polemics on romanticism. The tragedies of Racine, the comedies of Molière and the poetical and satirical works of Boileau served as models of classical taste. Voltaire joined them as "an 18th century classicist". The young Pushkin had a great respect for all these names. And even later when he

rebelled against the aristocratic narrowness of classical French poetry, Pushkin still admitted that Racine was great in spite of the narrow form of his tragedy, was ready to appeal to Boileau against the "slovenliness" of the French romanticists and spoke in praise of Moliere's "inventive daring." It was characteristic of Pushkin that, of Moliere's plays, he had an especially high opinion of "Tartuffe" with its exposure of religious hypocrisy and false prudery.

The culture of the 18th century influenced the young Pushkin in two directions. On the one hand he absorbed the still living traditions of the aristocratic drawing-room culture of the old regime which, though it retained all its exclusiveness and over-refinement, was inwardly sapped under the influence of bourgeois critical thought. It was this that made him take up 18th century "light poetry" with its drawing-room epicureanism, its playful eroticism and sceptical libertinism which was a feature of Russian aristocratic literature of the time. On the other hand Pushkin inherited from the 18th century the "free thought" of bourgeois enlightenment and the rationalism and materialism which struck deep roots during the period immediately preceding the French Revolution.

"Baron d'Holbach, Morellet, Gaham, Diderot
And all that sceptical, encyclopedic lot"

This was the source of Pushkin's rejection of traditional church religion and of the official and unofficial mysticism of the epoch of the Holy Alliance. As is well known, the Russian liberal movement in the reign of Alexander I, which came to a head in the December rising of 1825, was imbued with French "free-thought" ideas. It was these same ideas which at the end of the 18th century influenced the revolutionary ideology of Radishchev. As V. Semevsky who made a close study of the Decembrist movement has shown: "Among 18th century writers, Beccana, Voltaire, Helvetius, Holbach and Raynal played an important part in forming the social and religious ideas of the numerous members of the secret society." It should be noted that Byron's liberal romanticism was similarly nourished by French 18th century "free thought" and like Pushkin's romanticism continued the traditions of the French bourgeois revolution.

Of all the writers of the 18th century, Voltaire had the greatest influence on Pushkin. Voltaire's name frequently recurs in Pushkin's school-boy poetry as that of one of his teachers. "The man who stands alone," "a poet the first among the poets," Voltaire, in Pushkin's view, is "more widely read than any other and wears less than any." Pushkin knows him as a classical tragedian ("a rival of Euripides") and as the author of lyrical elegies ("fond friend of Erata"), as the bard of "Henriade" ("Tasso's

grandson"), as philosopher and satirist ("The son of Monro* and Minerva") and as the author of philosophical novels ("father of *Candide*") But a still greater impression was made on Pushkin by Voltaire's "*Maid of Orleans*" — "a glorious, golden, unforgettable book, a catechism of wit the Holy Bible of the Graces "

Among his school friends and in the friendly society known as "The Green Lamp," which Pushkin joined on leaving the Lycee, the epicurean and erotic tendencies were inevitably accompanied by free thought in religion and politics In this sense the eighteen-year-old follower of Voltaire is at one and the same time "a philosopher and a scamp" as Pushkin described himself in a poem to Gorchakov

Pushkin was well read in the poetry of French libertinage, which began as an oppositional tendency in the classical literature of the 18th century and ended during the period of the French Revolution Voltaire's "*Maid of Orleans*" stood at the centre of this school Pushkin had a high opinion of La Fontaine's frivolous tales and later pointed out that they contained one of the first signs of revolt against the official sanctimoniousness of the court of Louis XIV "The poor noble (in spite of the piety of the times), published his merry tales about nuns in Holland" "but La Fontaine died pensionless " Pushkin knew "Vert Vert," a humorous erotic poem by the abbe Gresset who was persecuted by the clergy for his religious latitudinarianism He also read the anti-religious poems of Parny, written during the period of the French Revolution, which parodied biblical and christian mythology in the adventure spirit of the "*Maid of Orleans*" ("The War of the Gods," "Gallant Adventures," etc)

Pushkin's first attempts at epic narrative were made after reading "*The Maid of Orleans*" and other works of the same type. The religious free thought instilled by the French libertines is especially in evidence in Pushkin's "secret" poetry in his first poem entitled "The Monk" (written in 1813 and only recently found) in which the lives of the orthodox saints were parodied in the form of an erotic "fairy tale" written in verse, and in his later poem "Gavrihada" (1821) which is similar to the anti-religious poems of Parny, but has the same lyrical passion as his "Byronic" poems written at the same time

In the unfinished poem "Bova" (1814) which was suggested by Radishchev, and in "Ruslan and Ludmila," the influence of Voltaire can be traced only in the formal attributes of the literary genre chosen — broad epic narrative with a number of parallel themes, digressions and episodes, and the humorous, frivolously amorous tone of the narrative which is in keeping with the ironic treatment of the plot and the heroes In these poems, and especially in "Ruslan and Ludmila," the choice of subject represents the first revolt against the anstocratic narrowness in the choice of

subject matter typical of the classical school of the 18th century and an attempt to introduce into literature the folk tone of the Russian heroic epos and the fairy tale

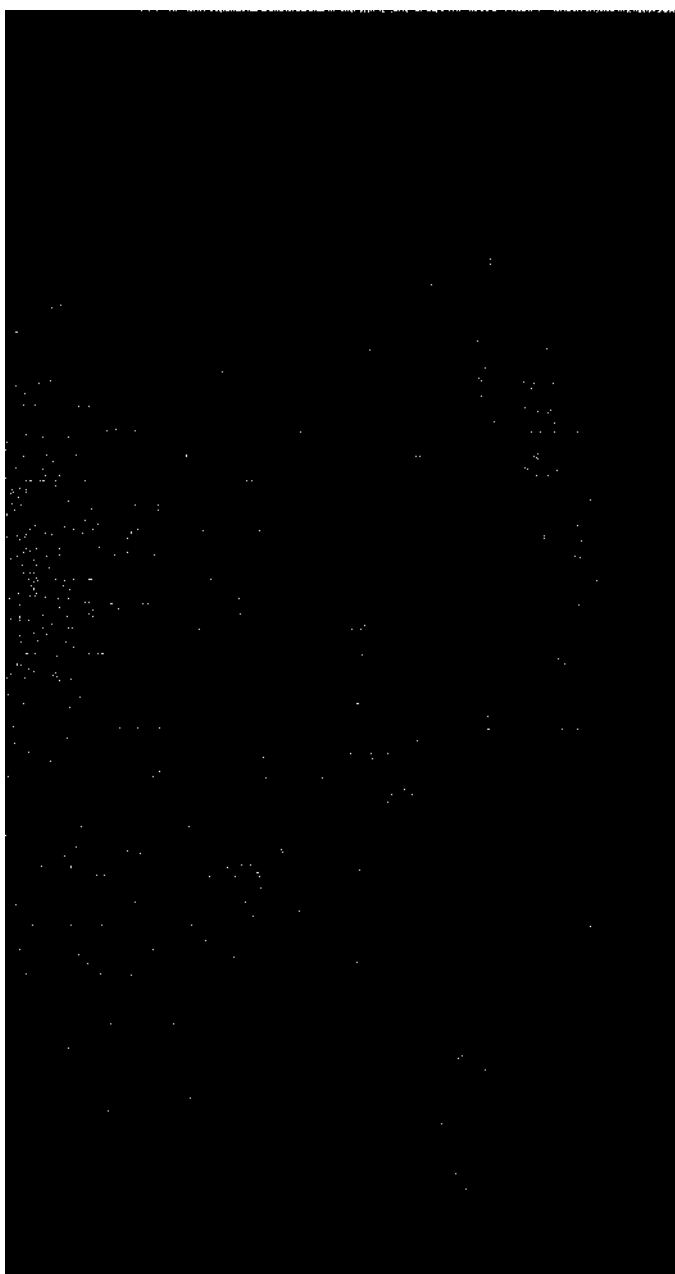
Later on, when he was thoroughly versed in European romanticism, Pushkin revised his attitude to the French literature of the 17th and 18th centuries in the light of the new attributes that he required of art, namely, broad artistic realism and popular appeal. After the 1820's, Pushkin devoted much attention to the criticism of French classicism and its influence on Russian poetry in the 18th century.

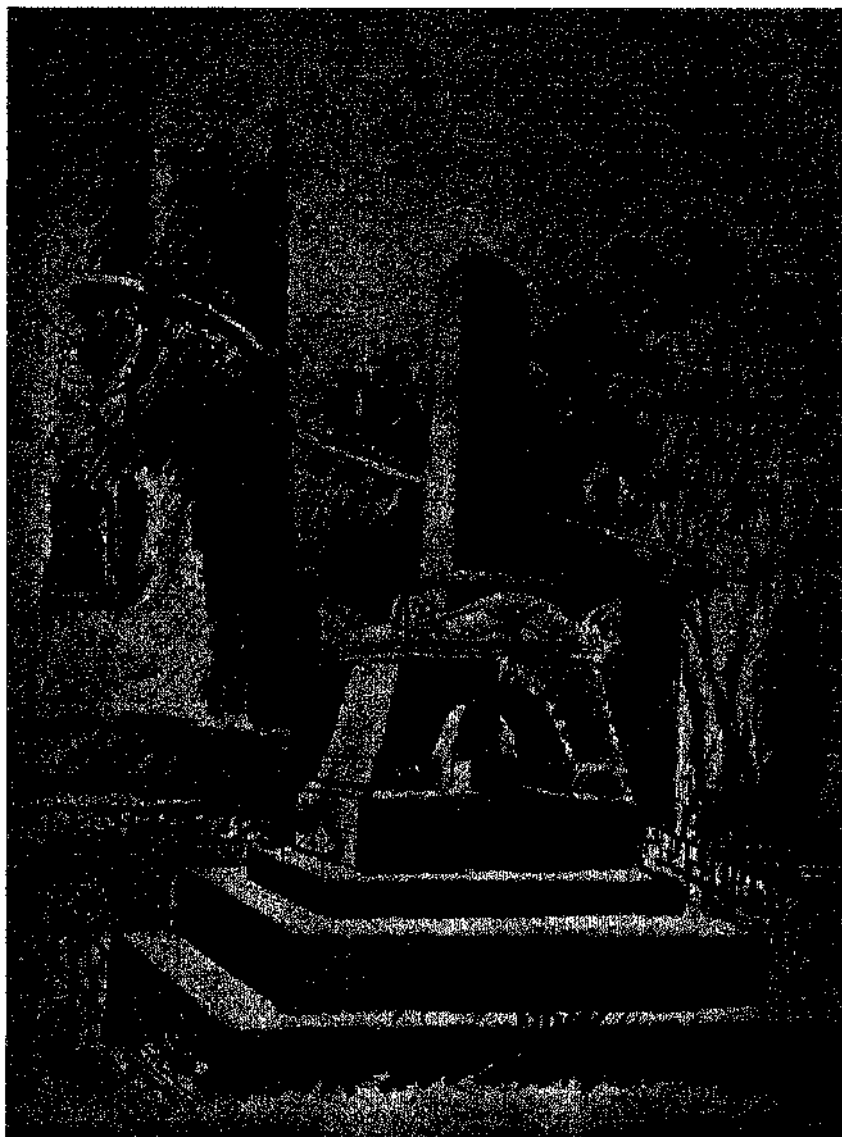
In Pushkin's opinion, the worst fault of French classical literature was its aristocratic narrowness, its courtly, "drawing-room" character. "French literature," said Pushkin, "was born in the ante-room and never went further than the drawing room." "Who was it that powdered and rouged Racine's Melpomene and even old Corneille's straight-laced muse? The courtiers of Louis XIV. What was it that laid the cold veneer of good manners and wit on the works of 18th century authors? The society of M^lles du Deffand, Boufflers, D'Epmay, all very delightful, educated women. But Milton and Dante did not write for the favour of a sarmie from the fair sex." Hence the "bashfulness and affectation" of French poetry and the "timid rules" of the French classical theoreticians. "The result is a polite, refined literature, brilliant and aristocratic, a little affected, but for this very reason capable of being understood by all the courts in Europe—for aristocratic society, as one of the most modern writers has justly observed, forms one single family all over Europe."

As opposed to the other literatures of Europe at the time, French classicism had no roots among the people. In Pushkin's view this accounted for its imitative character. "In Italy and Spain popular poetry existed before its geniuses came on the scene. These geniuses followed a path that had already been trodden." "Germany had long been in possession of its Nibelungen." "The advent of enlightenment in France found French poetry in its childhood without any aim or any motive force. The educated minds of the age of Louis XIV justly despised its pettiness and turned to ancient models. Boileau made public his Koran, and French literature bowed down to him."

From the beginning of the 1820's Pushkin spoke against the influence of French poetry on the grounds that it threatened "to stifle our adolescent literature." "Stand with the Germans and the English!" he wrote to Vyazemsky in 1823, "destroy these marquises of classical poetry."

In spite of such virulent attacks Pushkin was in many respects indebted to French 18th century culture for his subsequent development. Pushkin retained to the end certain features of the critical free thought of the period of Enlightenment. Thus he shared its clarity and sobriety of intellect.





Pushkin's Tomb.

A. Kaplun. Lithograph drawing, 1930

and this made him oppose the visionary and fantastic elements in Zhukovsky's work and the poetical idealism of the German "philosophizers." While rejecting the narrow rationalism of the encyclopedists in religious matters he always remained an atheist at heart. He looked upon religion as an historical phenomenon and compared the Bible with Homer as being, like the latter, a relic of primitive civilization. He also defended protestantism against Chaadayev (in a letter written in 1831) from the point of view that in the process of history monarchical institutions must of necessity be superseded by republican ones. In his writing Pushkin did not reject the legacy of French 17th and 18th century classicism, but rose above its limitations. Pushkin's realism was tempered with classicism and retained the simplicity, clarity, objectivity and harmonious proportions of the classical style and the precision and concreteness of its verbal expression.

It is interesting to note in this connection Pushkin's views on taste, a subject that was eagerly discussed during the period of classicism. "True taste", in his opinion, consists in "a sense of proportion and a sense of fitness." It is "a negative rather than a positive virtue which does not admit anything tense in one's emotions, anything obscure or abstruse in one's ideas or unnatural in one's descriptions." "The necessary condition of beauty" is not poetical "frenzy" (that is to say, not blind and unconscious inspiration such as the romanticists preached) but "intellectual power which distributes the parts with respect to the whole." From this point of view Racine—"that marquis of classical poetry"—is admirable, for his poems are "full of point, exactitude and harmony."

The 18th century school of French prose writers with Voltaire at their head, had a very important influence on the development of Pushkin's prose. "The primary merits of prose are accuracy and brevity, it requires ideas and ideas, for without them brilliant turns of expression are worthless." Voltaire's prose always served as a model for Pushkin in this respect and was described by him as "the best example of a rational style." The classical school brought Pushkin close to Merimee and Stendhal, who among the French romanticists stood on the same positions of classical realism as he.

III

During his exile in the south of Russia an important change took place in Pushkin's outlook and in his literary work. During exile his opposition to the existing political order was strengthened. This was to a large extent due to his contact with members of the "Southern Society" (the left wing of the Decembrists) and the impression made upon the poet by the revolutionary movement in the West and the struggles for liberation in Spain, Italy and still more nearer home, in Greece.

The exiled poet sets himself in opposition to the society which banished him. The wild southern landscapes of the Caucasus and Crimea and the colourful and unfamiliar life of the peoples of the Russian colonial East broaden his perspective. The drawing-room and bookish poetry of 18th century France lose their charm for him. The soil is prepared for a romantic revolution in the work of the young Pushkin. He takes up) Byron.

At the beginning of the 1820's the influence of Byron spread throughout Europe. Byron became the literary leader of European liberalism. He proclaimed the struggles for national liberation in Spain, Italy and Greece ("Childe Harold" and "Eastern Poems"). His half-voluntary exile from his native country, the part he took in the Carbonari movement and later in the Greek revolution, ending in his heroic death at Missolonghi, all spread around Byron the glamour of a political fighter against triumphant reaction. Byron's last poems written in exile ("Don Juan" and the political satires, "The Age of Bronze" and "The Vision of Judgement") are all full of the most virulent attacks against the rulers of contemporary Europe, the statesmen of the Holy Alliance, Metternich, Castlereagh, Wellington, Alexander I and all the larger and smaller fry who gave them, ideological support.

Byron's poetry, which like that of the young Pushkin was nourished by the ideological heritage of French 18th century bourgeois thought, that is to say, by the "free thought" and criticism of the ideologists of the bourgeois revolution, creates the romantic figure of the rebel hero, the pessimistic and disillusioned individualist, the hero-apostate who finds himself in conflict with modern society and is, according to the prevailing moral standards, a criminal. All Byron's poetry represents the confessions of this hero in lyric verse.

Pushkin first read Byron in St. Petersburg, shortly before his banishment, but it was only in the South that Byron became his favourite poet. Pushkin absorbed Byron's rebel poetry at a time when Europe was shaken by revolution, and the poet was for him surrounded with all the glamour of a herald of freedom.

The first indication of Byronic influence in Pushkin's poetry is to be found in the elegy "Now Fades the Light of Day" (1820) written on board ship on his way from Theodosia to Gursuf, in which the young exile identified himself with Childe Harold sailing away from his native land. Byron's "Eastern Poems" had a still more marked influence on Pushkin as is evident from his "Southern" poems, written during exile (1820—1824). These are "The Prisoner of the Caucasus," "The Brothers Highwaymen," "The Fountain of Bakhchisarai" and "The Gypsies." Pushkin himself admitted that "The Prisoner of the Caucasus" and "The Fountain of Bakhchisarai" were written under the influence of Byron, about whom, as he said, "I have gone quite mad."

The conflict between the individual and society figures for the first time in Russian literature in the "Southern" poems of the young Pushkin. Here the actual conflict between the advanced revolutionary-minded young members of the nobility on the eve of the uprising of 'the Decembrists and the social system of Russia under serfdom is portrayed in romantic form. The contrast Pushkin makes between the "freedom" of nature and the "slavery" of civilization ("the bondage of airless towns"), this Byronic variation on the theme of Rousseau's philosophy, which rings so clearly through Aleko's accusatory speeches in "The Gypsies", is a poetical expression of the same conflict

Thus Pushkin's type of the Russian Byronic hero, that "Muscovite in Harold's cloak," 'had its roots in Russian soil and in Pushkin's own character, although it was created under the influence of a European type that had already been evolved

Pushkin, like Byron, identified himself with his hero, portraying him subjectively and sharing his emotional life and experiences. However, one can note in Pushkin an attempt to overcome romantic subjectivism. One sees how in wrestling with the Byronic tradition the great Russian poet is preparing the way for a new realistic treatment of the conflict between the individual and society. The hero of "The Prisoner of the Caucasus" and, still more, "The Gypsies" comes to grief at the clash with reality. His idea of primitive "freedom" is shown to be a romantic illusion and all the limitations of his individualism are brought out. Aleko is incapable of submitting to the laws of primitive *Me* and brings into the patriarchal society the proprietary egotism and "fatal passions" of a civilized man. For this he is expelled from the patriarchal group and the old Gypsy in pronouncing his sentence says to him, "Thou wouldst thyself alone be free."

Thus for civilized man there is no going back, there is no escape from the society in which he has been bred.

Not only is the hero morally dethroned, but he is also aesthetically dethroned in the sense that the compositional elements of the poem are emancipated from direct subordination to the figure of the hero and are made artistically independent. The descriptions of the country and the life of the people cease to play a subordinate part in the composition of the poem. They have themselves perfectly independent artistic interest. In "The Prisoner of the Caucasus" the descriptions of nature and the life of the mountain folk almost completely overshadow the traditional figure of the disillusioned hero. "The Circassians, their customs and morals," Pushkin admits, "take up the larger and better part of my story."

In "The Fountain of Bakhchisarai" the usual lyrical hero is entirely absent. His place is taken by the Crimean Khan, who, in spite of certain Byronic characteristics, himself belongs to the ethnological environment of

the Tatar poem. It should be noted that the "local colour" in these poems of Pushkin is already an expression of the universalism of his mature work. We here find germs of that objective realistic treatment of life with all its historical and national details which is so characteristic of Pushkin during his more mature years.

On the other hand, side by side with the main hero, we have here the independent emotional lives of secondary characters. The heroine, especially, becomes an active and no less important figure in the story. From this arises the necessity of giving an objective description of the equally important and mutually contrasted personalities of Maria, Zarema, Zemphira and the old Gypsy, of which each has its own part in the story and its own fate. In "The Gypsies" this striving for dramatic objectivity breaks up the narrow form of the lyrical poem and the result is the "Shakespearization" in character portrayal which Pushkin later develops in a condensed form in his "little" dramas.

Among Pushkin's later works which are close to the tradition of the romantic poem mention may be made of "Poltava" (1828). The love story in "Poltava" (Mazeppa—Maria—Kochubei) recalls to mind Byron's "Eastern Poems". Maria and Mazeppa retain the outward appearance and traits of character of the Byronic hero and his beloved. But the plot is widened to include a new national historical theme, namely the struggle for the unity and national independence of the Russian state. The personal encounter between Mazeppa and Kochubei is overshadowed by the struggle between Peter I and Charles XII in which Mazeppa plays the part of an ally of Charles and Kochubei that of a martyr, although an involuntary one, for his country. The subjective Byronic poem thus develops into an epic with a national historical theme.

The Byronic hero still persists in "Eugene Onegin," but here he is shown realistically, in the contemporary social environment. Onegin is shown as a disillusioned individualist who, in his critical attitude to contemporary life, rises above his environment, but the poem reveals his personal and social egotism, his moral worthlessness and the futility of his society existence.

Onegin here represents the type of the Russian liberal nobleman of the pre-Decembrist period.

In Pushkin's remarks about Byron a distinct change of attitude can be noted by the year 1824. In letters and notes between 1825 and 1827 Pushkin opposes Shakespeare and Goethe to Byron.

Pushkin accuses the romanticist and individualist of one-sidedness and subjectivism in his literary work. "Byron took a one-sided view of the world and human nature, then turned away from it and immersed in his own self." In his works "there was only one character whom he fully grasped and

was able to create and describe, and that was his own " It is this that explains Byron's failure in the writing of drama. "To each of the characters of his drama he gave one of the constituent elements of his own gloomy and powerful character, and thus dismembered his magnificent creation and converted it into a number of small and insignificant¹ ones " Consequently, in Pushkin's view, Byron's tragedies were "beneath his genius" and while he was original in "Childe Harold," "The Giaour" and "Don Juan" he "became an imitator the moment he stepped on dramatic ground " Thus in "Manfred" he imitated Goethe's "Faust" but "weakened the spirit and the forms of his model" "Twice Byron attempted to wrestle with the giant of romantic poetry and was left lame like Jacob "

Pushkin's abandonment of the romantic individualism of Byron in the theory and practice of his art was a necessary stage in the evolution of his own form of realism

IV

Pushkin began to outgrow Byronism at a time when his philosophic outlook as a whole was undergoing a profound change This was between 1824 and 1826, during his second exile, in the solitude of the village of Mikhailovskoye

During this period Pushkin was beginning to make a profounder study of history from the standpoint of a realist, and this was bound up with his realisation of the role of the people in the making of history It was this that led to his subsequent interest in the great popular movements, such as the period in Russian history known as the Turbulent times and the Pugachov and Razin movements Thus the new phase in Pushkin's outlook was marked by the dominance of the historical idea and the idea of the people.

In his interpretation of the present in the light of the historical past Pushkin became a disciple of Shakespeare and Walter Scott He learned from the former the art of the chronicle play, the historical tragedy, and from the latter the historical novel giving a broad realistic portrayal of the social life of a period.

Pushkin first began to read Shakespeare in the South, but he did not become a real admirer of the Bard of Avon until he was living at Mikhailovskoye and was working on "Boris Godunov" (1825) "What a man Shakespeare was!" he exclaimed in a letter to N Rayevsky, "I cannot get over him!" ("Mais quel homme que ce sh.; Je n'en reviens pas!")

Pushkin sees Shakespeare's drama as "popular tragedy" which was "born in the market place" and was designed for "popular entertain-

ment" This democratic character of Shakespeare's art is contrasted with the aristocratic, restricted art of French classicism, which was evolved at court and conformed to the requirements of "educated society" Hence Pushkin's description of Racine's tragedies as being narrow in form, prudish and absurdly long-winded, all of which attributes he contrasted with the breadth and variety of Shakespeare's realism, his freedom of design and the bold way he expressed himself without any respect for the demands of court etiquette "I am firmly convinced," Pushkin declared, "that the popular rules of the Shakespearean drama, not the court usage of the Racine tragedy are suitable for our stage "

Popular art, as Pushkin understood it, is at the same time national art Like Shakespeare, Pushkin writes a dramatic chronicle presenting historical events He follows Shakespeare in the portrayal of "great national occurrences", the dramatist, he says, must give "the historian's ideas on the state" instead of "commonplace amorous intrigues," that he must show the "successive stages of an historical epoch and the development of historical characters "

In his interpretation of the forces at work in the national tragic drama Pushkin also followed Shakespeare. Whereas Schiller divorced his heroes from the masses and made them the abstract mouthpieces of an idea, Pushkin found in Shakespeare the "Falstaffian background" of historical drama, which in the words of Engels is such a characteristic feature of Shakespearean realism In "Boris Godunov" the tsar is surrounded by the boyars and priests with their mutually antagonistic political ideas and interests; but it is the masses that are the decisive factor in the political struggle and it is to their power and conscience that the opposing parties appeal as the last resort. The people do not take part in "Boris Godunov" merely as an amorphous mass There are definite popular types such as the old monastic scribe Pimen and the beggar fanatic who condemns Boris before the crowd, who are the embodiment of the popular conscience, as also the vagabonds Varlaam and Misail, representing the humour of the people

Pushkin also solves the problem of dramatic character portrayal in the Shakespearean manner In this connection he wrote- "I copied Shakespeare in his free and easy representation of characters and his simple and careless way of building up types " "Genuineness of passion and plausibility of the feelings depicted in the given circumstances—that is what our intellect demands of the dramatic writer" The lyrical one-sidedness and subjectivism in the portrayal of the Byronic hero is replaced by the objective versatility of the characters and situations of Shakespearean drama

Shakespeare, according to Pushkin, created complex and many-sided characters, with all 'the inconsistencies of people of flesh and blood

showing themselves in different aspects according to the situations in which they are placed. He contrasted this with the one-sided rationalized method of characterisation followed by the French classicists and best exemplified in the comedies of Molière. "The characters created by Shakespeare are not like those of Molière, types of some one passion, some one vice, but are living beings with many passions, many vices." "In Molière the miser is avaricious and nothing more, in Shakespeare Shylock is avaricious, resourceful, revengeful, witty, and also fond of his child."

Following this principle, in "Boris Godunov" the historical characters (Boris, the Pretender, Shuisky and the others) are shown from various angles. Their complex humanity is revealed in the various situations in which they find themselves. Thus Boris is ambitious and for the sake of his ambition he has committed a crime. Hence his suspicion and cruelty and the pangs of conscience which he suffers. At the same time he is a wise and enlightened ruler who cares for the welfare of his subjects, but in this he is actuated by the hope of winning their support and obliterating the memory of his crime. Further he is not only a ruler overwhelmed with state duties, but is also a kind and loving father, as when he is shown in the intimate atmosphere of his private apartments. When he speaks to Shuisky his manner is different from that he has with Basmanov, or with his son, and he displays a still different manner when alone and speaking to himself.

The problem of writing a "popular drama" on a national historical subject, dealing with a large number of events and characters, was necessarily bound up with the external reform of dramatic presentation which had taken place in the West under the name of romanticism. Pushkin himself described "Boris Godunov" as a romantic tragedy, meaning by romanticism in this case the reform of dramatic presentation "according to our father Shakespeare's system." By discarding the unities of time and place adhered to by the classical French tragedy, and the division into acts demanded by the artificial concentration of the dramatic theme, Pushkin gives his dramatic display of the national disturbance, from the accession of Boris to the murder of his children and the accession of his adversary, in an epic sequence of scenes taking place in the tsar's palace, in a monastic cell, on Red Square, in an out-of-the-way tavern on the Lithuanian frontier, in the castle of General Mnishczek, on the battlefield and so forth. Moreover, tragic scenes are interrupted by comic scenes, conversations between historical personages alternate with popular scenes, and political intrigues and clashes of troops with romantic episodes (Dimitri and Maryna) and family idylls (Boris with his children). There is no unity of action in the classical sense, that is to say, unity of the dramatic plot. This is replaced by the unity of the historical events, the latter being

shown realistically, in all their aspects, in the order in which they unfold themselves. There is thus "unity of interest"

V

In the field of the historical novel Walter Scott was Pushkin's teacher, just as he was also the teacher of most of his Western contemporaries. The great influence exerted by Walter Scott on the development of contemporary European and especially Russian prose, was realized by Vyazemsky, who wrote that "in our age it is impossible for a poet not to remind one of Byron or a novelist not to remind one of Walter Scott."

The historical novels of Walter Scott give a picture of a period of great changes in English national life and show the class and party struggles that were taking place, particularly the clash between the old feudal order and the new bourgeois order.

The fundamental idea of Walter Scott's novels is to show the great events of the past as reflected in everyday life, in the fortunes of ordinary people of no particular importance. The historical events thus become interwoven with personal memoirs or a family chronicle and the imaginary heroes of this chronicle occupy the foreground of the novel. The historical heroes are only shown in the background, but they are drawn into the circle of everyday human relationships and thus lose their traditional grandeur and remoteness. And although Walter Scott's chief characters, those, that is to say, who are the centres of the love interest, are often idealized in the conventional, romantic manner, the broad historical and social background is filled with a great variety of popular, democratic types.

It would seem from his letters that Pushkin was already familiar with Walter Scott's works while in the South, but the period when he¹ began to take the greatest interest in him was when he was studying Shakespeare, that is to say at Mikhailovskoye. "Walter Scott! He is food for the soul!" declared Pushkin in a letter to his brother written in October 1825 asking him to send more books. Pushkin had a high opinion of Walter Scott as the creator of the historical novel and an interpreter of the past.

Pushkin particularly approved of Walter Scott's realistic approach to historical events and personages. "What is so delightful about Walter Scott's novels," he wrote, "is that in them we get to know past times not with the *enflure* of French tragedy, not with the primness of the sentimental novel, not with the *digmté* of history, but contemporaneously, in a domestic manner."

Walter Scott was for Pushkin the model of a realistic novelist writing on historical (in the broadest sense of the word) and social subjects

In Pushkin's historical novels, as was already evident in "Boris Godunov," the historical subject chosen was bound up with important and critical changes in national development.

The main problems of the process of Russian history dealt with by Pushkin were the Europeanization of Muscovite Russia during the reign of Peter the First, when "Russia came into Europe like a launched vessel amid the hammering of axes and the thunder of cannons" and the peasant revolution in Catherine's reign, which challenged the very foundations of the rule of the landed nobility. The special themes dealt with in the contemporary novel "Dubrovsky" are presented with equal force. This picture of despotic Russian landlordism, to which an impoverished member of an old aristocratic family becomes a victim, was suggested to Pushkin by contemporary Russian life and this fact fundamentally distinguished the novel from "The Bride of Lammermoor," which has a similar theme.

Pushkin, like Walter Scott, recreates an historical period by careful documentation, himself collecting records and studying the memoirs of contemporaries and historical researches. "A History of Pugachov" was written parallel with "The Captain's Daughter," and the plot of "The Negro of Peter the Great" echoes "The History of the Reign of Peter the Great" which was planned but never written. Pushkin was not content with written documents, but made special journeys to the scenes of the events about which he was writing. Thus he collected material about Pugachov from recollections of living people which had already evolved into folklore. As a result the figure of Pugachov in "The Captain's Daughter" becomes clothed with a popular glamour which does not fail to win a certain human and artistic sympathy for the "muzhiks' tsar." However, with Pushkin's historical concreteness and documentariness does not degenerate into an over-emphasis of historical detail as such, or into superficial naturalism and the romantic exoticism of "local colour." In this respect Pushkin does not follow the tradition of Walter Scott and most of his Western and Russian disciples. Pushkin seeks historical truth above all else in the realistic portrayal of "national occurrences," "events and passions."

Realism is attained in the presentation of historical events, as in Walter Scott's work, by interweaving them with a family chronicle or the fortunes of perfectly ordinary people of the times dealt with. Both Peter the Great in his family circle and at the court reception, as also Pugachov as Grinev's guide and later as his benefactor, are shown under "domestic" conditions, just as Pushkin considered essential in the writing of historical novels, and the result is that history becomes "what we see around us" ("absolument ce que nous voyons").

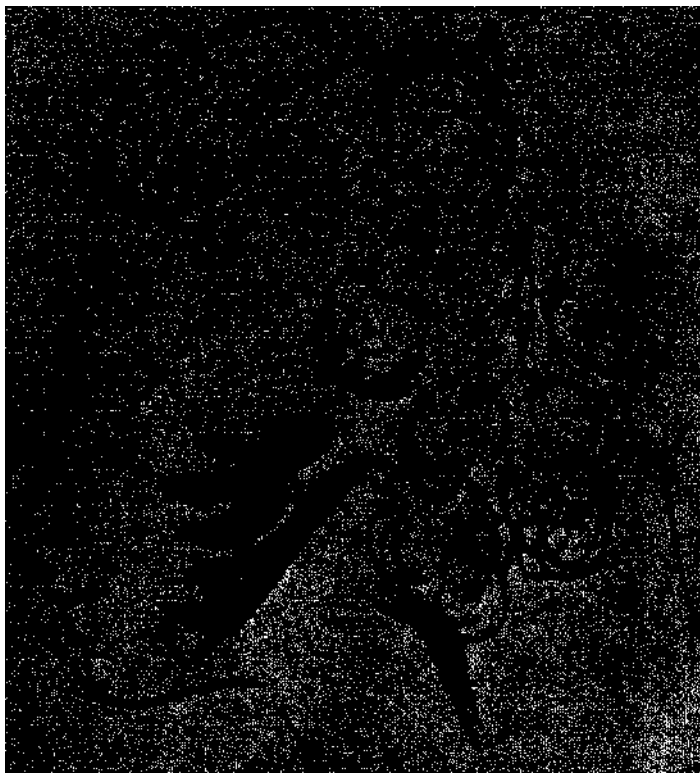
But the heroes of "The Captain's Daughter," Pushkin's last and best

novel, the family of Captain Mironov, an officer whose father had been a soldier in the ranks, Grinev himself and his old servant Savelyich, are in this sense less a novelist's characters than Walter Scott's heroes. They are the obscure people in whose fortunes Pushkin took such a keen interest during the latter period of his literary development (cf. "The Station-master") and whom he represented as genuinely human, universal types, thus to a certain extent anticipating the heroes of Gogol and Dostoyevsky.

Together with the romantic atmosphere, the carefully worked out plot inherited by Walter Scott from the "Gothic novel" also disappears.

The extraordinary conciseness, classical lucidity and sobriety of the narrative style of Pushkin's prose is also in vivid contrast to the highly coloured and emotional style of the romantic novel.

Thus it was by measuring his powers with the best writers of contemporary Europe and never ceasing to vindicate his principles of realism and popular art that Pushkin rose to the height of his genius as the great national poet of Russia.



' *Large self-portrait*
A. S. Pushkin. Pen drawing. From the album of E. N. Ushakovn, 1829

THEATRE
AND MUSIC





PUSHKIN AND THE STAGE

By M ZAGORSKI

I

The legacy left to posterity by Pushkin in the field of drama is of much greater significance and wider scope than is generally believed. Besides "Boris Godunov," "Mozart and Saheri," "The Covetous Knight," "The Stone Guest," "A Feast During the Plague," "Scenes from the Days of Chivalry" and the "Water Nymph" Pushkin left fragments and outlines of eight tragedies, dramas and comedies and also a number of articles and rough notes on various problems of dramatic art, the stage, actors' craftsmanship and the popular theatre ("My Ideas of Shakhovskoy," "My Notes on the Russian Theatre," "On Drama," variants of an introduction to "Boris Godunov," an opinion on Victor Hugo's "Cromwell," several notes on Shakespeare, etc).

In Pushkin's poems and letters we find a gallery of prominent people of the stage sketched by an exacting artist: there is Didelot, master of the ballet, Istomma, ballet dancer, Semyonova and Kolosova, actresses, and the playwrights Ozerov, Shakhovskoy, Khmel'nitsky, Gnyomedov, and Katenin. Pushkin also began to write down the reminiscences of M. S. Shchepkin, the famous Russian actor and reformer of the stage. It was Pushkin who suggested to Gogol the theme of "The Inspector General." The Russian stage owed Pushkin its high European standard, its adaptations and variations of themes from Shakespeare, Molière, Tirso de Molina, Beaumarchais and Goldoni. Pushkin was the first to appraise the

role of the spectator in the shaping of a play and in the development of the actor's talent ("the public shapes dramatic talent").

Pushkin's first literary attempt was devoted to the theatre ("The Abductor," a comedy "abducted from Mohere"), And the last lines the poet wrote in his deathbed referred to the translation of Barry Cromwell's plays for the magazine *Souremennik* (letter to A. O. Ishimova)

Thus Pushkin started out with the ' theatre," and ended with it.

The greatest of Pushkin's dramatic works is "Boris Godunov", the staging of which was prohibited by the tsarist censorship Pushkin was particularly fond of this drama and considered it of particularly great value "I am sending you, dear friend, the dearest of my works," he wrote to N I Krivstov "Boris Godiunov" was written in 1824/25, in the quietude of the Mikhailovskoye estate, to which place he was exiled by the government In this tragedy Pushkm, six months before the uprising of the Decembrists, dealt with a subject which was of cardinal importance for his time and agitated the minds of the best men of that period The theme dealing with the people and the criminal tsar, the public square and the princely, boyar Kremlin, and the decisive influence of popular opinion on events,— was then so "vital and palpitating" that Pushkin could not for a long time make up his mind to show this tragedy even to his fnends, Zhukovsky and Vyazemsky, in spite of their insistent requests This great and poignant theme was presented by Pushkin in tones of "strict artistic style and noble classic simplicity," as Behnsky put it The beauty and ease of the free verse, the masterly use of historical annals and popular tradition, the Shakespearean methods of character drawing and of rapidly changing scenes, the deliberate avoidance of "scenic effects" and "romantic pathos," a realistic conception of the past in its connection with the contemporary scene—all this lent "Boris Godunov" an everlasting value which was not understood by the poet's contemporaries

Pushkin's "little tragedies", written, or, to be more precise, completed, at Boldino in 1830, are also of a very high artistic standard. In contrast to his "Boris Godunov," a drama deeply national in its theme and Shakespearean in form, Pushkin in his "The Covetous Knight," "The Stone Guest," "Mozart and Salieri," and "Feast During the Plague" uses West-European themes, creating an independent form of laconic drama, compressed in time and space, winch, however, deals with great human problems which are treated with keen artistry and profound understanding

The range of problems of the theatre that interested Pushkin was unusually wide It included love drama and historical tragedy, the personal and the social, the fantastic and the historical, lyrical poetry and folklore, "the individual and the people, the destiny of an individual and the destiny of a nation," as Pushkin expressed it in his notes on the drama.

Pushkin's views on the origin and role of the theatre and drama are of particular importance. Pushkin was keen on the matter of simplicity in dramatic art, of its being understood by and accessible to the millions instead of the "small narrow circle" of the chosen, "arrogant" few.

In his preface to "Boris Godunov" Pushkin wrote. "I am firmly convinced that the popular rules of the Shakespearean drama, not the court usage of Racine's tragedy, are suitable for our stage."

At the same time Pushkin was keenly interested in the problems of histrionic art. As a youth at the Lycee he writes a message "To a Young Actress" where he contrasts her "bad" acting with that of the famous actress Clairon. In his "Message to Gahch," written at about the same time, he ridicules the classic "singing of senseless verse" and the "terrific howl of actors and fiddlesticks." In a letter addressed to his brother from Kishinev he writes "But the actors! The actors! Pentameter verse without rhymes require a completely new manner of recitation." The poet's opinion of histrionic art is expressed with striking power and clarity in his "The Stone Guest," in the second scene where Laura's delighted guests speak of her acting in the play which was just finished.

First Guest

I swear to you, dear Laura, never yet
Was such perfection in your acting shown!
How thoroughly you understand your role!

Second Guest.

And with what power its meaning you unfolded!

Third Guest

And with what art!

Laura

Today, indeed, success
Did crown my every movement, every word.
I yielded freely to my inspiration,
The words flowed forth as though it was the heart
And not the timid memory gave them birth "¹

¹ From Babbette Deutsch's translation of Pushkin

Here the process of the great art of genuine acting is outlined with perfect clearness To "understand" the part, to "unfold" it, to develop it by methods of art"—such are the various stages of this process But all this must be lit up with "inspiration", the "heart" and not the slavish memory should give birth to words

Such are Pushkin's views of histrionic art The great poet was a whole century ahead of his contemporaries whose views were expressed in the following lines. "The principal faults of Shakespeare are (his utter disregard of the rules of the theatre, particularly of the rules of unity, his repulsive scenes and indecent language" (N Ostolopov, "A Dictionary of Ancient and New Poetry," St Petersburg, 1821)

III

The fate of Pushkin's dramas on the Russian stage under tsarism was indeed a tragical one Pushkin's plays were either prohibited or mutilated 01 their failure was deliberately brought about on the pretext that they were unsuitable for the stage Bulgarin's newspaper *Severnaya Pchela* (*Northern Bee*) wrote "We had performances of 'The Covetous Knight' which is known to be unsuitable for the stage " Benkendorf, head of the police under Nicholas I, wrote of "Boris Godumov" "This work at any rate is not suitable for the stage "

In Pushkin's lifetime there was only one performance of one of his plays, viz , "Mozart and Salien," which was produced on January 27, 1832 On that occasion Pushkin's play was put by the administration of the St Petersburg Grand Theatre as the first item on the playbill, the first item was usually regarded to be of second importance and was played while the audience was assembling Even the reviewer of the *Severnaya Pchela* noted with pretended indignation that "some of the playgoers could not hear the acting because they were just coming m, looking for their seats and sitting down, others could not hear it for the banging of doors and the thumping of the feet of the entering public " Fortunately Pushkin himself was not present at this outrageous performance

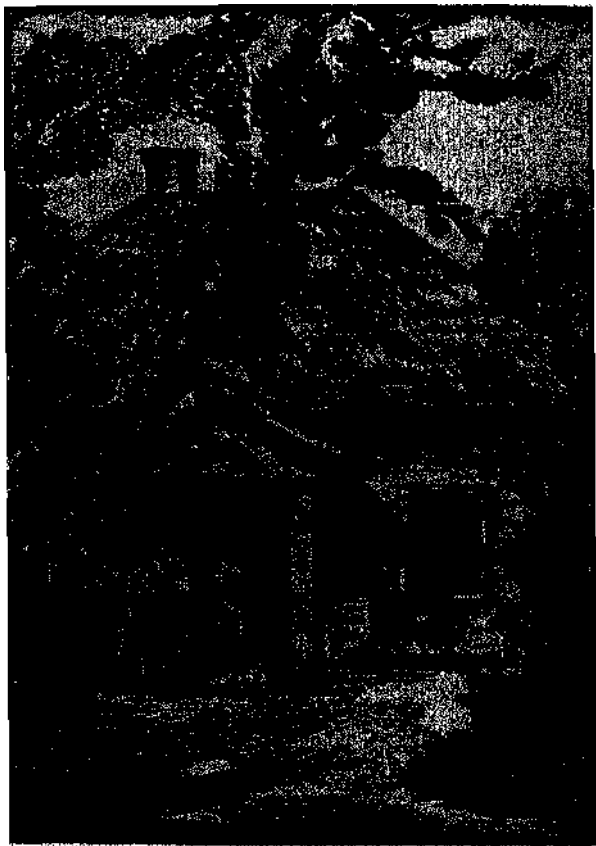
The production of Pushkin's "The Covetous Knight" was announced during the poet's lifetime The performance was to take place on February 1, 1837 (old style); however, on January 29 Pushkin's death occurred and the staging of the play was cancelled. "They were afraid of too great an outburst of enthusiasm," A J Turgenyev ironically wrote to A. I Nefedyeva

"The Covetous Knight" was for the first time produced on the stage in 1852 in the Alexandriinsky Theatre in Petersburg, with the famous Russian tragedian V. A Karatygin playing the part of the old baron How-

Circumstance	Justified (%)	Not justified (%)
If someone is attacking you	85	15
If someone is threatening you	75	25
If someone is harassing you	65	35
If someone is insulting you	45	55
If someone is annoying you	15	85

10. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 2000; 284: 2689-2694.

1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2636, 2637, 2638, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646, 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650, 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670, 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674, 2675, 2676, 2677, 2678, 26



The House of Pushkin's Nurse (Mikhailovskoye).
L. Khizhinsky. Woodcut, 1936

ever, it was not he but M S Shchepkin, the friend and admirer of Pushkin, who succeeded in giving a true interpretation of the poet's idea, when on January 9, 1853, he appeared in the title role of Pushkin's play produced at the Maly Theatre in Moscow. Shchepkin's triumph coming after Karatygin's failure signified the triumph of the genuine realistic school over the outwardly effective but hollow, elevated and "minuetish" (to use Behn-sky's expression) semi-classical and semi-romantic school of Karatygin who regarded Pushkin's "Boris Godunov" as "stuff and nonsense of 'the Shakespearean kind'" (from Karatygin's letter to Katenin).

"The Stone Guest" was first staged in 1837 at the Alexandrinsky Theatre in Petersburg and later during the season of 1862-63 it was produced at the Maly Theatre in Moscow. The performance was revived in the Maly Theatre in 1899 on the occasion of the Pushkin centenary celebrations, with an extremely good cast including the well-known actor A. P. Lensky in the role of Don Carlos and the refined and charming actress E. K. Peshkovskaya in the role of Dona Anna. However, none of these productions succeeded in giving a true interpretation of Pushkin's idea or in reproducing the real music of Pushkin's verse.

"A Feast During the Plague" was staged for the first time also during the Pushkin celebrations in 1899 (the centenary of the poet's birth) at the Alexandrinsky Theatre with V. N. Davydov in the part of the president of the feast and V. F. Komissarzhevskaya in the part of Mary. The administration regarded this performance as a tedious duty and therefore, notwithstanding the good acting, the play failed to reproduce the real atmosphere of Pushkin's tragedy.

A special place in the stage career of Pushkin's dramas must be given to the presentation of Pushkin's three "little tragedies" ("The Stone Guest," "Mozart and Salieri," "Feast During the Plague") in 1915 by the artist A. N. Benois at the Moscow Art Theatre. In contrast to the imperial theatres which always displayed a hostile attitude to Pushkin's dramas, the Moscow Art Theatre, a theatre of search and experiment, which reflected in its repertory the great subjects that agitated the minds of the Russian pre-revolutionary intelligentsia (from Ibsen and Gorky to Chekhov and Maeterlinck), a theatre which, according to the poet Blok, "shared the woes and joys of its epoch," treated Pushkin's tragedies with love and attention. But the production was a failure. We learn about the reasons of this failure from Stanislavsky who played the part of Salieri. With moving sincerity Stanislavsky relates "I failed to cope with Pushkin's verse, instead of verse there was profound, heavy prose." This remark applies to all the actors who took part in the performance with the exception of Kachalov who played Don Juan with ease and brilliance giving a true interpretation of the character portrayed by Pushkin. To a certain extent A. Benois,

the painter and producer, was also to blame for the failure Benois attempted in this production to enclose the naturalistic methods then prevailing in the Art Theatre in a self-contained framework of operatic splendour prepared, as it were, in the studies of "The World of Arts".¹

Many of the great masters of the Russian stage tried their strength in Pushkin's "little tragedies." Besides the above mentioned actors, there were Dalmatov, Samoilov, Medvedev, Samarm, Dalsky, Gorev. In addition to the role of Salieri, Stanislavsky, in the performances of the Moscow Society of Art and Literature, played the parts of the baron in "The Covetous Knight," and of Don Carlos and Don Juan in "The Stone Guest," but without success in either case. In spite of their persistent efforts these actors failed to render Pushkin's verse which, according to the poet himself, required a particular manner of delivery, neither could they master Pushkin's racy and extremely precise dialogue. However, these failures, according to Stanislavsky, proved to be more valuable and fruitful than many "successes and laurels", since the actors were enriched by their experience in the treatment of Pushkin's plays

IV

"Boris Godunov" was under the ban of the stage censorship until 1866 when permission to produce the play was given provided the scenes "The Patriarch's Chamber" and "An Inn on the Lithuanian Border," which are among the best and most brilliant in the tragedy, were omitted. "Boris Godunov" was for the first time presented on September 17, 1870, at the Mammsky Theatre in St Petersburg, but only sixteen out of the twenty-three scenes were given. The staging was in rich and magnificent style but in glaring contradiction to the theme of the drama and to Pushkin's views on the theatre. The national tragedy was transformed into a gaudy tinsel melodrama, and the acting was on a low level. A contemporary critic writing about this performance in the *Zarya* aptly said "It is not 'Boris Godunov,' but our ignorance, our shallowness and our bluster that suffered failure." This severe criticism applied in the first place to the imperial theatre, the theatre of the nobility.

The production of "Boris Godunov" at the Maly Theatre in Moscow in 1880 was not much better, even though the cast included such first-rate actors as Samarin in the part of Pimen, Lensky in that of Dmitri, Pravdin in the part of Shuisky and particularly Ermolova, the greatest tragedienne of the Russian stage, in the part of Maryna.

¹ "The World of Arts" was a school of cold aestheticism, and naturally this school was deeply hostile to the essence of Pushkin as a poet and playwright.

Elaborate preparations for the presentation of "Boris Godunov" were made by the Moscow Art Theatre in 1907. It was the first time that Theatre produced a Pushkin play. However, the Art Theatre failed to appreciate the fundamental principle of Pushkin's plays, "verisimilitude of situations and truthfulness of dialogue are the only true rules of the tragedy" (from Pushkin's letter to N. Rayevsky). The austere, Shakespearean realism in "Boris Godunov" was replaced by an artificial naturalism, while the truthfulness of dialogue and verisimilitude of situations were substituted by the outward habitual "verisimilitude" of a museum-like restoration exhibit. Nevertheless the production served to put an end to the assertion that Pushkin's tragedy was not suitable for the stage.

In Soviet times "Boris Godunov" was first staged in 1934 at the Drama Theatre (formerly Alexandrinsky) in Leningrad. For the first time the mass scenes in "Boris Godunov," which are so important for a real understanding of Pushkin's idea, were presented to the public. However, the production as a whole failed to satisfy the Soviet spectators, who justly demand that Pushkin productions in the Soviet theatre should fully reflect the ideas of the poet.

In the U S S R the interest taken in Pushkin's "Boris Godunov" and the "little tragedies" is so great that these plays are produced not only by professional theatres but on the amateur stage as well, both in the towns and among collective farm groups.

The famous Italian tragedian Ernesto Rossi who appeared with great success in the role of Pushkin's Don Juan and the old baron, wrote in his memoirs. "With what pleasure and pride would I have presented the author himself to the public. Who knows, had not Pushkin been killed in the duel, how many more wonderful plays he would have written for the stage." Evidently, this great artist was able to detect in Pushkin's plays what for so long a time had escaped the notice of other actors—Pushkin's ability to give effect to the "magic" of drama which strikes "three chords of our imagination—laughter, pity and terror" ("On Drama").

Pushkin's plays are full of great ideas, deep passions and strong characters. Only the heart of a great actor can respond to Pushkin's dramatic masterpieces with the necessary truthfulness and depth. Such an actor was Rossi and, on the Russian stage, Shchepkin.





PUSHKIN IN RUSSIAN MUSIC

By Prof V FERMAN

The significance of Pushkin is exceptionally great not only in the history of Russian literature but also in the history of Russian art as a whole. Pushkin's themes, images, characters and heroes have become part and parcel of Russian music, painting, the ballet, the stage and cinema.

In this respect, Russian music, represents a particular case in point. There is every reason to say that Russian music has developed and grown under the strong influence of Pushkin's poetry, that it was through contact with Pushkin's poetical works that Russian opera and the Russian ballad acquired full artistic value and striking originality. Pushkin's poetical genius stimulated the imagination of the best Russian composers and was instrumental in bringing forth a number of classical models of musical drama and vocal chamber music.

It should be noted that Pushkin arrived in Russian literature "on the shoulders," so to speak, of the great poets of the older generation—Derzhavin, Karaamzin, Zhukovsky, Batyushkov. By the time Pushkin appeared on the scene Russian literature already had its traditions, schools and! tendencies, while Russian music was still in its infancy. Russian music developed only after Pushkin, who truly may be considered its "godfather."

There is hardly any West-European poet whose influence on the development of his country's national music was as great as that of Pushkin's on the development of Russian music. And it is easy to understand why. By the beginning of the 19th century the art of music in France, Italy and Germany had quite a long history of development behind it. West-European music had already produced its Bach and Handel, the Italian and French operas, "the Vienna classics." However great the significance of Goethe in the history of German lyrical vocal music, however numerous the wonderful musical compositions inspired by the immortal figure of Faust (suffice it to mention the works of Berlioz, Schumann, Liszt and Gounod which were composed under the influence of Goethe's tragedy), none the less it cannot be said that it was Goethe who assisted at the birth

of German music, or that his poetry determined the further course of its development.

On the other hand, Russian music of the 19th century (before the 19th century there was practically no Russian music barring the rich folk music) grew and developed primarily under the influence of Pushkin's poetry. Russian musical "Pushkimana" very nearly represents the history of Russian music as expressed in its most important productions beginning with Glinka and ending with the young Soviet masters.

Glinka's "Ruslan and Ludmila," Dargomyzhsky's "The Water Nymph" and "The Stone Guest," Mussorgsky's "Boris Godunov," Ghaikovsky's "Eugene Onegin" and "The Queen of Spades"—are not these works the most important in Russian classical opera? To this list of the best Russian operas should be added a list of Pushkin's ballads by the same composers.

Pushkin's poetry has found a deeper reflection still in Dargomyzhsky's romances. Of the greatest value among these are the wonderful Eastern ballads. "The Orchard," "You Were Born to Inflame," "O, Maiden, Rose" In these romances the exceptional warmth of Dargomyzhsky's treatment of Pushkin's verse is combined with an original interpretation of the East.

The excellent vocal compositions of Glinka, Borodin, Rubinstein, Glazunov, Taneyev, Metner and Rakhmaninov supplement the long list of ballads written to Pushkin's poems.

It is not surprising that Pushkin's poetry was introduced almost exclusively into Russian vocal, opera and chamber music and partly into the orchestral music of the ballet. There are, however, no important symphonies in Russian music connected with Pushkin's poetry. This is very characteristic, Pushkin's poetical images are so closely interwoven with the music of his verse that almost as a rule they find their musical interpretation only in vocal form. In this respect it is particularly interesting to note the compositions which Chaikovsky, the greatest of Russian symphony composers, wrote on themes taken from Pushkin. Chaikovsky, as is known, wrote a few symphonies based on poetical images taken from world literature, such as "Romeo and Juliet," "Manfred," "Hamlet," "The Tempest" and "Francesca da Rimini." Not one of Pushkin's great works could inspire Chaikovsky to write a symphonic orchestral composition.¹ On the other hand Chaikovsky left us three remarkable operas based on Pushkin*. "Eugene Onegin," "Mazeppa" and "The Queen of Spades."

The question arises why it is that Chaikovsky was inspired in his symphonies by Shakespeare and in his operas by Pushkin and not the other way about?

¹ Chaikovsky's orchestral ballad "Voyevoda" is of no account. Chaikovsky himself dismissed it as "rubbish" and even intended to destroy the manuscript.

We believe that we must look for an answer to this question in the fact that Chaikovsky's approach to the images of West-European literature was different from his approach to those of Russian literature. To Chaikovsky the images of West-European literature were not necessarily associated with their poetical dress in the form of verse, not necessarily with a particular poetic context. These images were expressions of some philosophical idea artistically rendered, and therefore resolved themselves in music preferably in the form of symphonic generalization. On the other hand Pushkin's images, the heroes of Pushkin's works, were perceived by Chaikovsky and by all Russian composers as organically associated with definite poetic expressions and definite dramatic situations. That is why in music they gave rise not to the generalization which is characteristic of the symphony form but preferably to dramatic or lyrical vocal music.

This by no means implies that Chaikovsky in his Pushkin operas refrained from using his favorite method of rendering characters and emotions by means of symphonic music. It is precisely the rich element of symphony music that distinguishes Chaikovsky's Pushkin operas from his other musical dramatical works. This is precisely the characteristic feature of Chaikovsky's mature style in (musical) drama and reveals the profound realistic tendency of his operas. As an illustration we may refer to such brilliant examples of Chaikovsky's symphonic style in opera as the scene of Tatyana writing her letter in "Eugene Onegin," or the masterful scenes in the countess' bedroom and the barracks in "The Queen of Spades." Like Mussorgsky, Chaikovsky, the great master of the Russian musical ballad, practically avoided Pushkin in his lyrical vocal music¹. However, in his Pushkin operas he gave us many unforgettable pieces of lyrical vocal music, as, for instance, the famous aria of Lensky before the duel, Paulina's song in "The Queen of Spades" and Mary's lullaby in "Mazeppa." All the other Russian composers who produced operas based on Pushkin texts often turned their attention to Pushkin's lyrical poetry and composed "Pushkin" ballads of great artistic value.

The tremendous richness! and variety of Pushkin's poetry secured for him a lasting place in Russian music. Composers of most varied tendencies and artistic inclinations were able to take themes according to their taste from the ever-fresh source of Pushkin's poetry. Pushkin's poetry is so varied and many-sided that to this day only some of its aspects have found their reflection in Russian music. Thus Pushkin's philosophical lyrics" and prose are reflected in music to an incomparably lesser extent than his "love lyrics," his epic poems and dramas. Some of the remarkable

¹ Only one of Pushkin's poems, "Nightingale, my little nightingale" was set to music by Chaikovsky. Mussorgsky wrote a ballad on the subject of Pushkin's "My voice for you" but he changed Pushkin's text considerably.

"Tales of Belkm" have not been set to music yet Out of five hundred of Pushkin's poems hardly more than one hundred and fifty have been set to music However, the number of musical ballads set to the words of Pushkin totals a few hundred, since many of Pushkin's poems have been set to music by various composers and some of the particularly favorite poems by as many as ten and even more composers, as, for instance, "Night" or "Oh, Beauty, Do Not Sing to Me. ."

For a whole century Pushkin provided an abundant supply of themes to the most varied Russian composers Each generation of Russian musicians and even each composer had his "own" Pushkin who was individually conceived and subjected to individual musical treatment.

The history of modern Russian music begins with M. I. Glinka, the founder of the Russian school in music Glinka is also to be considered as the father of the Pushkin tradition in Russian music Indeed, Glinka's musical ballads set to Pushkin's words and his remarkable opera "Ruslan and Ludmila," which was inspired by Pushkin's youthful poem, are the models of Russian musical art on which all future generations of Russian composers were brought up

While Pushkin's poetry gave a tremendous impetus to Russian music, helping it to develop into a national school, Glinka was the first representative of his school who showed what a composer could take from Pushkin and how Pushkin's poetry was to be approached

For Glinka Pushkin was above all the greatest Russian national poet The images created by Pushkin were for Glinka profoundly national images, and Pushkin's poetry a model of the rich variety and fine expressiveness of the melodious and rhythmic forms of the Russian literary language In his rendering of highly artistic images in music, in his experiments with new musical forms of expression closely associated with the intonation and structure of Russian folksong, Glinka was inspired by Pushkin Moreover, Pushkin's poetry provided abundant food for Glinka's musical fantasy and was the source for the great variety of vocal forms of Russian music which Glinka created

Glinka's "Ruslan and Ludmila," which combines all the best qualities of modern Russian music, was born under the immediate impression of Pushkin's great epic.

Glinka regarded Pushkin as the great national poet, the wonderful master of language who had at his command a rich variety of poetical forms and assimilated the best traditions of West-European art A similar creative feat was still to be accomplished in the realm of Russian music Russian musicians were still faced with the task of mastering their art, of creating their own style and winning for Russian music an honorable place in world music And Glinka has shown that like the Russian writer, Rus-

sian musicians, while learning a great deal from the West, have been capable of creating their own national art. In this respect Glinka's ballads and the opera "Ruslan and Ludmila" hold an exceptional place. Glinka's ballads and his opera stand comparison with the best musical works of West-European masters. The score of this first Russian opera built on a Pushkin text showed that Glinka succeeded in creating not only a masterpiece of Russian opera but also a work of art which, for mastership of composition and brilliance of music, is superior to many West-European operas of his time.

The first great composer to continue Glinka's work of creating a school of Russian national music was A. S. Dargomyzhsky. In one of his letters to V. F. Odoyevsky, the Russian musician and scientist who was an ardent admirer of Glinka and an authority on his works, Dargomyzhsky wrote: "In my opinion Glinka touched only upon one element of Russian music—the lyrical element. As far as it is in my power I am working in my 'The Water Nymph' on the development of our dramatic element."

In the development of the dramatic element of Russian music Dargomyzhsky holds first place indeed.

Dargomyzhsky acquitted himself with honor of the task he set before himself. While Glinka in his "Ruslan and Ludmila" laid the general foundations of the Russian operatic style and established the traditions of Russian romantic opera, Dargomyzhsky with his "The Water Nymph" opened a broad path for the development of Russian realistic opera, for Russian musical drama. The power of "The Water Nymph" lies in its truthful musical and scenic rendering of dramatic situations and characters. The historic significance of this opera lies in the fact that it demonstrated not only the lyrical wealth of Russian folksong but also its tremendous emotional dramatic expressiveness.

In his first Pushkin opera Dargomyzhsky devoted great attention to musical declamation as the strongest means of musical dramatic expression. In his next (and last) opera, "The Stone Guest," he made the quite exceptional attempt to bring musical declamation as close as possible to the natural intonations of the Russian language (This opera was never completed by the composer).

Here, too, Pushkin's poetry provided the composer with wonderful material. Dargomyzhsky chose one of Pushkin's so-called "little tragedies," which inspired him with the profundity of its content and richness of its style. He did not trouble to adapt it to an opera libretto but set it to music in its entirety without changing a single line. The result was an opera of unusual daring, work which indeed broke new ground. It thoroughly differs from the former operas in that in it all conventionalities of form have been done away with.

From Glinka through Dargomyzhsky two tendencies have branched off with regard to the treatment of Pushkin's works in Russian opera. One of these tendencies found its most vivid expression in Mussorgsky's works, while Chaikovsky and his followers were the exponents of the other tendency.

We have noted above the fact that neither Mussorgsky nor Chaikovsky took an interest in Pushkin's lyrical poetry. But these composers created the most important Pushkin operas after Glinka and Dargomyzhsky

Mussorgsky and Chaikovsky treated Pushkin each in his own way,

Mussorgsky took Pushkin's (historical drama "Boris Godunov" He made a thorough study of the idea of Pushkin's drama and did not confine himself to the rendering of the "personal tragedy" alone but devoted great attention to such colorful types of the Moscow people as the beggarly peasants, the imbecile, the mendicant monks, etc, and created what is truly a musical drama of the people

In two other pieces of vocal music written by Mussorgsky to Pushkin's words—the fantasy "Night" and the musical skit "The Jabbering Magpie" the composer took great liberties with Pushkin's text.

Chaikovsky wrote three operas to Pushkin's themes "Eugene Onegin," "Mazeppa" (Pushkin's "Poltava") and "The Queen of Spades." Every one of these operas has its own individual character. At the same time, however, they all have in common the feature which is most characteristic of Chaikovsky the artist: profound truthfulness, simplicity and lyrical emotion.

"The Queen of Spades," the most dramatic of Chaikovsky's operas, is undoubtedly a world masterpiece as yet not fully appreciated by musical critics. In this opera Chaikovsky rose to great heights of philosophic generalization, and gave a broad picture of Russian life as distinct and vivid as Mussorgsky in his masterful "Boris Godunov." With extraordinary acumen Chaikovsky penetrated into the very essence of Pushkin's marvelous short story and reflected it in his music, developing and dramatizing Pushkin's characters.

Rimsky-Korsakov, in his own way, also continued Glinka's traditions in the treatment of Pushkin's works. Two of his famous operas, "The Tale of the Tsar Saltan" and "The Golden Cockerel" belong to the same fantastic fairy-tale opera genre as "Busman and Ludmila." Pushkin's fairy tales captivated Rimsky-Korsakov by the exceptional richness and refinement of their poetical content, they furnished the composer with the opportunity of displaying all the aspects of his brilliant talent for musical depiction, they helped Rimsky-Korsakov in his searching experimentations, in his insistent work on finding new modes of Russian musical expression. And indeed, as far as melody, harmony and orchestration is concerned, Rimsky-

Korsakov's fantastic operas written to Pushkin's texts represent a 'colossal achievement, they introduce a new manner of musical expression in opera which is in accord with the musical peculiarities of Russian folksong

Rimsky-Korsakov's third opera, "Mozart and Sahen," is particularly remarkable for its fine and tender treatment of Mozart's part for which the composer availed himself of certain manners of Mozart's music. However, notwithstanding the fact that the composer wholly reproduced the text of Pushkin's tragedy in the music of his opera, he failed to reveal the philosophical content of the tragedy

Rimsky-Korsakov wrote also a cantata to Pushkin's "Lay of the Wise Oleg "

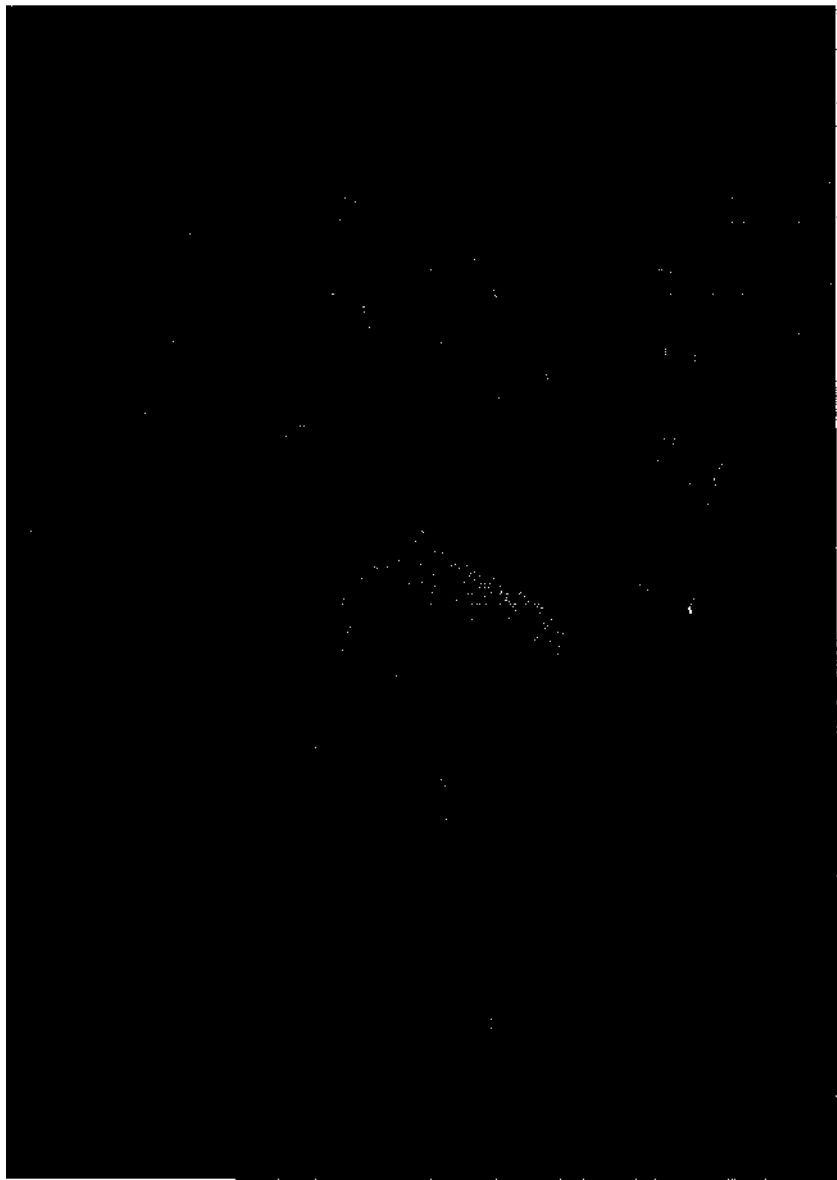
Rimsky-Korsakov continued Glinka's traditions also in his musical ballads to Pushkin's words Of these we shall mention such well-known ballads as "The Flying Flock of Clouds Is Thinning," "On the Hills of Georgia," "The Light of the Rainy Day is Out" and "The Prophet" They are among the best Russian musical ballads Rimsky-Korsakov's ballads written to Pushkin's words mark a new stage in the development of this important branch of Russian music A typical feature of Rimsky-Korsakov's vocal lyricism is a somewhat "academic" relish for Pushkin's verse, a fine play of sound, compositional perfection This tendency was further developed by such masters of high culture as Taneyev, Glazunov and Metner Of Glazunov's musical ballads, "The Muses," "Persida," "Eastern Romance," and "Deliah" are the most popular Borodin was another composer who was close to this group He created that gem among Russian musical ballads set to Pushkin's poems—the vocal miniature "For the Shores of My Native Country" which is on a par with the best of Schumann's inspired lyrics

Rumsky-Korsakov ends the list of the best musical interpreters of Pushkin's poetry Very few composers of the generation that followed succeeded in rising to a true artistic understanding of Pushkin Cesar Cui, a contemporary of Rmsky-Korsakov and the least talented of the so-called "great live," attempted to base his operas on Pushkin. However, not one of his operas written to Pushkin's themes—"The Prisoner of the Caucasus," "Feast During the Plague" and "The Captain's Daughter"—survived Cui was more successful in his musical ballads written to Pushkin's verse They possess elegance, melody and taste

The Pushkin operas of the end of the 19th century, after Rimsky-Korsakov, marked a sharp decline Sentimental interpretation and a striving for external effect predominate in the operas of that period Typical in this respect is Napravnik's "Dubrovsky," which is even now being produced at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, and Rakhmaninov's "Aleko" written on the theme of Pushkin's "The Gypsies." Rakhmaninov also wrote



Pushkin's Last Apartment. Photograph



Komsomols at the Pushkin Memorial in Ostafyevo.

N. 1. Shestopalov. Oil, 1936

the opera "The Covetous Knight" after Pushkin's tragedy of the same name. The most popular of Rakhmtaninov's musical ballads is his "Sing Not, Beauty, in My Presence" written to Pushkin's words.

Here note should be made of some of the Pushkin ballets. The introduction of Pushkin's poetry on the Russian stage began with the ballet. While the first Pushkin opera was staged five years after the poet's death, the first Pushkin ballet was staged twenty years earlier, when Pushkin was in exile in the south of Russia. Like the first Pushkin opera, this first ballet was written after Pushkin's "Ruslan and Ludmila." On the bills the ballet was announced as follows. "Ruslan and Ludmila or The Overthrow of Chernomor, the Wicked Sorcerer, a big fantastic and heroic ballet in five acts, a magnificent show with battles, marches, transformations, flights and machines." The music was composed by the St. Petersburg court conductor Scholz; the producer was the famous ballet master Didelot.

Neither this first Pushkin ballet nor the others that followed could claim any particular artistic value. Their music was not above the average "bandmaster's" level. In contrast to the Pushkin operas, these ballets called into being no new Russian school of choreography, nor did they contribute anything that would be of interest from the point of view of music or the theatre. The only exception is Dargomyzhsky's "Triumph of Bacchus." This, however, is not an ordinary ballet but a one-act opera-ballet, and is not distinguished by great artistic merit. Evidently the ballet, as a musical variety of theatrical production unaccompanied by speech or song, failed to stimulate the Russian composers to work on texts from Pushkin.

It was not before the end of the 19th century that Arensky composed his ballet "Egyptian Nights" and Glazunov his ballet "Mistress into Maid," both of them based on themes from Pushkin works.

In our days the Soviet composer B. Asafyev turned his attention to Pushkin's epics as material for ballets. His two ballets, "The Fountain of Bakhchisarai" and "The Prisoner of the Caucasus," are evidence of a new presentation of the romantic images of Pushkin's heroes, and of a new development of Soviet choreography which draws upon the rich material flowing from the ever-fresh well-spring of Pushkin's poetry.

Soviet music on themes from Pushkin includes a great many works, some of which represent fine models of lyrical vocal music. Particularly great is the interest taken by Soviet composers in Pushkin's works at present. Scores of oratorios and operatic compositions have been written to themes and texts from Pushkin. The number of Soviet musical ballads written to Pushkin's words runs to close on two hundred.

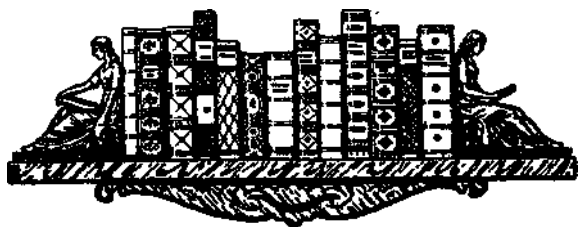
It is difficult to form a judgment on Soviet Pushkin operas since none of them has been staged yet. Several operas have been written already

on Pushkin's themes, such as the opera "Manor House" by Marian Koval after Pushkin's "Count Nulin," "The Station-master" by Vladimir Kryukov, "Tale of the Golden Push" by Leonid Polovinkin. The composer Vasilenko has written a ballet "The Gypsies."

As for Soviet vocal music of the lyrical genre, written to Pushkin's words, one may point out not only the ballads composed by Shebalin, Alexandrov, Feinberg, Kmpper, Vasilenko, Gnessin, Nechayev, Shaporin, Khrennikov, Gher and other masters who follow more or less closely the classical Russian traditions, but also some more original attempts, as, for instance, Marian Koval's "Pushkiniana," a cycle of musical recitations, or the cycle of ballads by the Leningrad composer Deshevov which depict Pushkin's Lycee years.

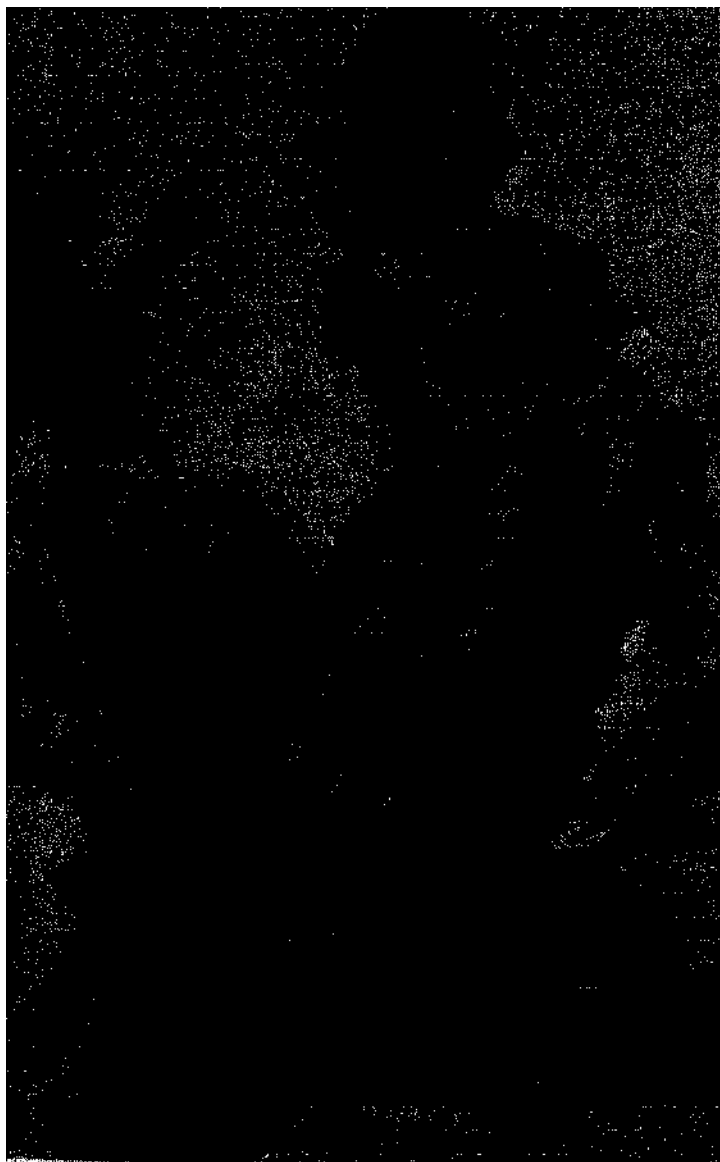
Note should also be taken of the significant growth of the number of musical works by composers of the various nationalities of the Soviet Union based on translations of Pushkin into Ukrainian, Belorussian, Tyurk, Armenian, Georgian, Tatar, Uzbek and other languages.

All this shows that Pushkin's images are near to the heart of all Soviet artists, that the numerous young Soviet composers continue to study Pushkin and that the time is not far distant when Soviet music will create its own classical school, and in that school Pushkin will occupy a most honorable place.



PUSHKIN
I N ART





Dorida.

L. E. Fineberg. Sanguine drawing, 1937



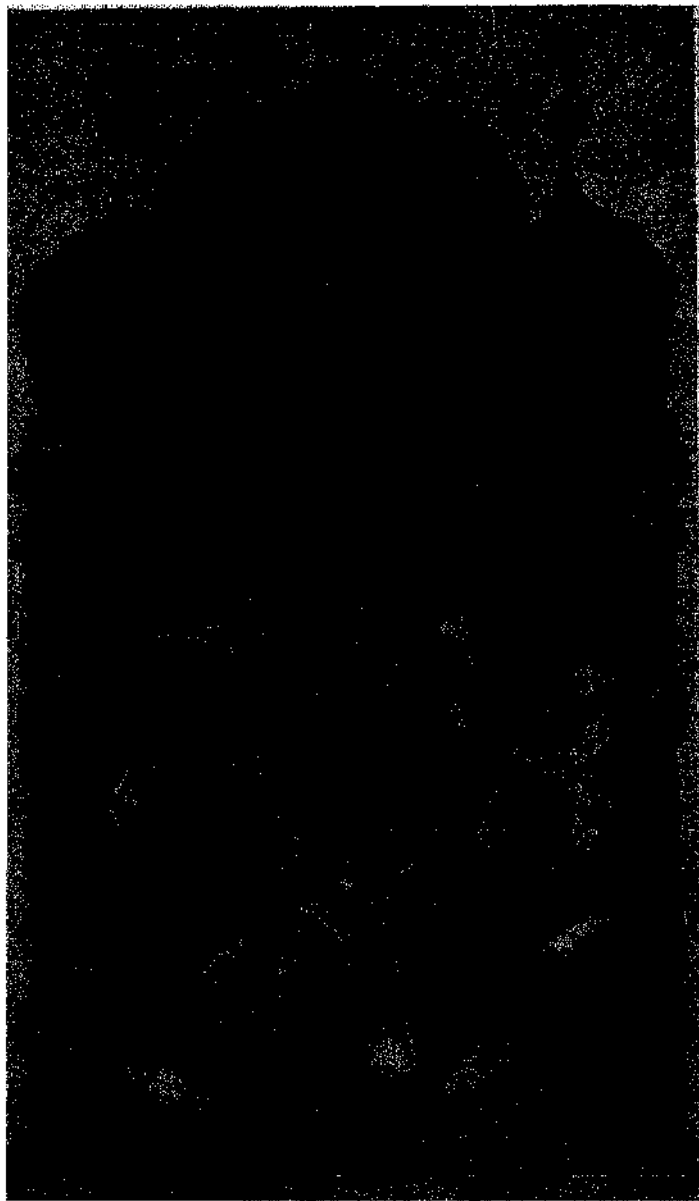




Egyptian Nights.
A. I. Kravchenko. Woodcut, 1934

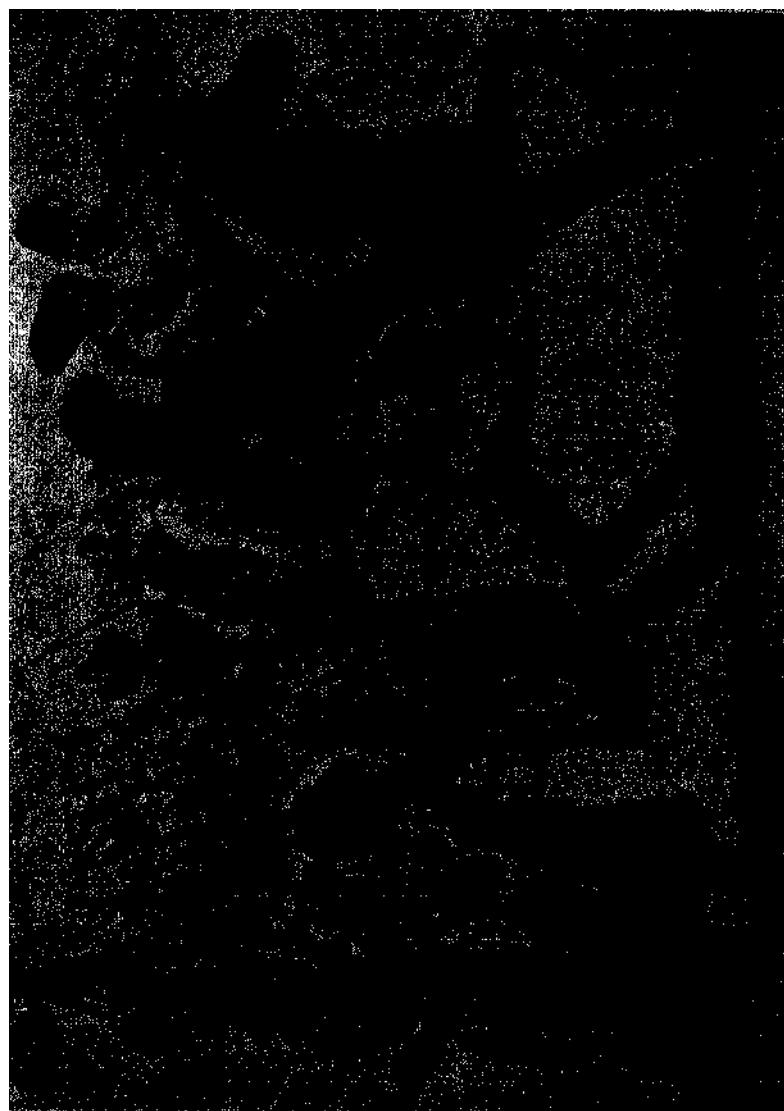


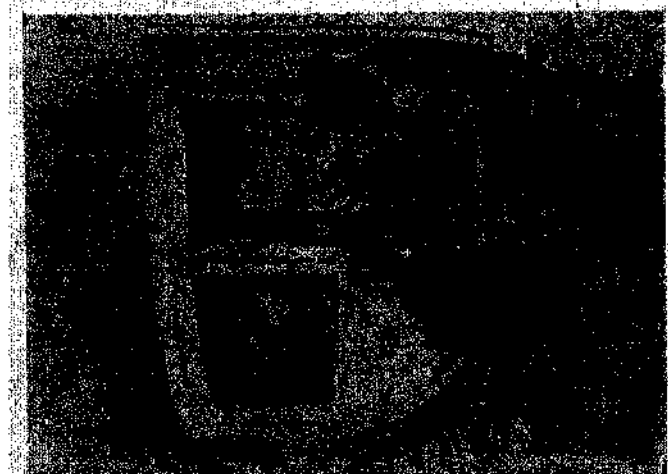
House in Kolomna.
V. Favorsky. Woodcut, 1927



The Tale of the Tsar Saltan.

I. I. Golikov. Tempera (Palekh), 1936

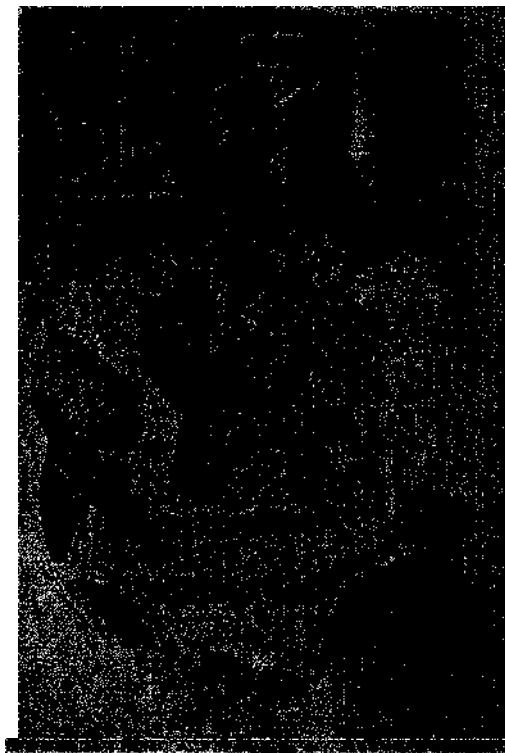








Once on a Warm Spring Day.
E. Kibrik. Lithograph drawing, 1936

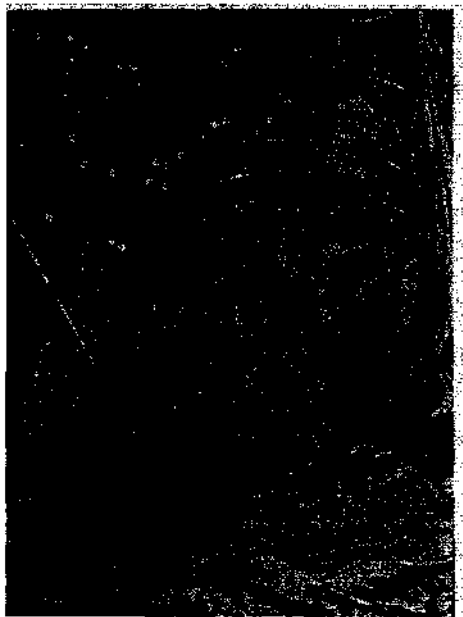


Queen of Spades.
N. Tirsá. Lithograph drawing, 1936

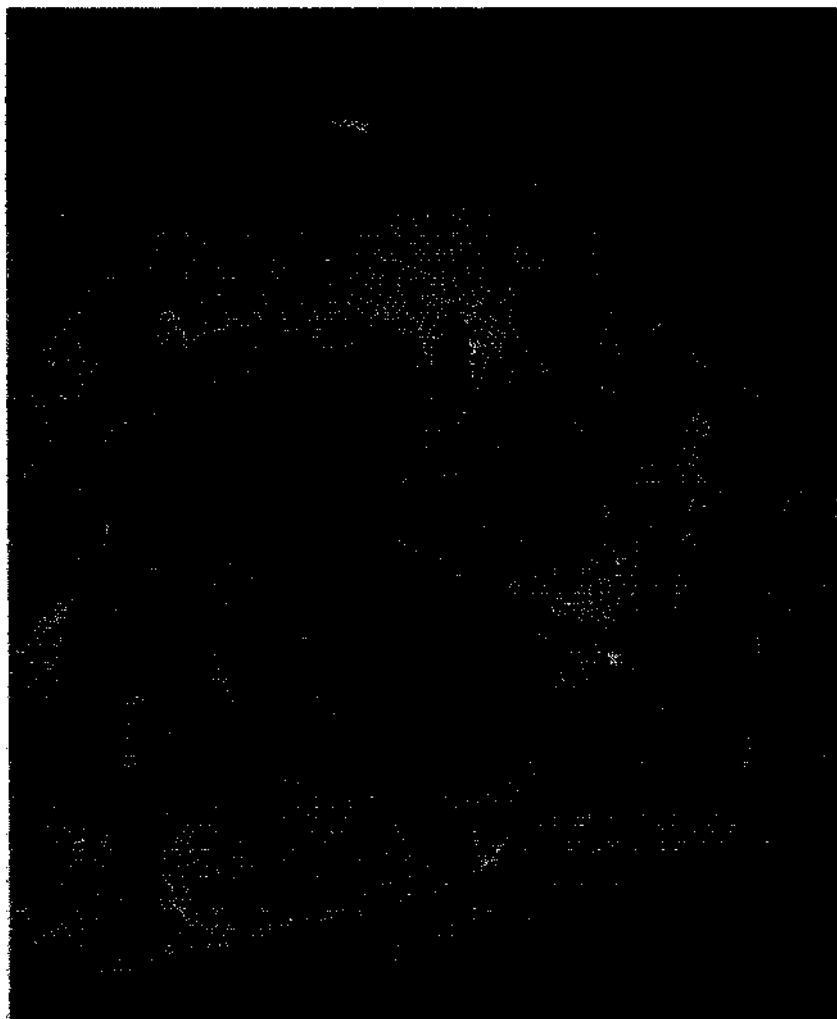


Frontispiece to the "Tales of Belkin".

N. N. Piskarev. Woodcut, 1936

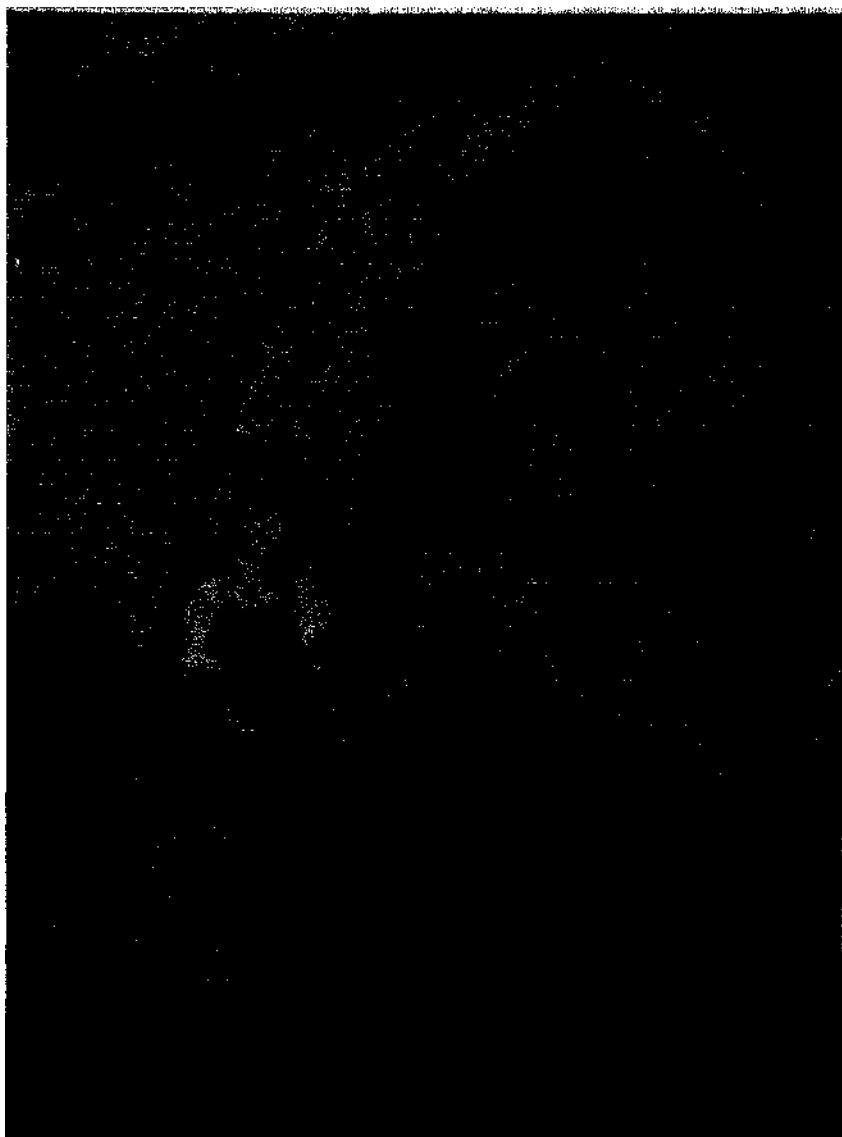


The Shot.
H. Chenniskov. Woodcut, 1926

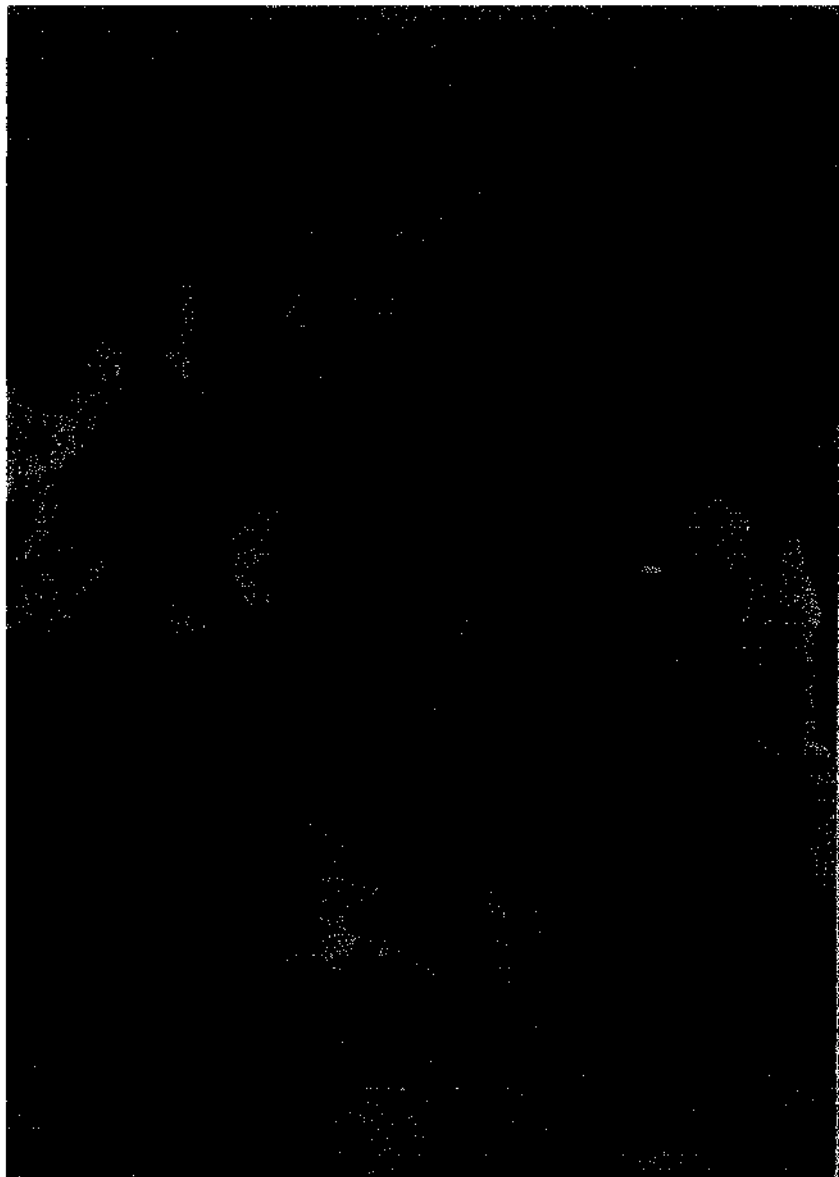


Snow-storm.

1). A. Shmarinov. Charcoal, 1937

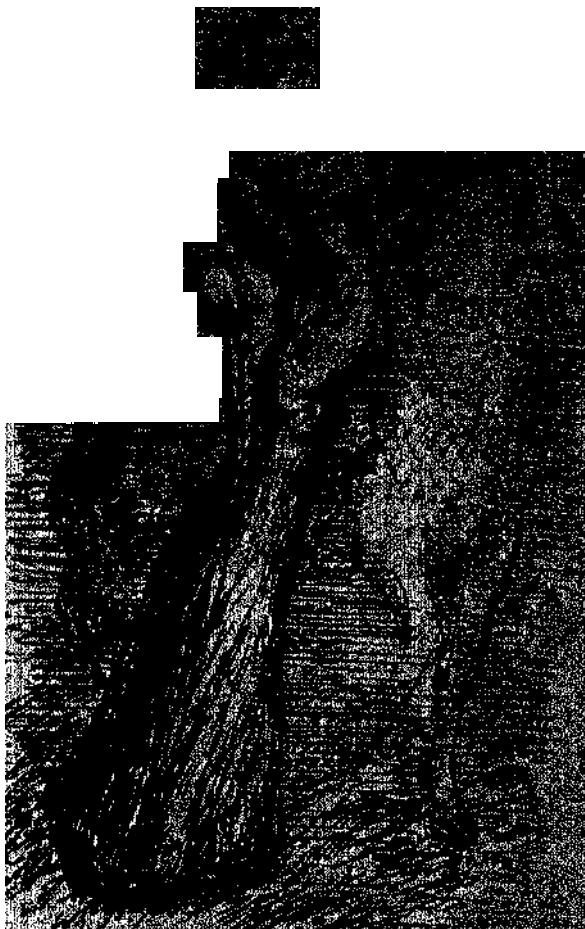


The Peasant Maid.
D. A. Shmarinov. Charcoal, 1937



The Tale of the Golden Cockerel.
1. P. Baknnov. Tempera (Pakekh), 1935

1992-2011



Rusalkai.

A. N. Jacobson. Pen drawing, 1936

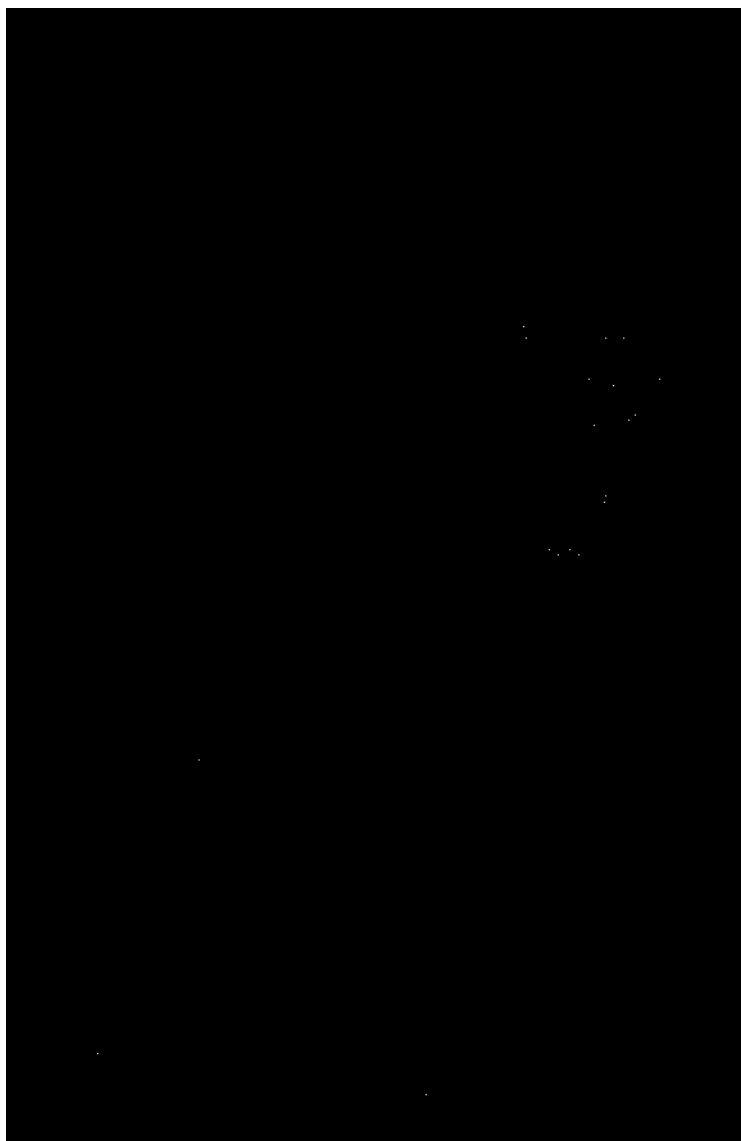


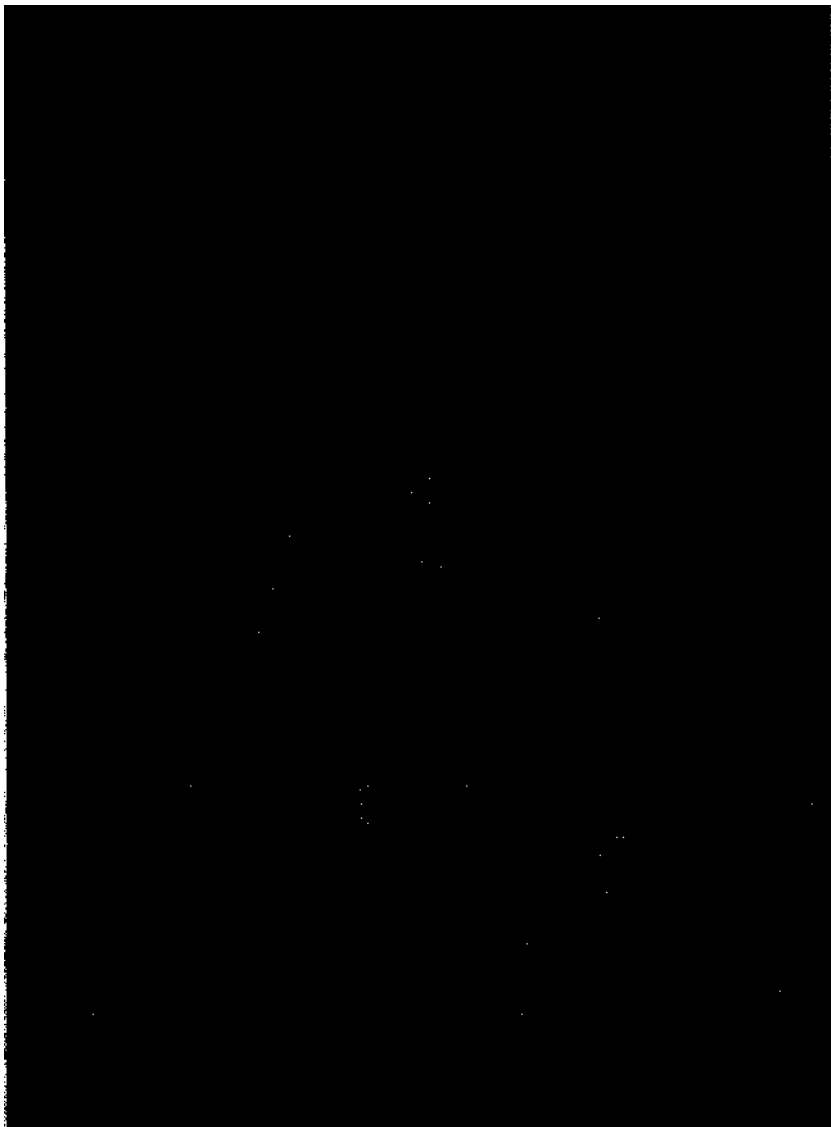
The Stone Guest.
M. Vrubel. Water color, 1889



The Stone Guest.

A. Jacobson. Pen drawing , 1936





The Miserly Knight.
I. F. Rerberg. Wash drawing, 1936



Boris Godunov.
I. Rabinovich. Tempera, 1936

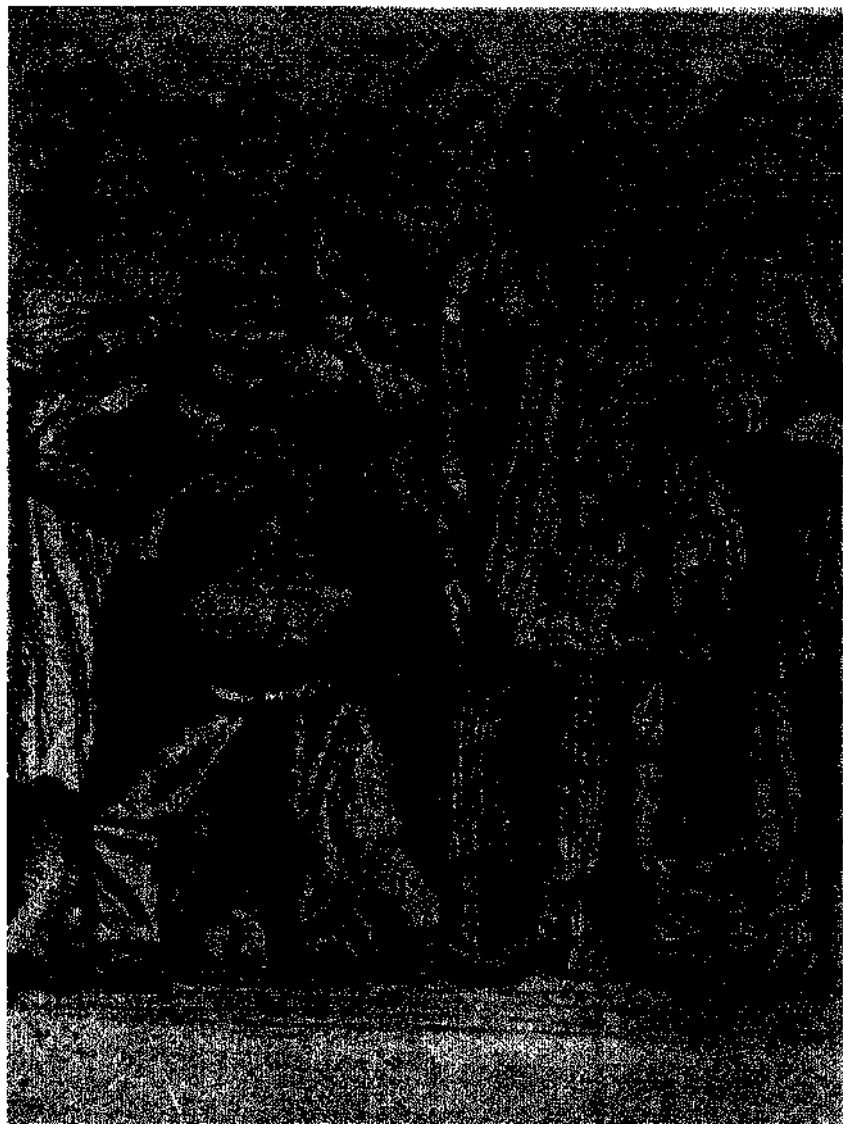


Boris Godanov.

1. Rabinnvich. Tempera, 1936



Feast During the Plague.
Surra Shor. Etching, 1936





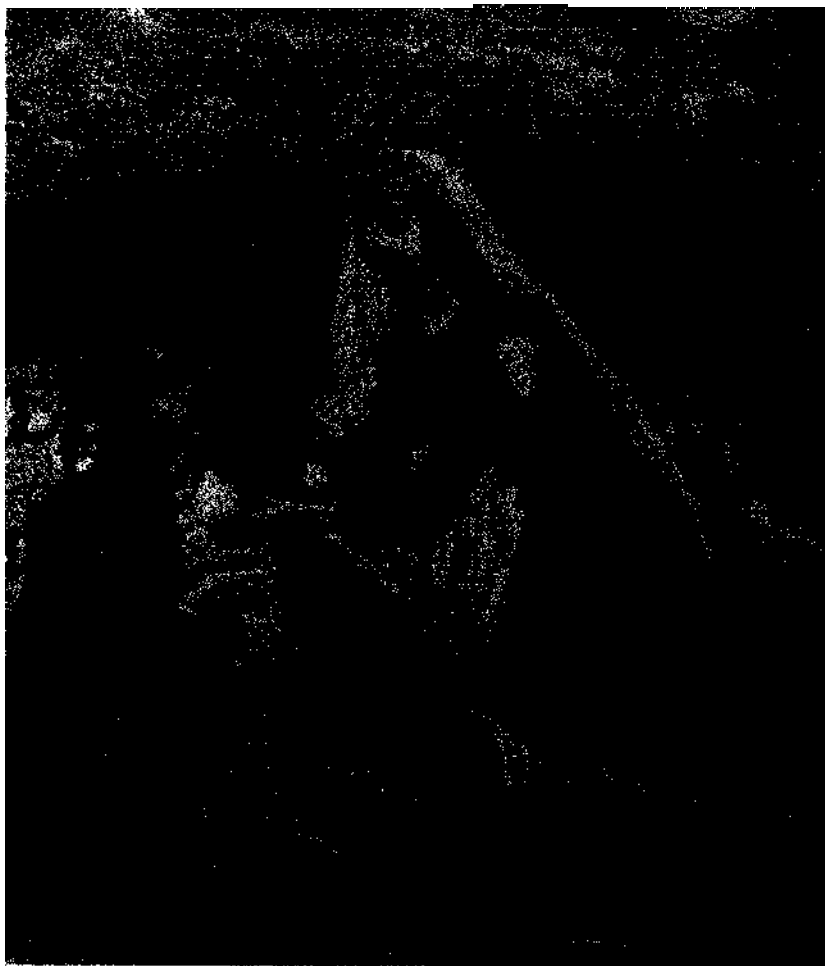
The Captain's Daughter

A. Ivanov. Water color

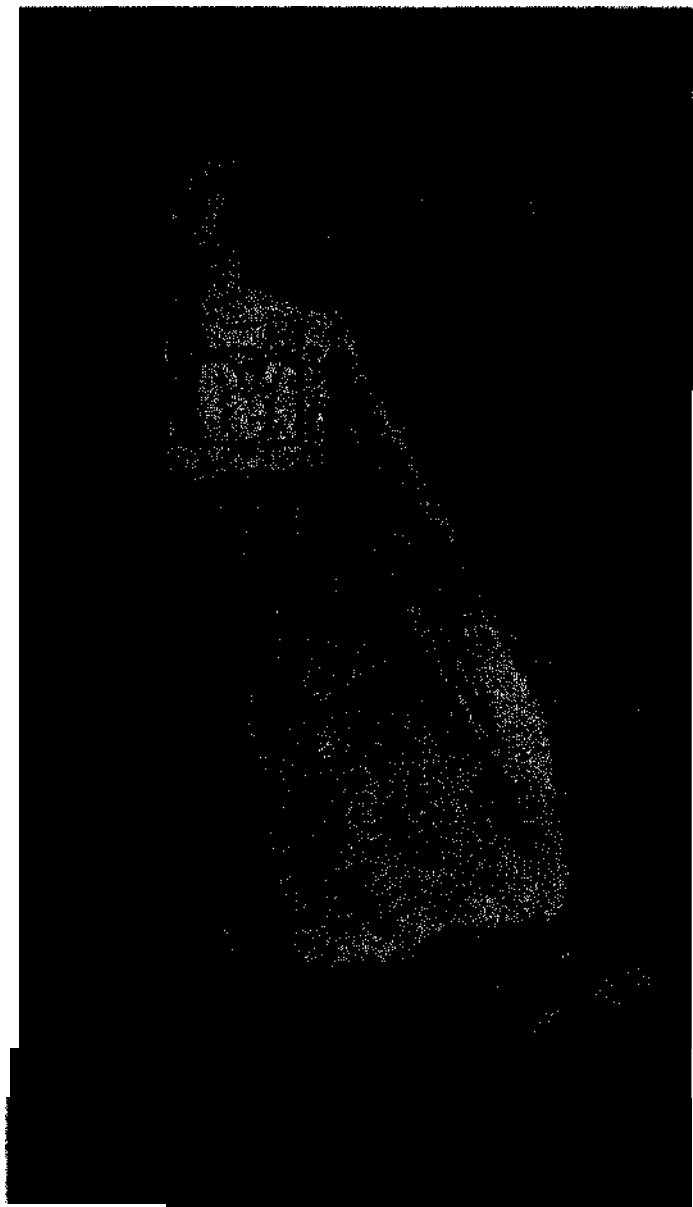


"At the Green Oak on the Winding Shore".

I. N. Kramskoi. Wash and Chinese white drawing, 1879



The Prisoner of the Caucasus.
M. Gorshman. Lithograph drawing, 1936

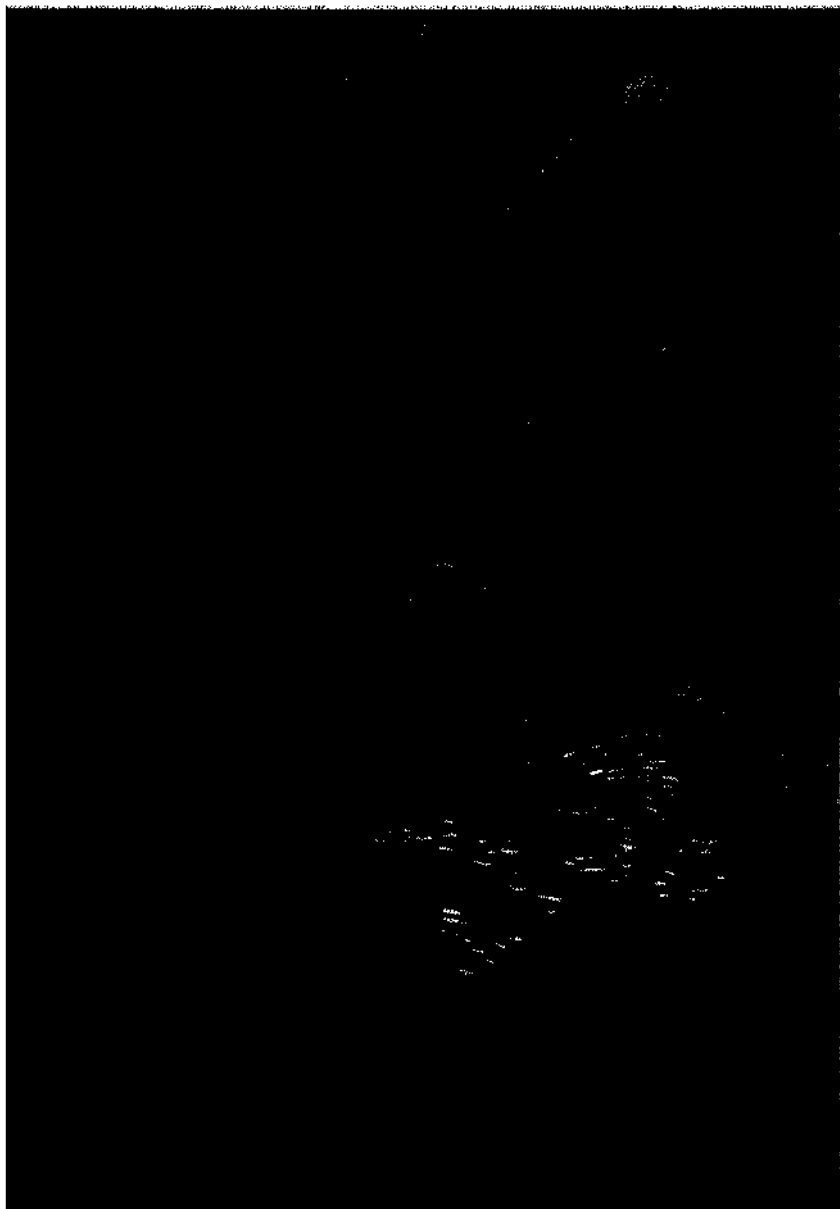


Fountain of Bakhchisarai.
A. P. Mogilyevsky. Water Color, 1936



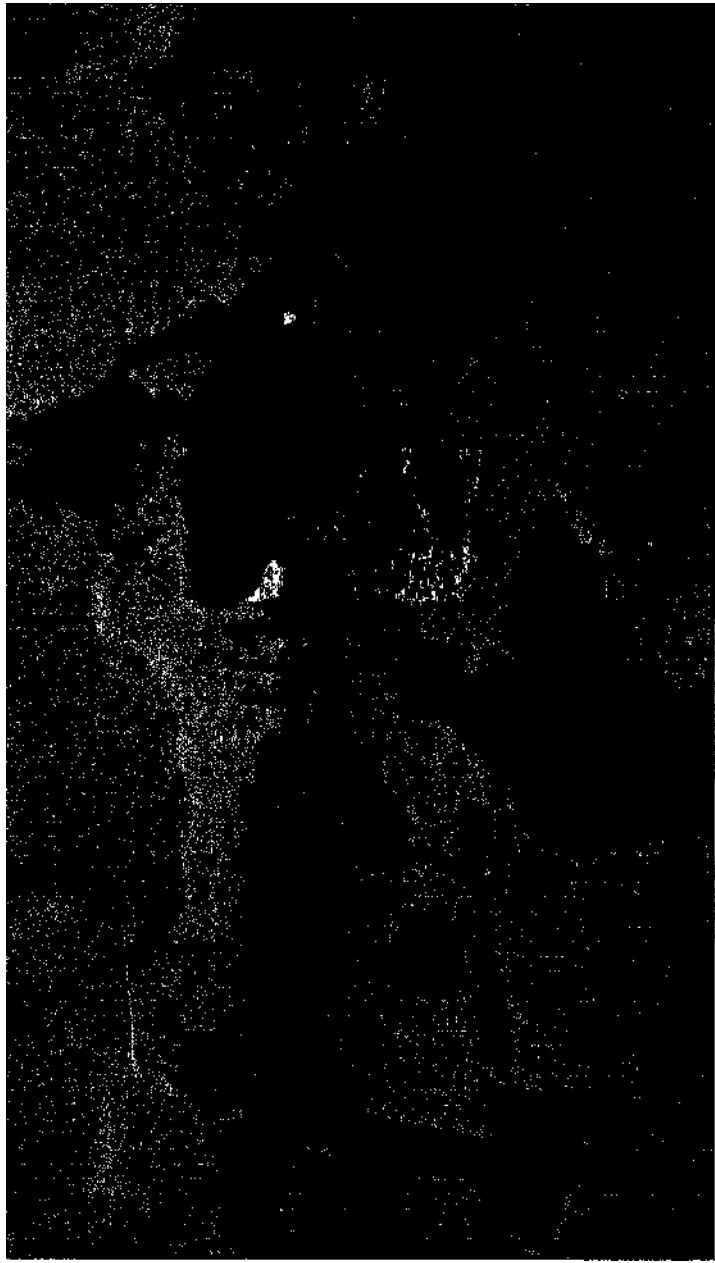
Gypsies.

K. A. Klimentyeva. Lithograph drawing, 1936



The Bronze Horseman.

A. N. Benua. Wash drawing, 1922



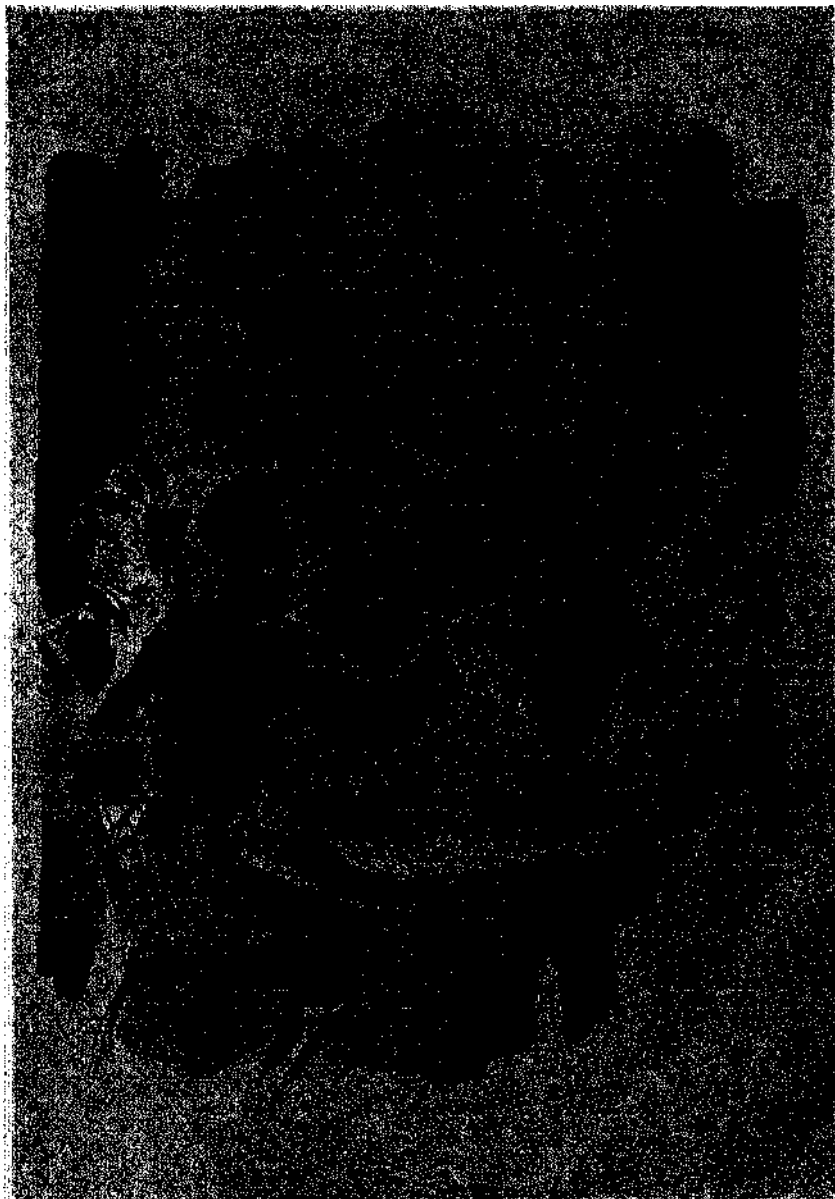
The Bronze Horseman.

A. N. Benue. Wash, water color, 1905, 1916



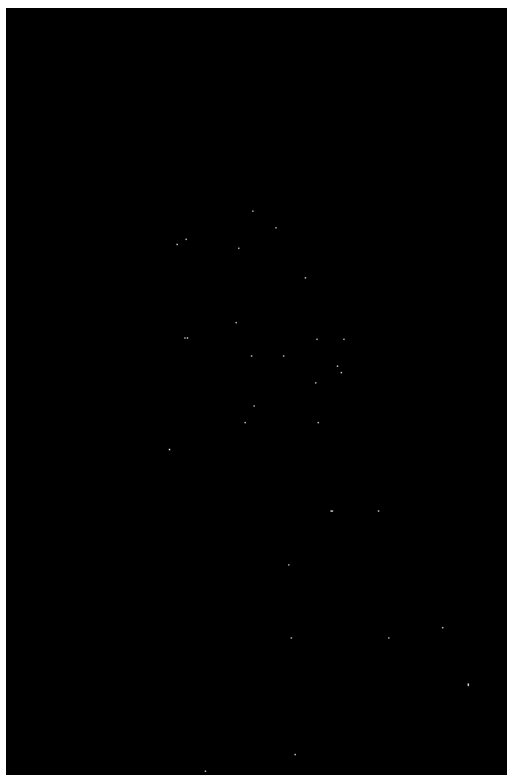
Poltava.

M. S. Rodionov. Lithograph, 1936



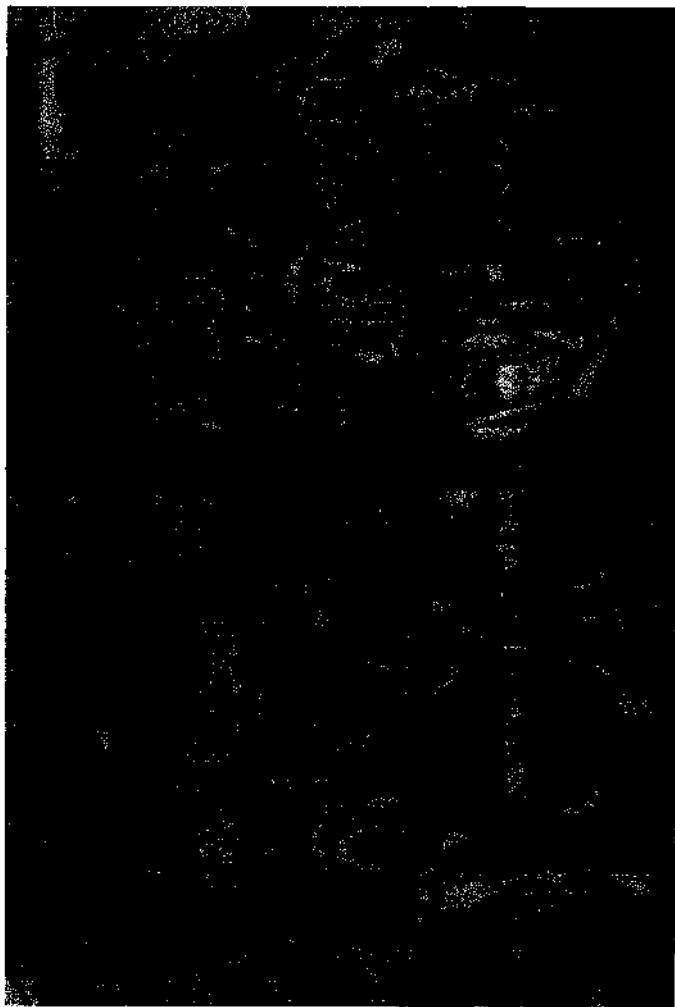
Illustrations for "Eugene Onegin".

N. V. Kuzmin. Water color, 1933



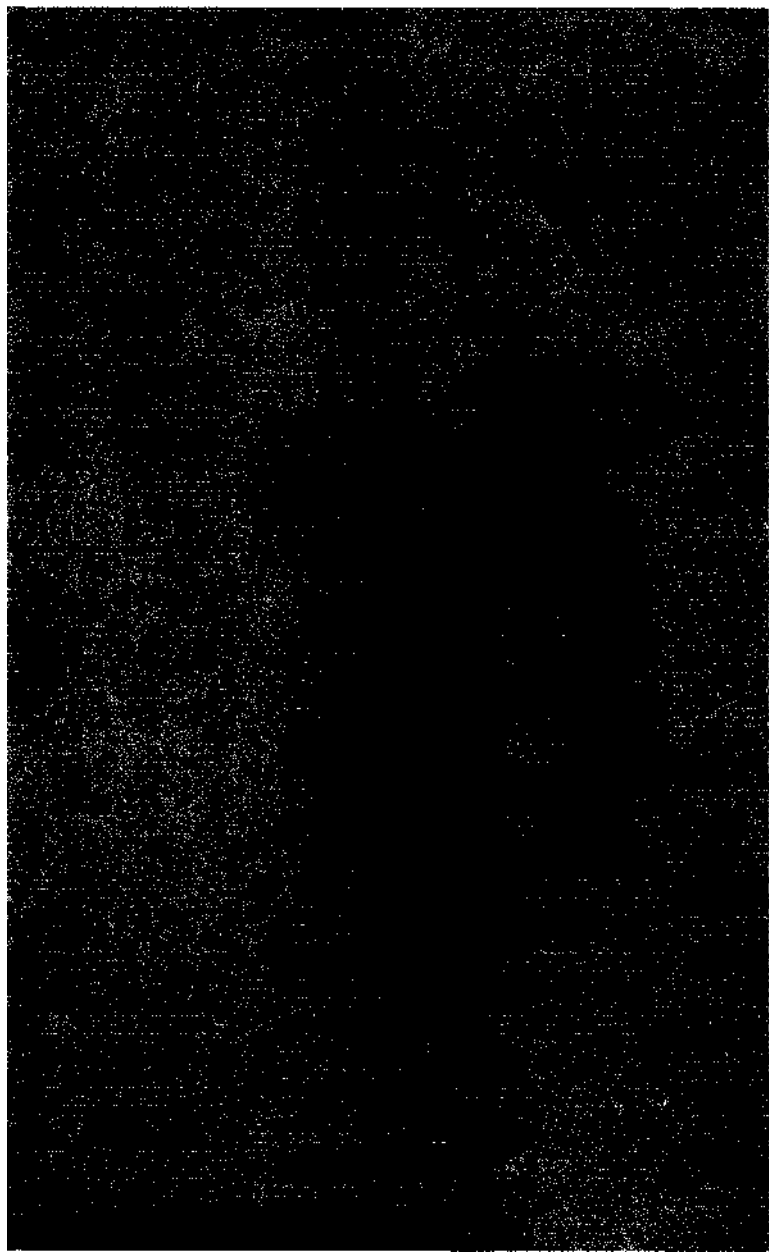
Illustrations for "Eugene Onegin."

V. M. Konashevich. Pen drawing, 1936



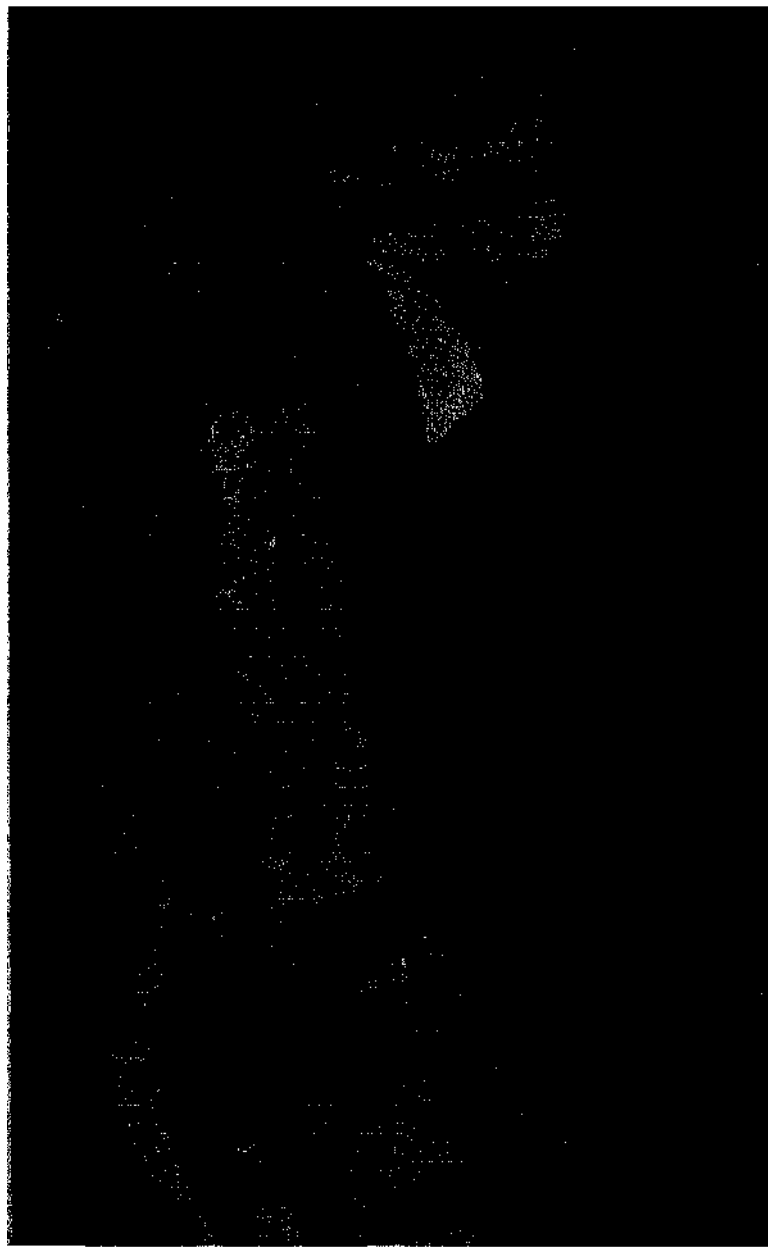
Burdon and Ladmila

Borya Adafyev, 12 years old. Moscow.



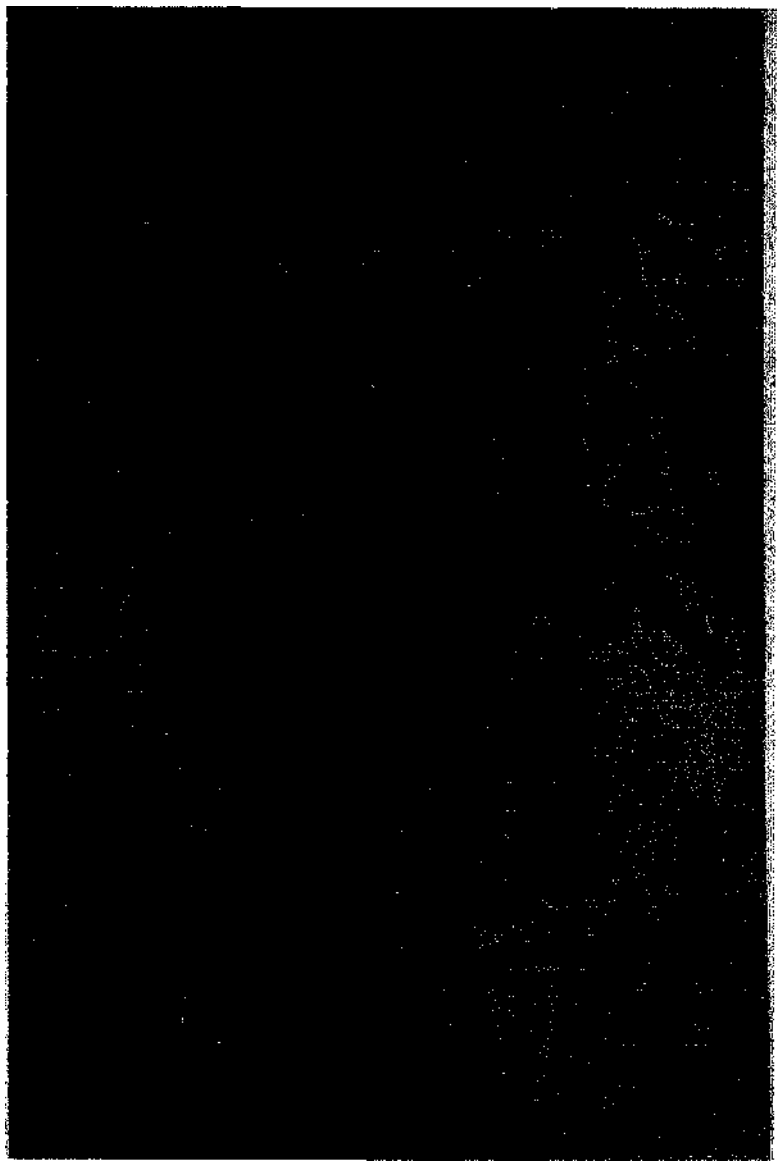
The Sutor.

Kokayev, 16 years old, Zaporozhye.



The Tale of the Tsar Saltan.

Kryatkovsky, 11 years old. Moscow.



The Captain's Daughter.

Valya Katursky, 13 years old, Moscow.



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PUSHKIN IN ART



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