REALISM AS ILLUSTRATED IN THE WRITING OF THE
NINETEENTH CENTURY RUSSIAN MASTERS

by

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ABSTRACT

The great movement in Russian literature known as realism has been aptly described by one of its later adherents, Anton Pavlovich Chekhov, as "imaginative literature", which "depicts life as it really is", and that "its aim is truth-unconditional and honest". There truly could be no better standard than this for enlightened literature. For although life is never static, and modes in literature of various regimes have come and gone and will continue to do so, nevertheless, truth sought sincerely by all serious thinkers throughout the ages remains eternal. Unfortunately hierarchies, oligarchies and dictatorships of various kinds have been forced upon human beings since the beginning of known history. With these regimes have come the masterminds who endeavored to mold into their particular cast the minds subjected to them. In some instances they have succeeded, but there have always been those refugees of independent thought who, because they refused to bow down to the decrees of a tyrant, have either hid in catacombes or fled to other lands. Such people are the illuminators of the ages—God's shining stars. Theirs was the spirit of 19th Century Russian realism. Its portrayal of truth is one of the most glorious in all literature.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction: A Short Introduction to the Realistic Russian Writing of the Nineteenth Century .......................... 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter I</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter II</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter III</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter IV</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter V</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter VI</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter VII</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter VIII</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

A Short Introduction to the Realistic Russian Writing of the Nineteenth Century

"One cannot comprehend Russia with the mind,
One cannot fathom her with a common measure,
Her destiny is of a different kind,
Faith alone in Russia one must treasure."

—F. I. Tyutchev

1. What is Realism?

2. The Great Kievan Heritage
INTRODUCTION

1. WHAT IS REALISM?

Most assuredly, the great Russian masters of literature deserve a place in the world's annals of history. In simplicity of style and yet with great depth of meaning, they have surpassed the writers of all other tongues, the Holy Scriptures excepted. Their tradition is not an old one, when compared with ancient writers of Israel, Egypt, Assyria and Persia, or with those of classical Greece and Rome. Realistic Russian writing came into being only at the beginning of the 19th Century. Indeed, its rapid development since then is somewhat staggering.

In tracing the beginning of this great movement in Russian literature it is interesting to note that the Russians have always been a people distinguished by their love of truth, and the search for truth is the key-stone of the Russian Realistic School of writing.

Old Russian writing was held almost exclusively within the walls of the ancient Orthodox Church until as late as the reign of Czar Alexis in the 17th Century, who reigned between the years 1645-76. During this reign is to be noted the writings of the Archpriest Avvakum "manifested in an optimistic Christian faith, in a profound but unfanatical attachment to the traditions and ritual of the Church in a desire to see everyone around him happy and at peace, and in a highly developed capacity to extract
a quiet and mellow enjoyment from all things". Avvakum did not write a great deal, but we have handed down to us from him a "Life Written by Himself" (1672-3) and several letters written to his friends when he was residing at Pustozersk in his later years.

The early Muscovite writers of the 17th Century reflected in great measure the attempted Westernization of Russia by Peter I (1689-1725). None of the early writers of this time are outstanding but the names of St. Demetrius Tuptalo (1651-1709), Stephan Yavorsky—Metropolitan of Rostov (1658-1722), and that of Theophan Prokovich—Archbishop of Novgorod (1681-1736) are worthy of mention.

The ages of Classicism and Romanticism which directly precede the Age of Realism may be dated from the early 18th Century—the time of the great scholar, Michael Vasilievich Lomonosov, who was born in 1711 and died in 1765. In Lomonosov lived the great desire to bring Russian literary and scientific achievements into line with those of the West. Unfortunately he did not live to see the birth of this school in Russian literary thought which was to surpass the trends the West had produced in its particular field. "The standards of the new literary prose were set up by Lomonosov and remained in force till the advent of Karamzin. Lomonosov's own practice was limited chiefly to the

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higher kinds—solemn eloquence and rhetorical history. Sumarkov in his periodicals was the first to cultivate the more everyday forms. The Age of Catharine was a great extension in the use of prose, together with the spread of European and modern ideas. This Age of Catharine lasted between the years 1762-96—to the 19th Century. Catharine also encourage the School of French letters known as Romanticism, which was noted for its affectations and mannerism rather than directness or clarity of style. Outstanding authors of this Romantic period which preceded Realism include Denis Ivanovich Fonvizin (1745-92), Pavel Alexandrovich Katenin (1792-1853), Baron Anton Antonovich Delvig (1784-1839), and the great historian, Nickolay Mikhaylovich Karamzin (1766-1826).

At the beginning of the 19th Century the Age of Realism suddenly comes into being with the realistic poetry and writing of the realistic novel by Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin (1799-1837) and Michael Yurievich Lermontov (1814-41). "To most foreign readers it is the most interesting thing in the whole language. It is Russia's principal contribution to European literature, if we take that term as denoting, not the sum total of the nationalities of Europe, but the international literature belonging in an equal degree to all European mankind."


3 Ibid., p. 169.
2. THE GREAT KIEVAN HERITAGE

In considering the history of the Great Russian group of the East Slavs, it is interesting to observe that the nucleus of their first kingdom started approximately in the year 862 A.D., when the Danish Prince, Rurik, of Jutland and Friesland, became their ruler. Some historians believe that the Eastern tribes, particularly the Rus-Swedish, who became independent of the Khazar domination in 825, asked Rurik to rule over them. There is the tradition that their land was large and rich, but lacked competent administrators and rulers. However, another viewpoint has been expressed and seems more reasonable in the light of history. That is, that the Norse Conquest of the ninth century was a planned and deliberate overthrowing of the East Slavonic tribes by Rurik; in the same way that the Norse had plundered the Slavonic lands along their famous trade route, "The Varangians to the Greeks", as early as the beginning of the fifth century. However these historical incidents are to be explained, the Kingdom of Rurik was definitely founded in the middle of the ninth century, and established first in the vicinity of Old Novgorod on Lake Ilmen and also in the vicinity of Lake Ladoga. The East Slavonic tribes, living in this section of the country, were pleased to pay tribute to Rurik after his conquest, and in time grew to look upon and revere his descendants as of their own princely lineage, until the collapse of the Kievan Kingdom; Kiev having been made the official capital of the early Kingdom
under the Regency of Oleg, who ruled for Rurik's son, Igor, from 873 to 912.

The roots of realistic Russian writing may be found in the "Byliny" of the eighth and ninth century Rus—the folklore of the Kievan Kingdom, which held sway approximately during the years 862-1237.

"The significance of the "byliny" in the history of Russian national culture is exceedingly great. In these ancient songs are very clearly and fully reflected the most diverse aspects of the historical and everyday life of the Russian people; they appear as wonderful landmarks of the original folk art. The "byliny" are striking in the wealth of their narrative subjects and motives; in the generalizing force and monumental character of their artistic figures, which incarnate in themselves the heroic features of the Russian people, their dreams and hopes; in the perfection of poetic forms, which have been worked out by many generations of popular singers; in the richness and expressiveness of their folk language."4

Some of these tales are remarkable in their natural beauty and heroic simplicity centering around the brave defence of the early Slavonic warriors against their enemies, the remnants of the old Turkic Khazars, Iranian, Gothic Hunic, Teutonic and Norse peoples, who besieged them relentlessly on all sides. Among the best beloved of these early stories of prowess is the tale, Sadko, and those about the exploits of Prince Vladimir and the old Cossacks:

"Vladimir, the sunshine of the city of Kiev
Into the wide dining room he comes,
His yellow curls thrown back,
He himself spoke these words,
Oh you, Suhmantee Odehmantevich
Why do you of nothing boast,
You don't eat, you don't drink, nor eat,
The white swan you don't eat?
Or the glass of wine to you has no taste,
Or your place was it not according to birth,
Or have the drunken men laughed you out?"%

"O height, height that reaches up to heaven
Depth, depth of the Ocean-sea,
Wide expense, throughout all the earth
Deep still pools of the Dnieper."%

"The Cossacks slew no small number of the Tartars,
And the Tartars were astonished at this,
How strong the Russian people were,
So that they, all together, could not overwhelm them;
And they were shot full of tempered arrows, as in sheaves,
But the Cossacks stand unharmed."6

The softest rosy light enshrouds the heavens, as the sun sinks into the coral reefs. In the winter the snow shines, "white and glistering", as the shimmering minarets rise toward heaven. The Iyes stands silent in its mantle of transparent ice and pure snow. The people portrayed in these tales of ancient heroism are the early Russian Orthodox Christians, known at that time as Greek Orthodox Christians. They are the Eastern group of a great people—the Slavs:

6 Ibid., p. 351.
"By the ninth century the eastern Slav tribes had settled and entrenched on a large territory: from the region of the lakes Ladoga and Onega in the north to the Dnepr and Dnestr provinces in the south, and from the Lithuanian and Polish borders in the east."7

The Slavonic land, even in ancient times, was vast—the "Vasty Russia", as spoken of by the great Russian poet, Pushkin, in the nineteenth century. Here in this favoured land were abundant stores of honey, red and blue wine-grapes, the finest wax, wheat, horses, cattle and sheep as well as broad forests rich in timber and minerals. The records of Slavonic tradition reveal the purpose of this people was not so rooted in aggressive conquest of other peoples as were the adventurers to the North. The staunch bronze helmets of their ancient warriors were not decorated with the traditional barbaric horns as were those of neighbouring peoples, and their unsheathed swords were more often used in self-defence than in blood-shedding conquest.

The Mongol or Tatar Conquest (1237-1480), which took place at the beginning of the 13th Century, left no outstanding heritage of literary work—indeed the complete sacking and disruption of the country by the Tatars did not produce an atmosphere conducive to literary effort and achievement, but rather completely wiped out whatever development there had been in that area:

"From Sarai, the khan of the Golden Horde ruled indirectly the Russian principalities, imposing upon them what has become known as the Tatar Yoke. Princes could assume rule in their principalities only with the consent of the khan, and each had to pay tribute and occasionally provide military recruits for the Tatar armies. To insure this control, the khan kept missions in the capitals of the principalities and, if the princes showed any restiveness, sent expeditions to remind them through fire and sword of the folly of insubordination. Otherwise he left the princes to their own device and offered no interference in the internal affairs of their principalities."

Apart from the folktale background just commented upon, "The Lay of Prince Igor"—whose author is unknown, and the ancient Chronicle are the most important written scripts that remain of the glorious old Kingdom. "The Lay of Prince Igor" relates the adventures of an obscure Prince, who lived near Kiev, in his combat with the Cuman Nomads about the year 1185. The only copies of this folk-epic to be preserved were taken from a manuscript discovered during the reign of Empress Catharine II (1762-96). Unfortunately the original manuscript is said to have perished in the Moscow fire of 1812:

"From the tenth century to the invasion of the Tatars in the middle of the thirteenth, the political and cultural center of Russia was Kiev. The civilization of the period was dominated by two classes: the urban clergy and the military aristocracy. The former was largely recruited from the latter. The clergy, especially the higher monastic clergy, were the principal depositories of culture, and the art and literature of the time are mainly religious. The military class, headed by a numerous and warlike race of princes, submitted to the authority of the Church and were Christians in their moral ideals, but they retained heathen traditions and loved war, the chase,

and the pleasures of the table above all things. They produced the only real literary masterpiece of the period, the prose poem of "The Campaign of Igor." 9

The ancient Chronicle, also worthy of mention, is a Chronicle of the court and government affairs of the Kievan Kingdom, believed to have been compiled and written by Nestor, a monk, of the Crypt Monastery, about the year 1110:

"The Primitive Chronicle begins with a genealogy of the Slavs "from the generation of Japheth." This is followed by an account of the early history of the Slavs, of their divisions and manners, which is strangely "nineteenth century" in its Panslavist sentiment and its ethnographical interest. Then follows the well-known story of the "invitation of the Varangians" to Novgorod, which is curiously similar to that of Hengist and Horsa. The account of events of the later ninth and of the tenth centuries is based on a fairly solid chronological skeleton, but the strictly annalistic entries are very few. They are enlivened by numerous vivid and spirited traditional tales, which form the chief attraction of this part of the Chronicle. The earliest is entered under 882, and they continue as far as the early years of Yaroslav (1019-54). They are obviously founded on oral tradition, but there is no ground to believe that this tradition was poetical." 10

The "Byliny" and other folklore, were handed down from one generation to another by word of mouth, until finally put into written form, as late as the eighteenth century. Since then in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries there has been extensive study and research in this field.


10 Ibid., p. 11.
After the gradual decline of the Mongol rule in 1480, with the declaration of the independence of Moscow from the Tatars received by Czar Ivan III (1462-1505), there came into being a Muscovite Dynasty, whose princes are said to be descended from the famous Prince Alexander Nevsky, who died in 1263. Prince Alexander is remembered chiefly for his heroic defense of Novgorod against the Teutons and the Lithuanians, and for his successful attempt in protecting the province of Suzdal, which had risen in rebellion against the Tatars. The hardships and exposures suffered on this last mission in the service of his Slavonic brethren, are said to have caused his death.

"Under Tatar domination the proliferation of Russian principalities continued. Their number varied with the ups and downs of war, but there were usually a dozen or more of them, including Novgorod, Ryazan, Vladimir, Tver, Pereyaslavl, Starodub, and Seversk—all vying with one another for power. The princes tended more and more to arrogate to themselves absolute political power within their realms, giving little thought to their common cause—that of the Russian state. One bright exception was Prince Alexander Nevsky, of Novgorod, a man of outstanding statesmanship and military prowess, who in the middle of the thirteenth century halted the Swedes, German Knights, and Lithuanians, and frustrated their aggressive plans against the Russians."

All during the 15th and 16th Centuries, through the reigns of Ivan the Terrible (1533-84), the Time of Trouble (1589-1613), and the beginning of the Romanov Dynasty in 1613, little was produced in the field of literature. These were times for the

moulding and growth of constitutional and ecclesiastical laws, and were also periods of military conquest.

It was not until the reign of the eighth Romanov, Czar Paul (1796-1801), at the close of the 18th Century, that the man was born who was destined to become the greatest Russian poet of all times namely, Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin. Pushkin also became one of the founders of the new trend in Russian thought which came to birth in the literature at the beginning of the 19th Century in the writings of Pushkin and also in those of the author, Lermontov (1814-41). This ideal continued in the writings of many of the great authors that followed. The meaning of Russian realism has been expressed by several renowned literary critics of the 19th and 20th Centuries, including Vissarion Belinsky and Prince Mirski.

The latter's comments read as follows:

"The main influences that emancipated Russian realism from pure satire were Pushkin and Lermontov. They gave the example of an equal, level, human treatment of all humanity. The "philanthropic" attitude in its more sentimental forms did not much survive the forties, but its substances, and sympathetic attitude to human beings, without distinction of intrinsic moral significance, became a principal characteristic of Russian realism. People are not good or bad: they are only more or less unhappy and deserving of sympathy--this may be taken as the formula of all the Russian novelists from Turgenev to Chekov. This was what Europe accepted as their message to mankind when they were first revealed to the West.

Another important and general characteristic of the Russian realistic novel is its artistic simplicity, a consistent effort to make its style as unobtrusive and as unstriking as possible. What they regarded as good prose was prose adequate to the thing described, prose that answered the reality it spoke of, transparent prose that should not be noticed by the reader."
Another obligation generally recognized by the realists was the duty of choosing their subject exclusively from contemporary or almost contemporary Russian life. This was owing not only to their honest desire to speak of nothing but what they actually knew, but also the social position of fiction in mid- and late-nineteenth-century Russia. The novelists were expected to react, sensitively and significantly, to the current life of the nation. Partly owing to the severity of the censorship of other branches of literature, fiction, from the forties onward, became an important and widely listened-to mouthpiece of social thinking, and the critics demanded that every time a novelist gave his work to the world, it should contain things worth meditating on and worth analyzing from the point of view of the social issues of the day. As a rule, the novelists took the obligation very seriously and never ignored it, at least in their more ambitious work. This "social" (obschestvenny) or "civic" (grazhdansky) colouring is a general characteristic of the European novel of the mid-nineteenth century, but it is nowhere more apparent than in Russia.  

Realism in Russian writing is most striking in its endeavor to reveal the truth about human life with a deeper understanding of its varied perplexities.

The various classes had continued to accept their status quo without questioning. In the Russia of the 19th Century there were the following distinct classes:- 1. the landowners, which included the aristocracy, 2. the intelligentsia, 3. the merchant class, 4. the peasants, 5. the clergy, 6. the petite bourgeoisie, and 7. the proletariat. The trend of French romanticism in literature had been dominated by expressions of superficiality and affectation. These beliefs, no doubt,

brought relief to the imaginations of the people, since except for the few wealthy members of the court, most of the people were bowed down with unbelievably heavy burdens, which enabled the French court to function with its favourites in its very costly fashion. The influence of this School of French thought also included the atheism and Godless philosophy of Voltaire and his associates, which made its bid at the court of Catharine, although she was supposed to be the defender of Russian Orthodoxy. Catharine herself corresponded with Voltaire and other leading literary men of the time. In contrast Russian realism tried at some length to explain nature and people as they really were. Imagination, affectation and speculation were entirely discarded in a determined attempt to express truth simply and unadorned. This new idealism in early 19th Century Russian authors so dominated their thought that it became their choice gift to literature, not only to their own people but also to the Western world. It stressed the ideal that there are both good and bad qualities to be found in all individuals of all classes of society. There has been no return in Russian writing to the romanticism or classicism which preceded realism. The realistic ideal continued all through the 19th Century and into the 20th.

Realistic writing came to its apex in Russian literature in the works of Leo Tolstoi and Feodor Dostoievski. The Soviet writers even after the 1917 Revolution, although their works are usually painfully saturated with Marxist dogma, are
pursuing to some extent the spirit of realism. It is hoped that God may show them the way out of the Marxist dilemma, which certainly is not realism, into the light of an emancipated realism in both writing and government. This should by no means be unattainable, as the desire for truth is still to be found in the writings of many Soviet authors.
CHAPTER I

REALISM AS ILLUSTRATED IN THE WRITING OF
ALEXANDER SERGEYEVICH PUSHKIN
(1799-1837)

1. Brief Sketch of the Life of Pushkin
2. The Amazing Voice Raised in 1817
3. Back to Romanticism in "Ruslan and Lyudmila"
4. Pushkin's Writing of the Period (1822-28), in Which His Realistic Idealism Comes to Flower
5. Pushkin's Writing of the Period (1828-36), in Which Realism Has Become a Dominant Factor
6. The Lasting Effect of the Great Realistic Poet
1. BRIEF SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF PUSHKIN

"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 alive."

—Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin

"Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin was born in Moscow, May 26, 1799. His father's family was one of the oldest of the Russian gentry. His mother, née Gannibal, was the granddaughter of "Peter the Great's Nigger"—more exactly Abyssinian—Engineer General, Abraham Gannibal. The poet was always prod both of his "six-hundred-year-old nobility" and of his African blood. His childhood and early boyhood were spent at home in a French eighteenth-century atmosphere of frivolous and superficial culture. There was no mutual affection between son and parents. In 1811 Pushkin went to school at the Lyceum of Tsarskoye Selo (founded that year). The Lyceum became more of a home to him than his family, and his schoolfellows always commanded the warmest and most permanent of his affections. While still at the Lyceum, Pushkin began writing verses. In 1814 his first poems appeared in the "Messenger of Europe", and before he left the Lyceum he was a member of the Arzamas, and was regarded as a rival, almost an equal by Zhukovsky and Batyushkov. In 1817, on completing his studies, he became a clerk in the Foreign Office, but the appointment was merely nominal and he did no office work. He lived in St. Petersburg, mixing with the most advanced, brilliant, and dissipated of his contemporaries. All the time he was working at a "romantic epic" in six cantos, "Ruslan and Lyudmila", which appeared in the spring of 1820, taking by storm the young generation and being violently censured by the old. Zhukovsky, on reading the manuscript, gave Pushkin his portrait with the inscription "To a victorious pupil from a defeated master." But before its publication some of Pushkin's revolutionary epigrams had reached the knowledge of Alexander I, and the poet was ordered to leave Petersburg. He was transferred to a government office in Ekaterinoslav. Almost immediately on arriving there he fell ill and was taken to the Caucasus by General Rayevsky, a famous soldier of 1812, with whose sons he contracted a lasting friendship and for whose daughters he held a fervent admiration. From the end of 1820 to 1823 Pushkin served in Kishinev, doing very little official work, and having sufficient freedom to pass much of his time at Kamenka,
an estate in the Province of Kiev that was one of the principal centers of the Revolutionary movement. But he worked more seriously than in Petersburg. He wrote "The Captive of the Caucasus"—which appeared in 1822 and had an even greater success than "Ruslan and Lyudmila". In 1828 he was transferred to Odessa. He was delighted to breathe the freer and more European air of a big seaport, but his life became even more irregular. In August 1824 he was suddenly expelled from the Civil Service and ordered to live permanently on his mother's estate of Mikhaylovskoye in the Province of Pskov. The years spent at Mikhaylovskoye were particularly productive.

Pushkin's forced seclusion at Mikhaylovskoye prevented him from taking part in the December Revolt of 1825. His connections with the rebels were obvious, but the new Emperor overlooked them, and, by a master stroke of clever policy, summoned the poet to Moscow (Sept. 1826), granted him a complete pardon, and promised to be his special protector and patron. In 1829 Pushkin fell in love with Nathalie Goncharova, a young girl of sixteen, a dazzling beauty, but frivolous and insignificant. He proposed but was rejected. Under the influence of this check he suddenly went off to the Caucasus, where a war was going on with Turkey, but was severely rebuked for doing so by his "protectors". In the spring of 1830 he again proposed to Nathalie and was this time accepted. His own financial affairs were far from brilliant—he got handsome sums for his books, but this was a precarious and irregular income, all the more so because Nicholas' censorship often held them up. The autumn before his marriage Pushkin spent in the country, at Boldino, and these two months were the most marvelously productive in his life. He was married in February 1831. His marriage was, at first, externally happy. But there was no real sympathy between the pair. Nathalie's beauty made her an immense success in Petersburg, in town and at court. It was to be able to invite her to court balls that Nicholas in 1834 made Pushkin a "gentleman of the chamber", an honor deeply resented by the poet. No longer the leader of an advanced school, Pushkin was now the head of the "literary aristocracy". He felt that he was suffocating in a society where a mere poet, in spite of his "six-hundred-year-old nobility", was looked down upon by the great courtiers descended from the favourites of eighteenth-century empresses, and was little more than his wife's husband. He tried to free himself from the noxious and deteriorating atmosphere, but was given to understand that if he left town it would be in disgrace. At
last came the tragic end. His jealousy was exasperated by the attention paid to Nathalie by Baron Georges D'Anthes, a French Royalist in the Russian service. The duel was fought on January 27, 1837. Pushkin was mortally wounded, and died on the 29th. For fear of public demonstrations of sympathy his coffin was hurried away in the night from Petersburg to the monastery near Mikhaylovskoye, which he had chosen for his burial place."13

2. THE AMAZING VOICE OF 1817

It is an astounding fact that one of Pushkin's greatest realistic poems in the cause of freedom and liberty, was written when he was but eighteen years of age, and just leaving the Tsarskoye Selo school. This poem and one written at the same period, "The Village", which is a plea against serfdom, caused Czar Alexander I to exile him to the Caucasus in 1820. These poems were first circulated privately among the poet's closest friends and sympathizers.

Although Alexander I was somewhat of a mystic, he very much resented the sentiments Pushkin expressed in his "Ode to Liberty" and "The Village". The Russians were bound at this time not by the Khazars, Mongols, or Norsemen, but by tyrants of their own regime, to Czars, who neither understood individual freedom, nor sympathized with individual expression. In "Ode to Liberty", envisioning the eventual downfall of Czardom, which took place exactly one hundred years later, Pushkin charges:

"Tremble, ye tyrants of the earth!
Fate's random minions, heed and cower!
Awake, ye bondsmen of their power!
Rise up, I say, and show your worth!
Looking around I ever face
Whips upon whips and fetters groaning,
Laws' peril in a world's disgrace,
And helpless slaves for ever moaning;
Arrayed on every hand I mark
Dense superstition, fatal craving
For fame, and genius for enslaving,
And unjust power thunder-dark.
Where a sure stronghold doth surround
There only o'er the rulers crowned
Drones not the people's dire complaining."
It is the law that doth instal  
Your rulers in your kingly station:  
You stand aloof above the nations,  
But Law stands high above you all.  
And woe, and woe to every race  
Where Law shall lurk neglectful, dozing,  
Where King or People shall outface  
Her equity, o'er justice glozing.  

Hark to the Truth, ye Tsars and Kings!  
Neither rewards, nor prosecutions,  
Nor prisons' glooms, nor altars' wings  
Can shield you, safe from revolutions!  
Come first, abase with bended knees  
Your heads 'neath Law's protective entry—  
And at your thrones shall stand as sentry  
The nations' liberty and peace!"

These are among the first lines uttered by a European poet on the subject of freedom. It is regrettable that the Czar did not heed their wise counsel; giving freedom and justice to the serfs and passing other amnestic laws to relieve the sufferings of the people. Instead he resented their sentiments, and banished Pushkin to the south of Russia:

"His venomous compositions were passed around among all the young people in the capital and became so popular that it was not long before every political epigram in any way improper was automatically attributed to him. "Anything imprudent, any disgusting pamphlet is immediately attributed to me." Pushkin wrote. And Pustshin\# in turn noted "At the time people were secretly passing around, copying and reciting his poems, "The Village", "Ode to Freedom", "Hurrah, into Russia Gallops", and other little things in the same vein. There wasn't a soul who didn't know his verses by heart.


\# Pustshin—a schoolfellow of Pushkin's with a similar name.
The three revolutionary poems Pustshin mentioned are worthy of special consideration; for, beginning with the "Ode to Freedom", dated 1817, and ending with "The Village", written in 1819, we have what amounts to Pushkin's testament of liberalism for this first period.

Veigel tells us in his "Memoirs" that the "Ode to Freedom" was written in the Turgenev# brothers' house, which was just opposite the sinister Michael Palace where Paul I had been murdered.

In his other poem, "The Village", Pushkin was even more outspoken and did not hesitate to stigmatize the institution of serfdom and cruelty of the landowners.

These few "forbidden" poems give us a good idea of what Pushkin's liberalism was like. At the age of twenty Pushkin was the favourite poet of his readers, the literary idol of his country.15


# Not the family of the 19th Century author of the same name.
3. BACK TO ROMANTICISM IN "RUSLAN AND LYUDMILA"

The first poem to bring Pushkin public recognition was his romantic epic "Ruslan and Lyudmila", written in 1820:

"In itself this playful tale of a princess snatched away from the bridal chamber by a magician and eventually by a knight, was a puerile performance, but its appearance was something of an event." 16

Avraham Yarmolinsky says in his introduction to "The Poems, Prose, and Plays of Pushkin". In this gay romantic sketch the first glimpse is seen of Pushkin's early genius, and for the first time, the general public became aware of his potential greatness. However, this poem savors of romanticism not realism. In it the influence of his upbringing in the school of French romanticism dominates the scene. It is said that at the time of the writing of this poem the philosophy of Voltaire influenced the poet's thinking.

The story is charmingly told, and is an excellent subject for the ballet stage. But there is no voice realistically raised in the interest of the needs of his countrymen, or those banished to the Siberian wastes. Based on a fairy-tale of folklore, it does not in any way contribute to realistic historical data. However, it is of interest to the scholar of Russian writing, because through it he obtains his first view of Pushkin in the setting in which he was educated. He then

emerges from this influence, and the spirit of realism suddenly comes to flower in his poem, "The Lay of the Wise Oleg" (1822). Pushkin's early manifestation of genius has been ably commented upon by Isabel Hapgood:

"Karamzin the historian, and Zhukovsky the poet, also divined the lad's wonderful gifts and the latter soon began to submit his poems to Pushkin for the judgment of the boy's wonderfully developed taste. The admiration of the great literary lights at last convinced his parents that dissatisfaction with his school reports as to diligence and the acquisition of general knowledge must be set aside for pride in his future greatness. The important points about his poetry at this epoch were the marvelous variety of subject and the astonishing delicacy with which he had entered a new path: he had begun to write his romantic, fantastic poem, "Ruslan and Ljudmila" in which, for the first time in history, Russian poetry dealt with strictly national themes on native soil, expressed in free natural, narrative styles, which was utterly opposed to the prevailing rhetorical school, both in irregularity of movement and diversions from the theme. This no doubt was the fruit of his child's fondness for popular tales, which his maternal grandmother had told him, and the startled critics were at a loss what to say when it was published later on in 1820."\17

Henri Troyat another biographer of Pushkin also remarks at the time of Pushkin's graduation from the Tsarskoe Selo School in 1817:

"The text of his diploma read as follows:

This is to certify that Alexander Pushkin, a student of the Imperial School of Tsarskoe Selo, has completed six years of study in this institution, and that he achieved the following grades:

In Religious Instruction, Logic, Ethics, and Philosophy, Natural Law, Russian Criminal and Civil Law: good.

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17 Warner's Library of the World's Best Literature--Comment by Isabel Hapgood, pp. 11904-11924 (on Pushkin)
In Latin Literature, Political Economy, Financial Law: very good.
In Russian and French Literature as well as Fencing: excellent.
He has, furthermore, studied History, Geography, Statistics, Mathematics and German. In witness whereof the Faculty of the Imperial School of Tsarskoe Selo has awarded the present diploma with the seal attached.
Tsarskoe Selo, June 9, 1817.
Igor Engelhardt, Director.
Alexander Kunitiszin, Secretary of the School Faculty."

But this diploma, which for so many of the boys had been their sole ambition and reason for studying, for Pushkin was only a scrap of paper. The administrative career which was open to him did not interest him at all. The only diploma he cared about was a notebook in which he had, with the help of his school mates, copied, in March, 1817, thirty-six of his best poems. On the cover of the collection was written:

Poems by Alexander Pushkin: 1817

Pushkin had been very careful in the selection he made. The poems written during his school years numbered more than one hundred and twenty. Most of them were published only after his death. As a matter of fact, when a publisher included them for the first time in Pushkin's complete works, certain critics protested. They claimed that it was doing the poet's memory a disservice to make public these early efforts which were so childish that Pushkin himself had discarded them. It was maintained that by incorporating them in the edition, the publishers were trying to make an additional commercial profit for themselves, to the detriment of Pushkin's reputation.

The Russian essayist Belinsky disagreed. "These schoolboy poems of Pushkin's are important, not only because they show, as compared to his subsequent work, how rapidly his poetic genius developed and matured, but also, and especially, because they establish the historical connection between Pushkin and the poets who preceded him."

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4. PUSHKIN'S WRITINGS OF THE PERIOD (1822-1828),
IN WHICH HIS REALISTIC IDEALISM COMES TO FLOWER

Pushkin's realism is reflected in his descriptions of the glories of the Old Kievan Kingdom, narrated in his unusual poem, "The Lay of the Wise Oleg" (1822). The opening lines of this remarkable work are reminiscent of the ancient conquest of the early Slavs over the Khazars, who still besieged the early Slavonic Kingdom and ravaged its people. This poem delves into more remote times, before the 10th Century, and mention is made of the god, Perun, who was one of the chief gods of pre-Christian Slavic mythology. The character of the old sorcerer, Murmon, in this poem illustrates these backward glances into the pre-Christian Slavic era. However the luminous rays of glory in the poem are shed on Oleg, who as regent for the tender Prince Igor, after the death of Rurik, founded Kiev as the capital of the early Slavonic Kingdom around the year 880. The kingdom gradually expanded until, by the time of Oleg's death (912), it constituted most of the prominent cities and wealthy principalities of the surrounding country-side. The romance of this age of Slavonic chivalry breathes with almost unbelievable realism through Pushkin's poetic lines in this poem, as he speaks in the fifth verse of, "the foe viewing with envy the great destiny" of the Kievan Kingdom, as it expanded on all sides toward the Volga, Caspian and Black Seas and enfolded the Ural Mountains.
The poem progresses as Oleg, known as "The Wise" because of his deeds of prowess and just counseling, meets old Murmon, the sorcerer, who informs him that his death wound shall come at length from none other than his brave battle steed:

"Remember now firmly the words of my tongue:
   The warrior delighteth in glory;
   On the gate of Byzantium thy buckler is hung,
   Thy conquests are famous in story;
   Thou holdest dominion o'er land and o'er sea,
   And the foe views with envy thy great destiny:

   Not the rage of the deep with its treacherous wave,
   At the stroke of the hurricane-hour--
   Not the knife of the coward, the sword of the brave,
   To undo thee shall ever have power:
   Within thy strong harness no wound shalt thou know,
   A guardian attends thee wher' er thou dost go.

   Thy steed fears not labor, nor danger, nor pain,
   His lord's lightest accent he heareth,
   Now still, though the arrows fall round him like rain,
   Across the red field he careereth;
   He fears not the winter, he fears not to bleed--
   Yet thy death-wound shall come from thy good battle-steed!"  

Oleg does not wish to heed this counsel, but because of his superstitious dread of the wizard's words, he at once dismounts and immediately unharnesses his beloved charger, leaving him forever. Years later he finds the bones of his steed, windswept and dry, all lying in a heap. He curses the dotage of the one supposed to be endowed with supernatural powers. But fate strikes! Just

as Oleg turns away, there darts from the skeleton of his horse a dread black snake, which entwines his leg. He dies almost instantly from the poisonous bite, falling back on the bleached bones of his beloved but forgotten charger. The prophesy of the old sorcerer had come true! The scene in the poem then shifts, as the reader envisions Igor and Olga "Weeping o'er the mound" of him who had so faithfully guided their kingdom. Now, without his blessing or wise counsel, they must continue either to greater glories, or to bitter defeats:

"The mead-cups are foaming, they circle around;
At Oleg's mighty death-feast they're ringing;
Prince Igor and Olga they sit on the mound;
The warriors the death-song are singing;
And they talk of old times, of the days of their pride,
And the frays where together they struck side by side."20

A fine example of Pushkin's nobler sentiments is expressed in his "Message to Siberia", written in 1827 after his pardon and subsequent return to the court of Nicholas I. He returned to the court in this year, but his heart was still with the Revolutionaries, especially those banished to Siberia in 1825, after the December Revolt, with which Pushkin was in sympathy. His heart still bled for the prisoners condemned to Siberia, where unfortunately hundreds of lesser political offenders, some for very slight offenses, were banished. It is hoped that the message of this poem may yet come true. Let us envision the people of Russia, with their "infinite kindness" living in their beauteous country free from bondage of any kind. Theirs is a

bounteous land, which can easily support all of its people graciously. Pushkin's message to Siberia reads as follows:

Message to Siberia

"Deep in the Siberian mine,  
Keep your patience proud;  
The bitter toil shall not be lost,  
The rebel thought unbowed.

The sister of misfortune, Hope,  
In the under-darkness dumb  
Speaks joyful courage to your heart:  
The day desired will come.

And love and friendship pour to you  
Across the darkened doors,  
Even as round your galley-beds  
My free music pours

The heavy-hanging chains will fall,  
The walls will crumble at a word:  
And Freedom greet you in the light,  
And brothers give you back the sword."21

The descriptive poem, "Poltava" (1828) sweeps the reader into the age of the Romanov Czar, Peter the Great (1689-1725). Here, Peter himself gallantly leads his troops against the Swedish Charles XII, who previously in the year 1708 had conquered Denmark, Ingria, Narva and Grodno almost at a single blow. Now he went with his battalions to destroy and subdue the Russian Kingdom. This poem, no doubt, was inspired by the story that Peter the Great, at the time of this decisive battle, is said to have charged his soldiers not to think of his personal welfare, but only of the welfare of the Russian State. Although in many respects Peter was a tyrant and deprived his people of constitutional and ecclesiastical rights, he was, nevertheless, brave in battle, and would gladly have given his life to save the Russian people and their lands. An interesting comment on the characters of Pushkin and Peter the Great by Janko Lavrin reads as follows:

"If Peter I "annexed" Russia to Europe and at the same time turned her into a Great Power, Alexander Sergeyvich Pushkin (1799-1837) achieved, just over a century later, something similar with regard to Russian literature and, for that matter, Russian culture in general. There was in fact a certain affinity between these two geniuses. Pushkin, like Peter the Great typified the belated Renaissance spirit in Russia, while trying to make up--by a short cut, as it were--for her lost opportunities in the past. They resembled each other in their broadness, their assimilative power, their intuitive awareness of the "Zeitgeist", as well as in their Russian character; for their cosmopolitan sympathies did not in the least interfere with what was essentially Russian in both. No wonder Pushkin felt curiously drawn toward a monarch whose work he admired precisely because he understood it in all its implications. "Peter was undoubtedly a revolutionary by God's
grace," he wrote in 1836. "The tremendous revolution achieved by his autocratic power abolished the old system of life, and European influences spread all over Russia. Russia entered Europe like a launched ship, accompanied by the noise of axes and firing guns . . . . As the executioner of an era which no longer corresponded to the nation's needs, the Tsar brought us culture and enlightenment, which in the end must bring us freedom also.

Pushkin could not but side with Peter the revolutionary, and for good reasons. As a member of that section of the gentry which was not on good terms either with the Court aristocracy or with the higher bureaucracy, he (like so many other younger members of his class) adhered to the advanced bourgeois-liberal opinions of his period, and therefore wanted to see Peter's work carried to its logical end. Peter, who in so drastic a manner set the whole of his country before the problem of Europe and Russia, also bequeathed to the younger generations the task of solving it. And there were only three ways in which it could be tackled. The first was Russia as a docile imitation of Europe. Russia asserting her own individuality against the encroaching Europe was the second. And the third was the prospect of an organic synthesis between the two. Each of these trends seems to have been tried out by Russia at some time or other in the course of her recent history. Hence her vagaries, experiments and contradictions, which are by no means over. Yet in Russian culture, at any rate, one can distinguish the third trend in the making. Russian music, for instance, represents a successful blending of European methods and traditions with Russian material and an essentially Russian spirit. The same applies to modern Russian literature, the prodigious growth of which, during the last hundred years or so, has been to a large extent a continuation and at the same time a completion of the possibilities inaugurated by Pushkin's work."22

The great epic poem, "Poltava", describes with penetrating realism the great battle of the same name, in which Peter was

victorious over the Swedes in 1709. In Canto III the reader finds:

"The East is bright with dawn
From field and hill the cannon roars." 23

The battle is a hard one, Peter is apprehensive because of the former victories of the Swedes. At length his voice rings out clearly and resolutely, "Now, with God's help, to work!" The troops and Cossacks all surge forward to a sure and glorious victory. The day is won! The battle o'er!

"Now, with God's help, to work!" And here,
His favourites about him surging,
Comes Peter from the tent. His eyes
Dart fire, his face commands surrender.
His steps are swift. The tempest's splendor
Alone with Peter's splendor vies.
He goes. They bring his charger, panting;
High-strung, yet ready to obey,
He scents the fire of the fray
And quivers. Now with eyeballs slanting,
Into the dust of war he fares,
Proud of the rider that he bears.

Noon nears. The blazing heat bores deeper.
The battle rests—a tired reaper.
The cossacks steeds, paraded, shine.
The regiments fall into line.
No martial music is redounding,
And from the hills the hungry roar
Of the calmed cannon breaks no more.
And lo! across the plain resounding,
A deep "Hurrah!" rolls from afar:
The regiments have seen the Czar." 24

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24 Ibid., translation by Babette Deutsch, p. 94
This great historical poem ends with these beautiful lines of victory and exultation. The spirit of realism embodied therein reflects all the might and consequence of this illustrious battle, which is one of the best known and most decisive in Russian history. Czar Peter's victory is again re-lived in heroic verse.
5. PUSHKIN'S WRITINGS OF THE PERIOD (1828-1836),
IN WHICH REALISM HAS BECOME A DOMINANT FACTOR

The well-known poem, "The Bronze Horseman" (1833), although supposed to be founded on an incident that occurred over a hundred years after the death of Peter, nevertheless, is woven around the bronze statue of this famous Czar. A statue that still stands in the Senate Square of St. Petersburg, now Leningrad, the city on the Finnish marshes founded by Peter I as St. Petersburg in 1703:

"I love thee, city of Peter's making;
I love thy harmonies austere,
And Neva's sovereign waters breaking
Along her banks of granite sheer;
Thy traceried iron gates; thy sparkling,
Yet moonless, meditative gloom,
And thy transparent twilight darkling;
And when I write within my room
Or lampless, read—then, sunk in slumber,
The empty thoroughfares, past number,
Are piled, stand clear upon the night;
The Admiralty spire is bright;
Nor may the darkness mount, to smother
The golden cloudland of the light,
For soon one dawn succeeds another
With barely half-an-hour of night." 25

St. Petersburg and Moscow subsequently became the greatest cultural and artistic centers of 18th and 19th Century Russia. The poem, "The Bronze Horseman" is woven about the incident of the cruel fate of the young man, Evgeny, who in the year 1833 was driven mad by seeing the home of the girl he loved, swept away by the flood. The plot of this work is not so satisfying to

the reader as is its heroic setting around the famous statue of the old Czar. The reader is more intrigued by Peter and his brave exploits for the Russian land than by the plight of the unfortunate lover. Through all these scenes, could the eyes of Peter still be watching from his horse of bronze?

""I believe," Pushkin once remarked to Mme. Smirnova, "that the dead influence the thoughts of the living." 26 If such could be, then the ending of this poem might have been perceived better in the light of realism. Peter lost some battles, but more often than not he won them. His courage never failed, which is the chief reason for his great triumph as a military leader. In this poem, the reader feels that his spirit almost envelopes the beautiful statue. Peter had courage, strength and boundless energy. Had the Czar been alive at the time of the incident of this sad poem, and heard of the tragedy of Evgeny, there breathes through the poem, the feeling that he might have taken an interest in the unlucky youth. However, in his demented condition Evgeny imagines, as he rushes out into the stormy flood-ridden night, that the statue of Peter has taken after him!

"For now he seemed to see
The awful Emperor, quietly,
With momentary anger, quietly,
His visage to Yevgeny turning!
And rushing through the empty square,
He hears behind him as it were
Thunders that rattle in a chorus,
A gallop ponderous, sonorous,
That shakes the pavement. At full height,

Illumined by the pale moonlight,
With arm outflung, behind him riding
See, the bronze horseman comes, bestriding
The charger, clanging in his flight.
All night the madman flees; no matter
Where he may wander at his will,
Hard on his track with heavy clatter
There the bronze horseman gallops still."27

The result, of this strange hallucination of Evgeny's, leads to his tragic death in the seething waters. This part of the poem does not savor of the spirit of realism. Instead Peter's hovering spirit could have made an attempt to rescue the unfortunate youth, just as he rescued the Russian people at Poltava, and as he is reputed to have tried to rescue a boat single handed, the result of which caused his premature death in 1725. On consideration, however, the poet may be alluding to another facet of Peter's character, which led him to condemn the Czarevich to a terrible death in 1718, on the grounds of religious differences. There was a merciless side to the character of Peter, for even though he often showed great benevolence toward his subjects, he also exhibited much cruelty. However it seems more likely, in the light of history, that had Peter's spirit really hovered near his statue on that dreadful night portrayed in Pushkin's poem, he might have seized Evgeny with a resolute bronze arm and have drawn him to his sculptured self, quieting and restoring his wrecked mentality. Never under any circumstances can one imagine Peter chasing his demented subject through the town, into the

dark and turbulent water. This was not Peter. The beautiful poem built around the heroic statue of bronze, ends on an unrealistic note. However Pushkin has not meant this to be so. In contemplation of the hard and merciless side of Peter's character, he has come to the conclusion that Peter could have nourished a feeling of cold contempt toward Evgeny's romantic love and resulting dementia. Thus in the spirit of realism Pushkin portrayed the tragic ending.

In the poems, "The Prophet" (1826), and "Pure Men and Women Too" (1836), Pushkin tried to grasp at long last the true meaning of God. He implies that he realized that he was not fundamentally a spiritual man. But he tried in the year 1832, from notes which have been found in his letters, to study and put into practice some of the precepts contained in the Holy Scriptures. "The Prophet" although written at an earlier period than "Pure Men and Women Too" reflects in great measure Pushkin's spiritual musings. It was inspired by his reading of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah--Chapter six--verses five to seven:

"Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.

Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar:
And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged."28

In the poem Pushkin makes a somewhat feeble attempt, to catch the vision of the greatly mystical prophet Isaiah, when he envisioned the Great God, Himself, in the Holy Temple. Instead of Isaiah's experience in the realm of the Spirit, where a coal of living fire seemed to be pressed to the great prophet's lips for purification, Pushkin feels instead his tongue with "the evil things and vain it babbled", being drawn out by the roots, and being replaced by the "wise" serpent's tongue. This last act is not convincing in the light of Biblical teaching, for in the fateful garden, the serpent spoke worldly wisdom, not the Wisdom of God. Pushkin's idea is obscure. He then imagines his heart—stony, cold, lifeless, Pagan, being plucked out by the winged seraph, and being replaced by a coal of living fire, or perhaps he means a heart of flesh as the scriptures give reference to (Ezekiel 36:26):

"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh."29

In his vision he then falls lifeless upon the wastes, a clod, until he is at length strengthened through God's voice:


29 Ibid., (The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel), Chapter 36:26, p. 1026.
"And from my mouth the seraph wrung
Forth by its roots my sinful tongue;
The evil things and vain it babbled
His hand drew forth and so effaced,
And the wise serpent's tongue he placed
Between my lips with hand blood-dabbed;
And with a sword he clove my breast,
Plucked out the heart he made beat higher,
And in my stricken bosom pressed
Instead a coal of living fire.
Upon the wastes, a lifeless clod,
I lay, and heard the voice of God:
"Arise, oh, prophet, watch and hearken,
And with my Will thy soul engird,
Roam the gray seas, the roads that darken,
And burn men's hearts with this, my Word."

The following beautiful poem written ten years after "The Prophet" is also worthy of consideration particularly to the reader interested in poetry in which a spiritual theme prevails:

**Pure Men, and Women Too**

"Pure men, and women too, all of the world unspotted,
That they might reach the heights to holy saints allotted,
That they might fortify the heart against life's stress,
Composed such prayers as still comfort us and bless.
But none has ever stirred in me such deep devotions;
As that the priest recites at Lententide devotions;
The words which mark for us that saddest season rise
Most often to my lips, and in that prayer lies
Support ineffable when I, a sinner, hear it:
"Thou, Lord of all my life, avert Thou from my spirit
Both idle melancholy and ambition's sting,
That hidden snake, and joy in foolish gossiping.
But let me see, O God, my sins, and make confession,
So that my brother be not damned by my transgression,
And quicken Thou in me the breath and being of
Both fortitude and meekness, chastity and love."31


31 Ibid., p. 86.
At length Pushkin in fancy rears unto himself a monument, not of stone, but in memory of his immortal genius in his poem, "Unto Myself I Reared a Monument" (1835). As the court favourite, at the height of his fame, Pushkin makes this rather bold comment about his own great talent:

**Unto Myself I Reared a Monument**

"Exegi monumentum
Unto myself I reared a monument not builded
By hands; a track thereto the people's feet will tread;
Not Alexander's shaft is loft as my pillar
That proudly lifts its splendid head.

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 alive.

The rumor of my fame will sweep through vasty Russia,
And all its peoples speak this name, whose light shall reign
Alike for haughty Slav, and Finn, and savage Tungus,
And Kalmuck riders of the plain.

I shall be loved, and long the people will remember
The kindly thoughts I stirred—my music's brightest crown,
How in this cruel age I celebrated freedom,
And begged for ruth toward those cast down.

Oh, Muse, as ever, now obey your God's commandments,
Of insult unafraid, to praise and slander cool,
Demanding no reward, sing on, but in your wisdom
Be silent when you meet a fool."32

So far this prophesy has come true. In Soviet Russia, even under the iron-hand of Communist dictatorships, Pushkin's name has been and is venerated; his immortal verse is read, and he is still the best-loved of Russian poets.

Several of Pushkin's long narrative poems have been set to music, among the best known is the "Golden Cockerel" (1835) which is about the exploits of the great Czar Dadon. This work has been set to music by Rimsky-Korsakoff, and includes the popular and expressive, "Hymn to the Sun"; "The Tale of the Czar Sultan"; and the well-known melancholy novel in verse, "Evgeny Onegin", written at Odessa (1823-31) has been made into an opera by the composer Tchaikovsky.

Pushkin was the first Russian to write a full-length historical play in the spirit of realism. This play, centering around the life of the Tatar Czar, Boris Godunov, is told most realistically and keeps well to historical data. It falls short of Shakespeare's genius in the field of the historical drama, but it is entertaining, and will appeal especially to those who appreciate Slavonic literature, because its Eastern Slavonic atmosphere is maintained throughout:

"This drama is not only of the greatest interest in itself, and as an absolute novelty,—the foundation of a style in Russian dramatic writing, but also as showing the genesis of Count Alexei K. Tolstoy's famous "Dramatic Trilology" from the same historical epoch written forty years later."33

Four other little dramas which Pushkin wrote, "Mozart and Salieri", "The Stone Guest", "The Feast During the Plague", and "The Coveteous Knight" are hardly worthy of mention. His genius did not manifest itself in these rather futile attempts to write for the theatre.

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33 Warner's Library of the World's Best Literature--Comment by Isabel Hapgood, pp. 11904-11924 (on Pushkin).
Pushkin's desire to write the short prose-story was also not overly successful. These writings have been collected into a group of stories known as "The Tales of Belkin" (1830), but can hardly be classed as a collection of first-rate short stories. None of the genius of the colorful author, Lermontov, is displayed in Pushkin's little stories. Although they are well-written, the reader feels the author is straining himself somewhat unsuccessfully to give insight into a thrilling adventure tale, with a surprise ending, which in many incidents is neither convincing nor satisfying. "The Postmaster" is perhaps the best written of the group including: "The Shot", "The Snowstorm", "The Undertaker", "Mistress into Maid", and "The Postmaster". Many critics highly praise "The Queen of Spades" written in 1833, but its climax does not demonstrate the new realism effectively. "The Captain's Daughter", describing times during the Pugachev Rebellions of 1774 and 75, illustrates the trend of realism in a better light. Pushkin's more lengthy prose works, "The Negro of Peter the Great" (1827) about his maternal great-grand-father; "Dubrovsky" (1832-33), and "Egyptian Nights" (1835), show considerable workmanship. Had Pushkin lived longer, he might also have become a great master of prose, but his God-given genius and the fire of his talent is to be found in his immortal poetry.
6. THE LASTING EFFECT OF THE GREAT REALISTIC POET

Pushkin must forever be remembered as one of the founders of the School of Realism in Russian literature. Before this new trend of thought, Russian writers had followed the School of Romanticism, which directly preceded it, and did not stress the importance of portraying scenes and people from life as they really were. Reasonable and psychological conclusions for thoughts and actions had not been considered. The mask of this school fell off with the dawn of the Realistic Russian School, inaugurated by Pushkin and Lermontov. Pushkin, at times put back his mask and lapsed into the old forms of his superficial upbringing. However the mask was never securely placed again over the face of Russian literature, once the ideal of realism took root, it was there to stay:

"In the realm for which Russian modern literature holds the palm,—simplicity, realism, absolute fidelity to life,—Pushkin was the forerunner of the great men whose names are synonymous for those qualities. He was the first Russian writer to wage battle against the mock-classicism of France which then ruled Europe, and against the translations to which every writer preceded him had been wholly devoted. He placed Russian literature firmly on Russian soil; utilizing her rich national traditions, sentiments, and life, in a manner which is as full of life and truth as it is the highest art. The special direction in which Pushkin surpasses all other Russian poets is in his marvelously harmonious blending of truth, beauty, delicate appreciation of the fundamental characteristics of the national life, unsurpassed clearness in setting them forth, with a simplicity which enhances but does not exclude the most satisfying completeness."34

34 Warner's Library of the World's Best Literature—Comment by Isabel Hapgood, pp. 11904-11924 (on Pushkin).
The realism in Russian writing, which had its birth in the early 19th Century soon permeated the French and other European schools of writing, and in France, too, there dawned the Age of Reason, beginning, of course, in the court of Louis XIV. It could be, that the French Revolution itself stemmed from the core of realistic thinking. As in Russia, the peoples' eyes were opened. They could no longer endure the superficialities of the old romanticism, which although artistic and in some instances portrayed with great taste and beauty, was dominated by beliefs in mythology and a tyrannical system, which before had gone unquestioned. No longer were the writers content to grope in the dark, and explain causes and effects away by inane guesses into the realm of fancy. Realism, in a sense was a prelude to the scientific revolution of the late 19th and 20th centuries.

Pushkin gives, in his poetry, a vivid picture of many characters exactly as they appeared to him. He voices his sentiments on human justice and liberty with superb mastery. In his historical poems and plays, which were especially novel to Russian audiences, where the theatre was only founded in 1756, he tried to keep to historical truth and sentiment. Some of his poetry is enshrouded in old superstitions of the pre-Christian Slav and Tatar periods; but these conditions, thoughts and ideas are presented as they truly existed. They are not mere appeals to the imagination. These old beliefs mentioned by Pushkin in his poems were believed in by the people living in the period of
which he is writing. His reference to old mythologies is slight, although it appears sometimes, but always in the place of the realistic. In his most mature works he entirely leaves this kind of musing.

We are given to understand by some critics and biographers that Pushkin led a very shocking and wild youth, and was the author of vulgar and biting epigrams. But it is not needful to dwell upon the baser side of his nature. It is more satisfying to appreciate him at his best, to dwell upon the immortal grandeur and beauty of his poetic writing:

"Equally astonishing is the wealth of literary "genres" in verse and in prose which Pushkin handled with such skill as to raise the level of Russian literature to a height which became a standard for subsequent generations. According to the famous critic V. Belinsky (1811-48), "all previous Russian poets compare with Pushkin as rivers, big and small, compare with the sea. His verse started a new era in the history of Russian poetry. And what verse it is! Antique plastic power and classical simplicity blend harmoniously in it with the enchanting melodies of the romantic rhyme. The acoustic wealth and all the might of the Russian tongue find here an astonishing complete expression."35

His immortal spirit still lives, as envisioned in "Wise Oleg" and "Message to Siberia"; in his frantic appeals for freedom and liberation. Let us remember his generous good wishes expressed toward all—to the Slav, Finn, Tungus, and savage Kalmuck, indeed in the interests of all mankind in his greatest realistic writing. This is the noble spirit of Pushkin's genius, that can never die.

CHAPTER II

REALISM AS ILLUSTRATED IN THE WRITING OF
MICHAEL YURI EVICH LERMONTOV
(1814-1841)

1. Brief Sketch of the Life of Lermontov
2. The Early Manifestation of Lermontov's Genius
3. A Hero of Our Times—A Monument to Realism
4. Lermontov's Poetry
5. Lermontov's Lasting Imprint on the School of Russian Realism
1. BRIEF SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF LERMONTOV

"We set out, the five lean nags hauling our carriages with difficulty along the tortuous road up Gud-Gora. We walked behind, setting stones under the wheels when the horses could pull no longer; it seemed as if the road must lead straight to heaven, for it rose higher and higher as far as the eye could see and finally was lost in the cloud that had been reposing on the mountain summit since the day before like a vulture awaiting its prey."

— Michael Yurievich Lermontov

"Michael Yurievich Lermontov was born October 2, 1814 in Moscow. His father, an army officer and small squire, was a descendant of Captain George Learmont, a Scottish adventurer who in the early seventeenth century entered the Russian service. Learmont, it will be remembered, was the surname of Thomas the Rhymer, and the Learmonts are traditionally descended from him. Lermontov, however, seems to have been ignorant of this poetic ancestry. His mother was an Arseniev, and her mother, née Stolypin, was a wealthy landowner and an important figure in Moscow society. When he was three his mother died, and this led to a breach between his father and Mme. Arseniev, who appropriated her little grandson and brought him up as a spoiled child. At nine he was taken to the Caucasian waters—where the mountains and the new environment left a lasting impression on him. He was thirteen when he began writing verse. In 1830 he entered the University, but studied little and kept aloof from the Idealists who were there at the same time as he. As a penalty for some riotous conduct he was not allowed to take an intermediate examination, and in 1832 he left the University of Moscow and went to Petersburg with the intention of matriculating at the University there. But instead of the University he entered the School of Ensigns of the Guards and of Cavalry Cadets. Lermontov did not like either Petersburg or the school. But he soon adapted himself to his new surroundings and became, on the face of it at least, a typical cavalry cadet. In 1834 Lermontov was given a commission in the Hussars of the Guard. His poetic and romantic nature burst out at the death of Pushkin. In a memorable poem (which may sound today like rhetoric rather than poetry but is in any case rhetoric of the finest quality) he voiced the feelings of despair at the death of the nation's greatest glory, indignation at the alien murderer, who
"could not understand whose life he attempted" and scorn and hatred for the base and unworthy courtiers that had allowed the foreigner to kill the poet. The poem hit its mark—and Nicholas reacted accordingly. Lermontov was arrested, tried by court-martial, expelled from the Guards, and transferred to a regiment of the line stationed in the Caucasus.

The first disgrace was not of long duration. Before he had been a year in the Caucasus he was pardoned and restored to the Guards. But the short time spent in the Caucasus revived his old romantic attachment of that domestic orient of the Russians and is abundantly reflected in his work. By the beginning of 1838 he was back in Petersburg, this time a famous poet and a lion. In 1840 a selection of his poems and the novel, "A Hero of Our Times" appeared in book form. But like Pushkin, only with more real grounds and more effectively, Lermontov disliked being regarded as a man of letters.

Society life, in spite of all the satisfaction it provided for his vanity, galled and goaded Lermontov. His life at Petersburg came to an abrupt end. On the most trivial pretext he fought a duel with M. de Marante, the son of the French Ambassador. No blood was spilled but all the same the poet was arrested and once again transferred to a line regiment in the Caucasus (1840). This time he took part in several military expeditions against the Chechens and proved himself a brilliantly brave officer. He was mentioned in dispatches and twice recommended for rewards, but these were not approved in Petersburg. In the summer of 1841 he went to Pyatigorsk, the Caucasian watering-place, where he found many acquaintances from Petersburg and Moscow, among them his old schoolfellow, Major Martynov. Lermontov and Martynov paid court to the same lady. Martynov bore it for some time but at last called Lermontov out. Lermontov was always glad of a duel. They met on July 15, 1841, in the plain of Pyatigorsk. Martynov was the first to fire, and Lermontov was killed on the spot."36

2. THE EARLY MANIFESTATION OF LERMONTOV'S GENIUS

Michael Yurievich Lermontov along with the poet, Pushkin, was one of the founders of realism in Russian literature. He did not display the poetic genius of Pushkin, but was definitely his superior in the field of prose. In fact, he is considered by many shrewd and learned critics, to be the greatest writer of Russian prose that has ever lived, even surpassing so great an author as Leo Tolstoi. There is no doubt that Lermontov's great prose work, "A Hero of Our Times", will be read so long as people are interested in reading stories of realistic adventure. Certainly, it is a true account of much of the great author's brief life, which ended tragically in a ridiculous duel, when he was but twenty-seven years of age. Strangely enough, the poet Pushkin's life ended in like manner, when he was but ten years older. Just what would have been the harvest of Lermontov's genius, had he lived out the usual life span, is difficult to estimate. He might have become the greatest writer of the realistic adventure-story that the world has ever known.
The realistic adventure-story, "A Hero of Our Times", published in 1840, is Lermontov's most famous work. It is divided into two parts. The first part, consisting of an introduction and two stories. The second part, a short introduction and three stories.

I. Introduction

(a) Bela
(b) Maxim Maximich

II. Introduction

(a) Taman
(b) Princess Mary
(c) A Fatalist

(the last three selections are grouped together and are published under the title, "Pechorin's Diary")

Most close students of the life of Lermontov are convinced that the character, Pechorin, was none other than Lermontov, himself, although to the last the author stoutly denied this. The stories are related as though an unknown author were the narrator. Maxim Maximich, an army captain, whom the narrator meets in the Caucasus, relates to him the tragic, touching story of "Bela". Later when he meets this same captain on government business in Vladikavkaz, he meets also the man, Pechorin, of whom Maxim Maximich had told him so exhaustively and vividly in the tale, "Bela". Pechorin hardly remembers Maxim Maximich, much to the latter's chagrin. In disgust he tosses to the narrator ten
books of Pechorin's diary, which Pechorin had given him when the
two of them had dwelt in such happiness with Bela at the Fort.
After the narrator hears of Pechorin's untimely death in Persia,
he has part of the diary published. These tales comprise the
last three stories—"Taman", "Princess Mary", and "A Fatalist".

Certainly, in beauty of expression, the remarkable
descriptions of nature interspersed throughout the pages of
"Bela", have not been surpassed by any other writer. The
description of the Gud Mountain, as Pechorin and Maxim Maximich
reached the Army Post of Krestovoy, is one of the most magnificent
descriptions of scenic beauty in any language:

"We left the hut. In spite of the captain's forecast,
the weather had cleared up and promised a quiet morn­
ing. On the far horizon were marvelous patterned
constellations, which were extinguished star by star,
as the pale glow in the east spread over the purple
heavens, lighting up gradually the dark, mysterious
chasms into which the mist whirled and writhed like
a snake, creeping along crevices of rock, as though
it felt and feared the on-coming day.

There was quiet in heaven and on earth, as there
is quiet in the heart of a man at the time of morning
prayer; only the wind, every now and then, blew up
cold from the east, lifting the horses' manes, which
were white with frost.

We started off and our sorry horses were hardly
able to drag the carriages along the winding road up
to Mount Gud. We followed behind on foot and put
stones under the wheels when the horses stopped to
rest. The road looked as if it led to heaven, for it
went on raising as far as the eye could follow it,
until it disappeared in a cloud which had been hang­
ing over Mount Gud since the evening before, like a
hawk waiting for its prey.

The snow crunched under our feet and the air was
so keen that it hurt to breathe. The blood mounted to
my head, but a pleasant feeling prevailed my body and I
was exhilarated to feel myself so high above the world. It was a childish feeling, of course, but when we get away from artificial conditions and approach nearer to Nature we cannot help becoming children. All that we have acquired falls away from our being and we become once more what we were and what we shall one day assuredly be again.  

This passage just quoted is of superb beauty in the original Russian tongue.

In the first tale, "Bela", supposedly told to the narrator by the Captain, the atmosphere of the Caucasus is strongly felt. As soon as the Caucasus, that stormy mountainous part of the Russian lands is entered, swords clash. It is not infrequent for shirts of mail to be worn under coats here! These people do not live or think as European Russians do. This is a different culture; one much closer to the natural elements, one too, incidently, steeped in hot-tempered, short-lived duels. There are more intense feelings, more primitive loves for women, horses, and belongings in general. This is the treacherous Caucasus, not the pastel tints of the Kievan Kingdom of yore, but a land of dark crimson shadows, rich purple gorges, deep green valleys,--black sharply-shadowed ravines, and foaming waterfalls cut deeply into great mountains, ominous in their dark blue and misty shrouds. Here the Dagestan, Georgian, Circassian and Ossetain Tatar peoples, mostly of Turkic and Mongolian bloods live. The intensity of their loves, hatreds,

feuds, and devious ways of life are known only here in these steep mountain defiles.

This story, dealing with the adventures of Pechorin, gives an account of the love affair of the young Russian officer with Bela, the beautiful daughter of a Tatar chieftan. This spritely Tatar maiden personified beauty itself in form, symmetry and grace. Her bewitching narrow face, and slightly slanting gazelle-like eyes enchant. Her magic Caucasian beauty, like that of a beautiful wild fawn delights and torments the young officer from his first glance at her in the mountain hut, where he and Maxim Maximich are entertained at her older sister's wedding.

After this meeting in the hut—Bela is abducted to the Fort, by her young brother, Azamat, at the bidding of Pechorin. At first she does not encourage the glances and petitions of the young Russian officer. His entreaties and gifts are all in vain. But at last she decides to remain with him at the fort, be it either for her good, or for her eventual destruction. Pechorin remains true to her, but apart from her extraordinary beauty, she has none of the development of mind that he would have found satisfying. She very probably had never read a book in her life. Very likely she could not even read or write. But she could sing, dance like the wind, and sway to music as gracefully as a young acacia tree in the breeze. Pechorin does not abandon her for other women. He takes to hunting—is off days with the hunt. Bela grows discouraged and strays from the fort, only to become the victim of treacherous old Kazbish, who had been secretly
enamoured of her for a long time. He also has had his faithful charger (which he loved, in Circassian fashion, more than any woman) stolen from him by Azamat, with the help of Pechorin. Hence his extreme thirst for revenge. In exchange for Pechorin's help in securing his wish, Azamat had bound Bela and brought her to him at the Fort, as already mentioned. The ending is tragic. The medical techniques of those days were unable to restore her life. At this point in the story the dramatic intensity is at a high level. Bela lives only a few days after the fatal stabbing inflicted on her by Kazbish, after he was forced to drop her from his horse as Maxim Maximich and Pechorin pursued him. Like an unfortunate little bird, which has been struck down by a marauding falcon, they bury her in a grave not far from the fort, where a gentle acacia, which she so resembled, blooms tenderly over her remains. She is buried with Moslem rites, not wishing to become a Christian, which is offered her tenderly at the last by Pechorin. At first Pechorin's grief is very poignant, but eventually he recovers and moves on again with his regiment.

The short story, Maxim Maximich, is then related to bring to the reader's attention, Pechorin's whereabouts, and just how and why his diary happened to be handed over to the narrator by Maxim Maximich.

The two stories, "A Fatalist" and "Taman", taken from the diary of Pechorin, are indeed among the greatest short stories ever written in any tongue. The story, "Princess Mary", is more
commonplace, and resembles many of the novels of the 18th and 19th Century European writers. It is more a diary of insigni­
ficant trivia among members of European Russian families, who
meet at Kislovodsk in the Caucasus.

"Taman",# the first story of the second group, was
considered by Checkhov the greatest short story that has ever
been written. It is exceptional in its brevity and realism.
This is an adventure tale, but its setting is in the little sea­
side village of Taman on the Taman Peninsula. This remarkable
tale gives a picture of Pechorin, who this time is on his way to
join his regiment at Gelenjik, when he encounters smugglers.
They were an unusual group of persons consisting of an old woman,
a young girl, and an unfortunate blind boy, who has been blind
from birth. The girl, sings of Yanka, the smuggler, who comes
in his little boat from over the sea. He brings a precious cargo
of silk stuffs, ribbons etc., whatever he can muster, which may
be sold for profit on the other side. Pechorin, senses this
situation from the time of his first night spent in the little
hut, where the smugglers are more or less forced to take him in,
until the arrival of his boat, because he is an army officer seek­
ing lodgings.

Being unable to sleep, Pechorin leaves his servant in
the hut, and proceeds to follow the girl and blind boy down along

# "Taman is on the eastern shore of the Straits of Kertch, which
unite the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. It faces Kertch and the
Crimea across the straits."
the steep bank to the shore. He listens intently "chto eto onee
nesut" he thinks:

"Now and then snatches of their conversation
reached me down wind.
"Well, blind boy", a woman's voice said; "the
storm is heavy--Yanko won't come."
"Yanko's not afraid of storms", he replied.
"The mist is getting thicker", the voice said,
with an inflection of sadness."
"All the easier for him to slip past the guard
ship."
"But supposing he's drowned?"
"Well, what of it? You'd go to church next
Sunday without your new ribbon!"
There followed a silence. It had been struck
during this conversation by the fact that though
to me the boy talked with a Little Russian accent,
he now talked perfect Russian.
"You see, I was right," said the boy suddenly
striking the palm of his hand with his fist.
"Yanko fears neither sea nor winds nor mist nor
guardships. Listen now. That noise is not the
sea--that's his long oars."
The woman looked anxiously into the distance.
"You're talking nonsense, blind boy," she said.
"I see nothing."
I tried hard to distinguish the outlines of a
boat in the distance, but without success. Ten
minutes went by, and then among the mountainous
waves I made out a black dot, which became now
bigger, now smaller. The boat rose slowly on
the crests and sank quickly to the troughs as it
approached ever nearer to the shore. He must be
a brave man to risk the fifteen miles of the
straits on such a night, and urgent must be the
reason of his voyage!

With these thoughts I looked at the wretched
little boat, my heart beating violently. But she
dived like a duck and emerged from the abyss with
a great sweep of the oars amid sheets of spray.
Now, I thought, she will surely be swept violently
ashore and be dashed to pieces. But she cleverly
turned on her side and was washed unhurt up a
little creek.

From her emerged a man of middle height in a
Tatar sheepskin cap. He waved his hand and all
three started dragging something out of the boat.
She was so heavy-laden that I have never to this day understood how she kept afloat. They each took a load on their shoulders and went off along the shores, where I soon lost sight of them. I had to go back to the hut, but so perturbed did I feel by the strange happenings of the night that I awaited the morning with impatience.  

These people are smugglers indeed, plying their dangerous trade in the deep waters. He tells the "mermaid", as he grows to call the rather attractive smuggler maiden, who sings to him gaily, on the roof of the hut, about the exploits of her smuggler friend, that he will accompany her on her venture the next night to the perilous shore.

The girl is deeply alarmed because she suspects that Pechorin has discovered their secret. She determines to take him out in the little boat and foist him overboard. She is terrified that he may reveal to the authorities how she and her friends make their treacherous living, and that they may all be arrested. After the little boat has pulled slowly out from the shore, the smuggler maiden tries to throw Pechorin overboard. He is not entirely surprised at her attempt. After a brief struggle he prevails, and it is he who throws the "mermaid" into the sea. However she swims to land, and soon drenched to the skin clambers up the bank. But she had not been able to do away with Pechorin, the only living being who knows about the trade that she, the blind boy and Yanka ply in the dangerous waters.

Pechorin leaves the next day after this strange encounter in the deep, to rejoin his regiment. He decides not to report

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these smugglers to the authorities, more on the grounds of contem­
tempt, than warm-heartedness, which is somewhat disappointing. 
However his sentiments are realistic for those times. The fact 
that he is somewhat contemptuous toward the one born blind 
displays a hardness of heart, which one would not ordinarily 
have expected. The mermaid's gay song he says he memorized word 
for word:

"Я запомнил эту песню от слова до слова."

Каж по вольной волишке--
По зелену морю,
Ходят все кораблики,
Белопарусники.

Промеж тех корабликов 
Моя лодочка, 
Лодка неснащенная, 
Двухвесельная.

Бура-ль разыграется--
Старые кораблики 
Приподымут крыльшки, 
По морю размечутся.

Стану морю кланяться 
Я низехонько; 
"Жс не тронь ты, злое море, 
Мою лодочку: 
Везет моя лодочка 
Вещи драгоценные, 
Правит ею в тёмную ночь
Буйная головушка."
"Over boundless billows green,
Over billows surging,
Fly the ships with sails a-spread,
Onward urging.

There among those ships at sea,
Sails my shallop sprightly,
Curtsying to wind and wave,
Kissed by combers lightly.

Stormy winds begin to blow,
Stately ships a-rocking,
Widely do they spread their wings—
To leeward flocking.

The angry ocean then I pray,
Bending low before him:
"Spare my barque, O fearsome one!"
Thus do I implore him.——

"Precious goods are stowed on board!——
Fierce the sea is foaming!——
Keep her safe—a madcap steers
Through the gloaming!"39

The daring maiden decides to join Yanka on the other side. Their trade in the deep and mounting waves is becoming very dangerous. There are too many guard boats, the waves beat too high in the storms, so Yanka and his "mermaid" decide to seek a new home. The blind boy is broken hearted. As they leave, they carelessly toss him a coin. He, miserably poor as he is, does not even pick it up. The reader hopes that somehow the old woman, who owns the hut may have compassion on him, because of his dejection and loneliness, and of course because of his blindness.

This story is particularly remarkable in its realistic dramatic intensity. The reader feels the sea-breeze on his cheek, the sound of the smugglers running breathlessly past the hut—quickly, dangerously plying their occupation. All this is told in simple language, yet every sentence is alive! The tense breathing of the blind boy and the "mermaid" are perfectly described. Their quick, surefooted steps, the atmosphere of suspense in which they live is retold with great realism. The fact that the action centres about adventure, which had disappeared almost completely from the lives of the teeming crowd of men and women at that time, and even now, also holds the attention.

Seldom does one ever find a short adventure story, of no more than a few thousand words, told with more vivid realism and action.

"A Fatalist", the last story in the diary, is likewise an amazing story of adventure told at its best. It almost converts the reader to the doctrine of fatalism. Sometimes the evidence may seem very strong in favouring that events are predestined, nevertheless to discard entirely free-will and conscience in regard to thoughts and actions, has never seemed true nor practical realism. However, this may have seemed the very truth to Lermontov, especially since his ancestors on his father's side were of Scottish descent, a people given especially to beliefs of superstition, commonly spoken of as "second sight".
In the character of Vulich in the story, the reader meets the same daring spirit that is Pechorin's own, only Vulich is not so likeable, so detached or uninhibited.

The story, "A Fatalist", opens as a group of army officers and their friends grow tired of cards and gossip, and their conversation drifts to a discussion about predestination—"the Mohammedan belief that one's fate is written in the sky." Vulich, a young Serbian officer, makes a bet with Pechorin that a Circassian gun which hangs on the wall is loaded, and goes to prove whether or not he is right by holding the gun to his forehead! The pistol clicks, and everyone stands aghast. It does not go off. However Vulich has not lost his bet. He fires at a cap hanging on the wall. The room is filled with smoke. The guests this time are flabbergasted. Vulich has won his bet, but Pechorin has yet to prove his premonition. Pechorin had thought he saw a look of inescapable death on the face of the young Serbian officer, such is his premonition about him—that he must somehow encounter death itself before the dawn! Vulich collects his roubles, but he has not far to go before he does encounter death, fatalistically indeed, in the sword thrust of a drunken Cossack, whom he does not even know, but who in a drunken fit has run amok striking wildly at anyone or anything in his path.

In the morning Pechorin is astounded to hear of the death of Vulich. He is even more surprised to learn of the last
strange words he uttered—"He was right". Vulich here indicated with his last breath, that he believed he must have after all been predestined to die that night, as Pechorin had predicted. The fatalists will be sure to agree, that indeed this must have been the case; although persons who do not adhere to these views, may contend just as reasonably, that had Vulich just happened to turn down a different street, out of the Cossack's reach, all would have been well with him.

It is interesting to note, however, that the fatalistic part of this story, that is really gripping, is the stand Pechorin now takes on the grounds of fatalism. After hearing of Culich's death, he undertakes to extricate the Cossack murderer from a hut in which he has barricaded himself. His epaulette is badly shattered, but his life is spared. Pechorin no doubt remained a fatalist the rest of his short life, and could he have commented on his untimely death in Persia a few years later, would have thought it could not have been otherwise:

"Then he added after brief reflection:
"Yes, I'm sorry for the poor chap... Why the devil did he stop to talk with a drunk at night! But, I suppose, that was his destiny."40

Just why are "Bela", "Taman", and "A Fatalist" so extraordinary? It is because of their sincerity of purpose, and their arresting spirit of adventure—their realism. Whoever the

character, Pechorin, was, if it were Lermontov himself, or if someone whom he knew very well, or merely a fabrication of his imagination, fashioned from memories of himself and his comrades in his Caucasian Army days, certainly he was not a perfect character, but undoubtedly he was a hero, and a real person. In spite of the undesirable traits, the devil-may-care part of his character stands out more strikingly than his less admirable qualities. He often takes his life in hand quite lightly, as illustrated in his duel with Grushnitzki, in the tale "Princess Mary", and in his decision on the basis of fate, to arrest a murderer single-handed.

Throughout all of the five stories one glimpses the character of Lermontov himself; that is, in Pechorin, the hero. His vanity, recklessness, and self-sufficiency appear again and again. But let us remember that Lermontov too was adventurous and brave. These nobler qualities are more clearly manifested in the last two stories, "Taman" and "A Fatalist". Neither of these stories express his own sentiments. They are pure adventure. In both of them Pechorin risks his life to probe into the very souls of the people whom he is among, perhaps to test more accurately his fatalistic doctrines and beliefs.

In summary it might be said, that in the story, "Bela", the poetic beauty of the Caucasus, given vividly, and painted in such realistic colors; and the dramatic intensity of the Plot combine to make of this unusual adventure tale a masterpiece
rarely surpassed. The very short story, "Maxim Maximich", is really in the nature of an explanatory—explaining how the diary eventually came into the hands of the narrator, in order that the reader may better understand the incidents of the stories from the diary that follow. The introduction to these tales mentions the untimely death of Pechorin in Persia. "Princess Mary", the second tale of the Diary Group contains much realistic adventure encountered by Pechorin in the mountain resorts of the Caucasus—such adventure as led to Lermontov's own untimely death in a duel is narrated. This story too has been described as being the most soul searching narrative in regard to Pechorin himself, and is considered to contain some of Lermontov's most powerful writing. "Taman" and "A Fatalist" must remain forever as excellent examples of truly great stories in the interesting realm of pure adventure. This whole work, "A Hero of Our Times", must always stand as a monument throughout the ages to heroic realistic adventure.
Lermontov had a religious and patriotic side to his character, and these traits are displayed in some of his poetry, which was much read, and beloved by the Russian people of the age in which he wrote, and is still a reading favourite. Lermontov, like Pushkin, was exiled because he expressed freely and openly some of his patriotic sentiments about liberty, which were raised in protest against the existing regime. For the very scathing poem he wrote commenting on the death of Pushkin, "On the Death of a Poet", in which he blames the corrupt practices of the time for the tragedy, he was exiled to the Caucasus in 1837. But this certainly worked out for his good fortune, and that of the reading public, as it was there that he received his inspiration for the writing of "A Hero of Our Times". His poem, "The Demon", although somewhat gaunt and mysterious contains also amazing and realistic descriptions of nature:

"And over the Caucasian ranges
Flew the exile from Paradise;
Beneath, Kazbek, like diamonds edges,
Flashed its eternal snow and ice;
Black as a creviced den confining
A serpent, deep below ran twining
The narrow chasm of Daryal;
And down its way, like a lion roaring,
There leapt the streams of Tereik, foaming,
With a frayed mane along its back.
Both mountain beast and soaring eagle
Circling against the azure sky
Harked to the calling of the waters;
And golden clouds, due north, all day
Flew rapidly along its way
From far-off southern countries roaming."
And closely crowding gloomy rocks,
Mysteriously still and pensive,
Inclined their heads with snowy locks,
Watching the flickering waves, attentive.
And castle-towers on the cliffs
Scowled with dark menace through the hazes—
The giants, there to dominate
Where Caucasus its gateway raises!
Both wild and glorious was the world
Around him; but the haughty ghost
Contemptuously cast a glance
On the creations of his Lord,
And naught of what he saw or thought
Reflected in his countenance."41

Lermontov's religious musings are revealed in the poems, "The Angel" and "The Prayer", which express profound faith and deep reverence. He also wrote many other poems of descriptive beauty and religious sentiment of which there is not space to comment upon here. "The Prayer" is exceptionally beautiful in the original Russian:

Молитва.

В минуту жизни трудную,
Теснитя-ль в сердце грусть;
Одну молитву чудную
Твержу я наизусть;

Есть сила благодатная
В созвучьи слов живых;
И дышит, не понятная
Святая прелесть в них.

С души как бремя скатится,
Сомненье далеко —
И верится и плакется,
И так легко, легко.

41 From the Translation by N. Jarintzov.
The Prayer

"In life's hard, trying moments,
    With sorrow in my breast,
I breathe a prayer most wonderful,
    Which ever brings me rest.
There is a power of blessedness
    In those sweet words enshrined,
Thought cannot grasp their sacred charm
    That calms the anxious mind.

Doubt stays no more, the soul is free,
    Her burden rolls away,
Her faith renewed, tears bring relief,
    When this sweet prayer I pray."

42 From the Translation by F. P. Marchant.
5. THE LASTING EFFECT OF THE GREAT REALISTIC POET

There is no doubt that the poet, Lermontov, has made a lasting imprint on the realistic school of Russian writing. Unfortunately he is not so well known to Western readers, but it is hoped that they and particularly the English speaking peoples may become eventually better acquainted and aware of his tales of adventure and his unusually beautiful descriptive poetry. Lermontov's writing should appeal especially to people of Anglo-Saxon lineage, who have always exhibited a great admiration and enthusiasm for tales and poetry centring around heroic adventure. Lermontov's Scottish ancestry is felt in his great appreciation of the grandeur of nature. His descriptions of the Caucasus echo some of the scenic descriptions of Walter Scott and Robert Burns although painted on a wider canvas and with deeper and more mysterious coloring. He has been compared to the English poet, Byron:

"No, I am not Byron," he wrote, 'I have been chosen as another; like him, a wanderer hunted through the world, but only with a Russian soul. I began young, will finish early, achieving little. On my heart, like in an ocean, lies a load of shattered hopes.'

As a result of his over-bold verses on Pushkin's death, he was exiled to the Caucasus, where, like Pushkin before him, he found inspiration for romantic poems in an Oriental setting. But Lermontov was no meek imitator, and he differed both from Pushkin and Byron in his deeper sense of loneliness, his firmer hatred of society, and his absolute personal fatalism. With a moral ideal, which found no
echo around him, he fixed his attention on his own generation in his own country, and was not afraid to face the painful conclusions which he reached: 'I survey sadly our generation and its future, either empty or dark. Meanwhile, laden with knowledge and doubt, it grows old and accomplishes nothing. Hardly out of the cradle, we are enriched by the mistakes of our fathers and by their wisdom after the event. Life already wearies us like a smooth path without a goal. Shamefully indifferent to good and evil, we fade away without a fight at the beginning of our course, timid in the face of danger, and contemptible slaves to power!' (Meditation)"43

Although it is now over a hundred years since the death of Lermontov he continues to be among the best beloved writers in his own country. Just recently his name has been mentioned in a Russian magazine published in Moscow popular with the Russians of the 20th Century which is printed in eight languages, and his great novel, "A Hero of Our Times" is mentioned as becoming the subject of a new Soviet film. An illustration from "Princess Mary" has the following inscription beneath it:

"Princess Mary" After a story by M. Lermontov. Produced by the Gorky Studio. Scenario and directed by I. Annesky. Cameraman: M. Kirilov. Starring Sanova as Mary and Verbisky as Pechorin"44

"What Lermontov might have grown into as a poet is a matter of wide speculation. Even as it is, he is one of the small number of great poets, and, though today his star is under an eclipse, it is probable that posterity will once again confirm the judgment of the nineteenth century and place him immediately next to Pushkin. As a romantic poet he has (with the conceivable exception of Blok) no rival in Russia, and he had in him everything to become also a great realist (in the Russian sense). But it is highly

probable also that the main line of his further development would have been in prose, which is regarded today as his least questionable title to a first rank."'}

CHAPTER III

REALISM AS ILLUSTRATED IN THE WRITING OF

NIKOLAI VASILIEVICH GOGOL

(1809-1852)

1. Brief Sketch of the Life of Gogol

2. Gogol's Early Realistic Writing, Which Was Immediately Accepted by Both Critics and Public

3. "Taras Bulba" and "Dead Souls"—Landmarks Along the Path of Realism

4. Other Works

5. Gogol's Tragic and Futile Search for a Living Faith
1. BRIEF SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF GOGOL

"And, Russia, art not thou too flying onwards like a spirited troika that nothing can overtake? The road is smoking under thee, the bridges rumble, everything falls back and is left behind! The spectator stands still struck dumb by the divine miracle: is it not a flash of lightning from heaven? What is the meaning of this terrifying onrush? What mysterious force is hidden in this troika, never seen before? Russia, whither flyest thou? Answer! She gives no answer. The ringing of the bells melts into music; the air, torn to shreds, whirs and rushes like the wind, everything there is on earth is flying by and the other states and nations, with looks askance, make way for her and draw aside."

--Nikolai Vasilievich Gogol

"Nikolai Vasilievich Gogol was born on March 19, 1809 in the market town of Sorochintsy, in the Province of Poltava. He came of a family of Ukrainian Cossack gentry. His father was a small squire and an amateur Ukrainian playwright. In 1820 Gogol went to a provincial grammar school and remained there till 1828. It was there he began writing. Very early he developed a dark and secretive disposition, mingled with painful self-consciousness and boundless ambition. Equally early he developed an extraordinary mimic talent, which later on made him a matchless reader of his own works. In 1828, on leaving school, Gogol came to Petersburg, full of vague but glowing ambitious hopes. He entered the Civil Service, still hoping to become a great administrator, and he began writing prose stories. He came in touch with the "literary aristocracy", had a story published in Delvig's "Northern Flowers", was taken up by Zhukovsky and Pletnev, and, in 1831, was introduced to Pushkin. In the meantime (1831) he brought out the first volume of his Ukrainian stories (Evenings on a Farm near Dikanka), which met with immediate success. It was followed in 1832 by a second volume, and in 1835 by two volumes of stories entitled "Mirgorod" (containing "Viy", Taras Bulba", "Old-World Landowners", and "Ivan Ivanovich and Ivan Nikiforovich"), as well as two volumes of miscellaneous prose entitled Arabesques (containing, besides a variety of essays, "The Nevsky Prospect","
"The Memoirs of a Madman", and the first draft of "The Portrait"). In 1834 Gogol was made Professor of History of the University of St. Petersburg, though except an unlimited self-confidence, he had absolutely no qualifications for the chair. His first lecture, an introduction to mediaeval history, was a brilliant piece of showy rhetoric, but those which followed it were poor and empty. Gogol resigned his chair in 1835. His good relations with the "literary aristocracy" continued, and Pushkin and Zhukovsky continued encouraging him. But while the "aristocracy" gave him qualified admiration, in Moscow Gogol met with the adulation and entire recognition sufficient to satisfy him. The young Idealists, with Belinsky at their head, carried him to the skies.

Through between 1832 and 1836 Gogol worked at his imaginative creations with great energy. It was only after the presentation, on April 19, 1836, of his comedy "Revisor" that he finally believed in his literary vocation. The comedy, a violent satire of Russian provincial bureaucracy, was met by enthusiastic praise and virulent obloquy. The Petersburg journalists, the spokesmen of the official classes, raised the hue and cry against Gogol, while the "aristocrats" and the Moscow Idealists of every shade of opinion were equally emphatic in admiring it. When, two months after the first night, he left Petersburg for abroad, he was finally convinced that his vocation was to "be useful" to his country by the power of his imaginative genius. Henceforward for twelve years (1836-48) he lived abroad, coming to Russia for short periods only. He chose Rome for his headquarters. The death of Pushkin produced a strong impression on Gogol, especially by emphasizing his conviction that he was now the head of Russian literature and that great things were expected of him. His principal work during these years was "Dead Souls". At the same time he worked at other tasks—recast "Taras Bulba" and "The Portrait", completed his second comedy, "Marriage", wrote the fragment "Rome" and the famous tale "The Greatcoat". After the publication of the first part of "Dead Souls", Gogol, it would seem, intended to continue it on the plan of Dante's "Divine Comedy". Instead he decided to write a book of direct moral preaching that would reveal his message to the world. The book, entitled "Selected Passages from a Correspondence with Friends" (though it contained practically no passages from actual letters), appeared
in 1847. Gogol expected it to be received with awe and gratitude, like a message from Sinai. He was cruelly disappointed before long. His best friends, the Slavophils, were painfully and unmistakably disgusted. His despair of himself was enhanced by the pilgrimage he undertook (in 1848) to the Holy Land. His incapacity to warm himself up to genuine religious experience in the presence of the Lord's footsteps increased his conviction that he was irrevocably lost and damned. From Palestine he returned to Russia and passed his last years in restless movement from one part of the country to another. He met Father Matthew Konstantinovsky, a fierce and narrow ascetic, who seems to have had a great influence on him and strengthened in him his fear of perdition by insisting on the sinfulness of all his imaginative work. However, Gogol continued working at the second part of "Dead Souls", a first draft of which he had destroyed in 1846 as unsatisfactory. His health gradually gave way. He undermined it by exaggerated ascetic practices, all the time trying to compel himself to Christian inner life. In an access of self-mortification he destroyed some of his manuscripts, which contained most of the second part of Dead Souls. He explained this as a mistake—a practical joke played on him by the Devil. It is not clear whether he really meant to do it or not. After that he fell into a state of black melancholy, and died on February 21, 1852."46

2. GOGOL'S EARLY REALISTIC WRITING, WHICH WAS IMMEDIATELY ACCEPTED BY BOTH CRITICS AND PUBLIC

Nicolai Vasilievich Gogol is generally acknowledged to be the greatest writer of the Ukraine, although his great works are all written in the Great Russian language. He was fortunate to have received an excellent education. His ancestors on his father's side belonged to the Ukrainian gentry, and his mother's descent, is said to include an heritage from the Polish priesthood. Gogol was somewhat of a mystic. He surely did not find a satisfactory answer to the riddle of life, which he so earnestly sought. His intense desire to find this answer makes the reader hope it was realized by him, if not here, at long last on the other side. Perhaps Gogol was too brilliant. His writing is a series of brilliant character studies in unusual detail. Nothing escaped his sharp eyes and shrewd observation. There is a lovable Ukrainian charm through all his stories. He did not mean to criticize and carp. He saw, in detail, men and women with all their human frailties as a heterogeneous mosaic. Such was his mind. All these critical observations disturbed him, and this tendency became more pronounced as time went by.

Gogol has been designated as "the father of Russian realism" by some of the critics, but can hardly be justified as such. Certainly he carried forward the torch of the realistic school. Gogol never for an instant returned to the old romantic and classical schools, which preceded the realism of the 19th
and 20th Century authors. Gogol's stories are very realistic indeed. He keeps close to facts. Most of his stories were taken directly from life, and were either told to him or were the result of his own keen observations among persons whom he knew well. From stories told to him by his grandfather, he is said to have jotted down much valuable data, about the exploits of the Ukrainian Cossacks. Gogol saw situations with unusually observant eyes, and from the standpoint of a critic. He was able to caricature anyone, or any situation in life, to the satisfaction and amusement of his readers.

Gogol is most famous for his amazing and humourous satires. He is notably a writer of comical tales and plays. From their first appearance his plays were popular. When members of Leo Tolstoi's household were planning to stage an amateur play—"The Marriage Broker" by Gogol--Tolstoi is said to have remarked, "You can't go wrong with Gogol".47

Gogol's first work, that is said to have attracted public attention, was his "Evenings at the Farmhouse Near Dikanka", published in 1831, when the author was but twenty-two years old. These tales of the Ukrainian gentry are remarkably realistic and entertaining. Through these pages there breathes the spirit of the Ukraine, with all its warmth and friendliness. During evenings spent among these countryfolk, he heard many of the stories which he re-told so realistically, and in such a lively

manner. Pushkin praised these stories very highly and encouraged Gogol in his budding literary career. Even the hard-to-please critic, Belinski, had a good word of encouragement for the early manifestations of Gogol's genius:

"The chief impression left by Gogol's work is: how simple, natural, and true; and yet how novel and original! The reader feels that he has long been familiar with these characters which the artist has created, that he has himself lived with them, that he could almost remind the author of certain of their features which have not yet been mentioned, so true to life are the personages which he has created. And in this very ordinariness of subject, this matter-of-fact, everyday quality of the events which he describes, resides the true mark of the artist."\(^{48}\)

And in commenting on Gogol's own unique and peculiar type of wit the great critic continues:

"While the stories of Gogol are to the highest degree genuine portrayals of Russian reality, their national character is not a special quality consciously imposed but a necessary condition of the true work of art, which by definition reflects the manners of a people. True national character is to Gogol as his shadow: without his thinking about it at all it attaches itself to him. In this, it is like originality. For while Gogol's originality lies in his individual humor, his humor consists in his fidelity to life and not in the caricature of reality."\(^{49}\)

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"Dead Souls" written between the years 1836-48 is Gogol's best known work. It is founded upon the history of a young upstart, who, in order to obtain the number of serfs required in order to mortgage land, and thus eventually become a landowner, (which was considered the highest status in Czarist Russia), decides to get a list of serfs, who were already dead—in short "dead souls". He intends to present these names to the land office. He imagines their validity will never be questioned, and this might not have been, as the censorship in those days was indeed very slack. Then, if his list were favourably received, he feels he could proceed to purchase a desirable piece of property. Thus he expects to settle down comfortably and in great self-esteem, until his land actually yields the increase sufficient to buy the needed serfs; although who would work his land in the meantime never seemed to enter his mind! "What a plan!" the reader will exclaim in astonishment. But the title of Chichikov's amazing plan to become a mighty landlord, does not refer alone to the souls—dead, which he tried to muster to gain himself an estate. The meaning of the title goes much deeper than this. Gogol here refers also to the souls of the men and women around him, who seemed to him veritably dead. This fact depressed him. Indeed they were either dead in spirit, in many instances, or at least he could not detect their spiritual
animus. In the writings of this great satirist, one does feel an over-criticism of his fellow man. However, each character is described just as he or she appeared to him, and Gogol did not glimpse anything very commendable about most of them. No doubt, he fell short here. Surely there was some kindliness and warmth deeply hidden in the souls of most of those whom he cleverly and scathingly caricaturized.

In "Dead Souls" Chichikov, the typical pandering young fellow, in all his encounters never stops ingratiating himself to others, from the time he sets out in his troika to the end of the tale. Most of the persons he encounters are astonished at his plan. Nevertheless all are finally persuaded, and give him the required list of their "dead souls". They then proceed to send him on his way, good-speed, although in some instances it is felt they rather question his sanity. Most amused of all at his ridiculous plan, was the old general.

Interspersed with the superficiality and the rather tiresome conversations of Chichikov with his prosperous benefactors, there are beautiful descriptions of the Russian countryside, as he travels over it in his spirited troika—drawn by three fine horses. This was a popular means of conveyance in Gogol's time. Gogol was a great lover of nature, and describes it with intense feeling and unusual charm. Through this unique story runs this continual thread:
"And, Russia, art not thou too flying onwards like a spirited troika that nothing can overtake?"  

Gogol wonders wistfully, just where Russia is heading; Russia—with all her beauteous lands, vast potentialities, and her strong and original peoples. Was she headed for a higher skyline? He ponders, lingers, dimly sees the far horizons, but does not clearly sense what the future holds. Surely some great good must ultimately be hers! "Dead Souls" is written in a style such as Gogol only could write. Chichikov's many exploits travel along at an amazing speed, that could not ordinarily be imagined, except written as they are in Gogol's brilliant and penetrating style. To Gogol belongs the term "unique", his style being so very different from any of his contemporaries. He has an inimitable way of writing all his own, which is not found in any other author either before or after his time. In "Dead Souls" the conversation is always crisp and entertaining; this is the singular magic of Gogol. His works resound with humor, mirth and sparkling wit. He gives his original descriptions of situations in his own unrivalled style of writing, which never fails to brim over with laughter and subtle candor. The following beautiful description of the Russian countryside exemplifies his great descriptive observations:

"Like the innumerable multitude of churches and monasteries with their cupolas, domes and crosses scattered over holy, pious Russia, swarms the innumerable multitude of races, generations and peoples, a many coloured crowd shifting hither and thither over the face of the earth. And each people, bearing with itself the pledge of powers, full of creative, spiritual faculties, of its own conspicuous individuality, and of other gifts of God, in which, whatever subject it describes, part of its own character is reflected."^51

Again when questioning Russia's great destiny he remarks with masterful power and beauty:

"Russia! Russia! I behold thee, from my lovely faraway paradise, I behold thee! But what mysterious inexplicable force draws one to thee? Why does the mournful song that floats over the length and breadth of thee from sea to sea echo unceasingly in the ear? What is in it, in that song? What is it calls and sobs and clutches at my heart? What are these strains that so poignantly greet me, that go straight to my soul, and throb about my heart? Russia! what wouldst thou of me? What is the mysterious hidden bond between us? Why dost thou gaze at me thus, and why is everything within thee turning upon me eyes full of expectation? . . . and still full of perplexity I stand motionless; and already a threatening cloud, heavy with coming rain, looms above my head, and thought is numb before thy vast expanse. What does that immense expanse foretell? Is it not here, is it not in thee that limitless thought will arise, since thou are thyself without limit? . . . . Is it not here there should be giants where there is space for them to develop and move freely. And thy mighty expanse enfolds me menacingly, with fearful force reflected in the depths of me; with supernatural power light dawns upon my eyes. . . . . . Ah, marvelous, radiant horizons of which the earth knows nothing! Russia!"^52

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52 Ibid., pp. 39, 40.
The unusual tale, "Taras Bulba," which is about the Cossack exploits of the 16th Century, is said to have been related to Gogol by his grandfather. The hero of the story is the Hetman of Zaporozhie Cossacks. He is bent on the slaughter of the little Polish town, Koven, even though it may be at the cost of the lives of his own two sons. Nothing matters to him but his fiery zeal to stamp out Catholicism in this Polish town, and in its stead establish Orthodoxy in the districts surrounding the Cossack lands. His unreasonable fanaticism is keenly felt, as he rides away with his two sons to join the Cossack host. The old mother left behind at home—considered by her husband little better than a chattel in comparison with his designs for religious conquest, voices her despair on their departure in the following lines:

"The mother alone did not sleep. She bent over the pillow of her beloved sons, as they lay side by side; she smoothed with a comb their carelessly tangled locks, and moistened them with her tears. "My sons, my darling sons! what will become of you? What fate awaits you?" she said, and tears stood in the wrinkles which disfigured her once beautiful face. Bulba suddenly awoke, and sprang to his feet. He remembered quite well what he had ordered the night before. "Now, my men, you've slept enough! 'tis time! Water the horses! "Be quick, old woman, get us something to eat; the way is long. The poor old woman, deprived of her last hope, slipped sadly into the hut. Whilst she, with tears, prepared what was needed for breakfast. Bulba gave orders, went to the stable, and selected his best trappings for his children. The scholars were suddenly transformed. Red morocco boots with silver heels took the place of their dirty old ones; trousers wide as the Black Sea, with countless folds and plaits, were kept up by golden girdles from which hung
long slender thongs, with tassels and other tinkling things for pipes. Their jackets of scarlet cloth were girt by flowered sashes into which were thrust engraved Turkish pistols; their swords clanked at their heels. Their faces, already a little sunburnt, seemed to have grown handsomer and whiter; their slight black moustaches now cast a more distinct shadow on this pallor and set off their healthy, youthful complexions. They looked very handsome in their black sheepskin caps, with cloth-of-gold crowns. When their poor mother saw them she could not utter a word, and tears stood in her eyes.

"Now, my lads, all is ready; no delay!" said Bulba at last.

"But we must first of all sit down together in accordance with Christian custom before the journey."53

There was a time in Russian History (1569) when at the signing of the Lublin union between Poland and Lithuania, the Ukraine was also incorporated into Poland. However by 1620 freedom had been won from this domination and the Polish government recognized again the existence of the Greek Orthodox Church in the Ukraine. In the year 1648 Bogdan Khmelnitsky with his combined forces of Cossacks and Crimean Tatars made a decisive effort to free the Ukraine from the Polish domination.

In 1649 a peace treaty was signed whereby Poland recognized the Cossacks as an autonomous army. However the Polish landlords retained their Ukrainian estates. In the year 1654 the Cossacks freed the entire land of the Ukraine from Polish domination. Unfortunately this did not last long:

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"After thirteen years of conflict, which exhausted both sides, an armistice was signed in 1667. Moscow gave up White Russia but kept Smolensk. The Ukraine was divided in two, the right bank (west of the Dnieper) being returned to Poland and the left bank (east of Dnieper) remaining united with Moscow. Poland ceded the city of Kiev (on the right bank) to Moscow for two years, and in 1686 agreed to cede it permanently to Russia."54

These historical incidents may account for some of the bitter feelings nurtured by the Cossacks against the Poles, and such a leader as Taras Bulba is an outstanding never-to-be-forgotten example.

It is interesting to note here, however, that Gogol himself was descended from both Polish and Ukrainian ancestors. It is no wonder that he wrote about the sentiments of his own people with such masterful understanding, since strains of both bloods flowed in his veins.

Returning to the story—eventually Taras' younger son, Andrei, falls in love with a beautiful Polish girl. This is more than the old father can bear. He feels that his younger son, has sacrificed all honour by such an attachment. When the Cossacks at length enter the besieged Polish town, where Old Bulba finds Andrei helping to protect the garrison of his betrothed, he immediately shoots him down as a traitor. He does not spare his own son, any more than he would have spared any one of his

other men guilty of what he considered an unpardonable breach of faith.

At length, both Ostap, his elder son, and Taras himself, meet tragic deaths at the hands of the enraged Poles. But even as Taras is being burned at the stake, he directs his loyal

"Farewell, comrades!" he shouted to them from above; "remember me, and come hither again next spring and make merry in the same fashion! What! cursed Lyakhs, have ye caught me? Think ye there is anything in the world that a Cossack fears? Wait; the time will come when ye shall learn what the orthodox Russian faith is! Already the people scent it far and near. A czar shall rise from Russian soil, and there shall not be a power in the world which shall not submit to him!"

But the fire had already risen from the fagots; it lapped his feet, and the flames spread to the tree... But can any fire, flames or power be found on earth which are capable of overpowering Russian strength? Broad is the river Dniester, and in it are many deep pools, dense reed-beds, clear shallows and little bays; its watery mirror gleams, filled with the melodious plaint of the swan, the proud wild goose glides swiftly over it; and snipe, red-throated ruffs, and other birds are found among the reeds and along the banks. The Cossacks rowed swiftly on in the narrow double-ruddered boats—rowed stoutly, carefully shunning the sand bars, and cleaving the ranks of the birds, which took wing—rowed, and talked of their hetman."

In this last passage of the book there is displayed a loyalty and singleness of purpose, despite the fanaticism, which is seldom found in any literature. A strength which is super-human. What a tragedy such determination could not have flowed into constructive channels!

55 Nikolai V. Gogol, Taras Bulba and Other Tales, Everyman's Library, No. 740, p. 135.
Gogol's magnificent pictures of the steppe-land rival those of Lermontov on the Caucasus. The reader actually feels the tall feather-grass brushing gently on his cheek, as Ostap and Andrei ride over wellbeaten Cossack trails into the still and shadow-filled steppe-land:

"In the evening the whole steppe changed its aspect. All its varied expanse was bathed in the last bright glow of the sun; and as it grew dark gradually, it could be seen how the shadow flitted across it and it became dark green. The mist rose more densely; each flower, each blade of grass, emitted a fragrance as of ambergris, and the whole steppe distilled perfume. Broad bands of rosy gold were streaked across the dark blue heaven, as with a gigantic brush; here and there gleamed, in white tufts, light and transparent clouds; and the freshest, most enchanting of gentle breezes barely stirred the tops of the grass-blades, like sea-waves, and caressed the cheek. The music which had resounded through the day had died away, and given place to another. The striped marmots crept out of their holes, stood erect on their hind legs, and filled the steppe with their whistle. The whirr of the grasshoppers had become more distinctly audible. Sometimes the cry of the swan was heard from some distant lake, ringing through the air like a silver trumpet. The travellers, halting in the midst of the plain, selected a spot for their night encampment, made a fire, and hung over it the kettle in which they cooked their oatmeal; the steam rising and floating aslant in the air. Having supped the Cossacks lay down to sleep, after hobbling their horses and turning them out to graze. They lay down in their gaberdines. The stars of night gazed directly down upon them. They could hear the countless myriads of insects which filled the grass; their rasping, whistling, and chirping, softened by the fresh air, resounded clearly through the night, and lulled the drowsy ear. If one of them rose and stood for a time, the steppe presented itself to him strewn with the sparks of glow-worms. At times the night sky was illuminated in spots by the glare of burning reeds along pools or river-bank; and dark flights of
swans flying to the north were suddenly lit up by the silvery, rose-coloured gleam, till it seemed as though red kerchiefs were floating in the dark heavens.

The travellers proceeded onward without any adventure. They came across no villages. It was ever the same boundless, waving, beautiful steppe. Only at intervals the summits of distant forests shone blue, on one hand, stretching along the banks of the Dnieper. Once only did Taras point out to his sons a small speck far away amongst the grass, saying, "Look, children! yonder gallops a Tatar." The little head with its long moustaches fixed its narrow eyes upon them from afar, its nostrils snuffing the air like a greyhound's, and then disappeared like an antelope on its owner perceiving that the Cossacks were thirteen strong. "And now, children, don't try to overtake the Tatar! You would never catch him to all eternity; he has a horse swifter than my Devil." They galloped along the course of a small stream, called the Tatarka, which falls into the Dnieper; rode into the water and swam with their horses some distance in order to conceal their trail. Then, scrambling out on the bank, they continued their road."

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4. OTHER WORKS

Gogol's minor works and plays may mostly be described as whimsical. Such short stories as "St. John's Eve", "The Nose", "How the Two Ivans Quarrelled", "The Mysterious Portrait", "The Calash", "Memoirs of A Madam", "A May Night" and "Viy" along with his little plays "Marriage", "The Gamblers", "An Official's Morning", "A Lawsuit", and "The Fragment" seem strangely inferior to "Dead Souls" and "Taras Bulba". Most of Gogol's lesser works are saturated in the superstitions of the Ukraine. Gogol was ever watchful of the strange and unusual. He would have been delighted, had some grotesque form appeared to him from another world. In much of his work there is an element of horror, although he seemed ever searching for light and truth, he more often found only darkness and error, which he seemed never to understand to his entire satisfaction. Gogol must live on in the minds of his readers as a Russian realist, who although often beset by a strange despair and the victim of uncanny melancholy and superstition also possessed a loving heart, which was never truly understood by himself or others:

"Gogol was a strange creature, but genius is always strange; it is only your healthy second-rater who seems to the greatful reader to be a wise old friend, nicely developing the reader's own notions of life. Great literature skirts the irrational.

Steady Pushkin, matter-of-fact Tolstoy, restrained Checkhov have all had their moments of irrational insight which simultaneously blurred the sentence and disclosed a secret
meaning worth the sudden focal shift. But with Gogol this shifting is the very basis of his art, so that whenever he tried to write in the round hand of literary tradition and to treat rational ideas in a logical way, he lost all trace of talent. When as in his immortal "The Overcoat", he really let himself go and pottered happily on the brink of his private abyss, he became the greatest artist that Russia has yet produced."

Gogol's best-known play is "The Inspector General". Here again, he satirizes the classes of his time, particularly the official class. This work is considered by some critics the greatest work of its kind in the Russian tongue, or indeed in any other. Even the somewhat tyrannical Nicholas I did not object to its production, and warmly applauded its first performances in the theatres of Moscow and St. Petersburg in 1836. This play, a biting satire on the different classes of Gogol's time, shows their superficialities, their utter lack of sincerity and any genuine standard of ethics whatsoever; when as depicted in the play, a silly youth is able to masquerade as the Inspector General of the district, and not be immediately detected:

"It is difficult to conjecture what pleased Nicholas I in "The Government Inspector". The man who a few years before had red-pencilled the manuscript of Pushkin's "Boris Godunov" with inane remarks suggesting the turning of that tragedy into a novel on the lines of Walter Scott, and generally was as immune to authentic literature as all rulers are (not excepting Frederic the Great or Napoleon) can hardly be suspected of having seen anything

better in Gogol's play than slapstick entertain-
ment. On the other hand a satirical farce (if we imagine for a moment such a delusion in regard to "The Government Inspector") seems unlikely to have attracted the Tsar's priggish and humorless mind. Given that the man had brains—at least the brains of a politician—it would rather detract from their quality to suppose that he so much enjoyed the prospect of having his vassals thoroughly shaken up as to be blind to the dangers of having the man in the street join in the imperial mirth. In fact he is reported to have remarked after the first performance: "Everybody had got his due, I most of all"; and if this report is true (which it probably is not) it would seem that the evolutionary link between criticism of corruption under a certain government and criticism of the government itself must have been apparent to the Tsar's mind."

Both Pushkin and Lermontov were sympathetic toward the revolutionaries, but Gogol in his unusual story, "The Greatcoat", was the first to write in behalf of the poor, downtrodden individual. In this unusual tale Gogol pictures an unfortunate clerk who loses his mind when his greatcoat, which he had saved many years to purchase, is stolen. This story probably will be understood least by our contemporary North American civilization. However, the Russia of Gogol's time included no Salvation Army, no general welfare agencies. With the writing of this story, Gogol is said to have become a recognized member of the realistic school:

"The plot of "The Overcoat" is very simple. A poor little clerk makes a great decision and orders a new overcoat. The coat while in the making becomes the dream of his life. On the very first night that he wears it he is robbed of it on a dark street. He dies of grief and his ghost haunts the city. This is all in the way

of plot, but of course the real plot (as always with Gogol) lies in the style, in the inner structure of this transcendental anecdote. In order to appreciate it at its true worth one must perform a kind of mental somersault so as to get rid of conventional values in literature and follow the author along the dream road of his superhuman imagination. Gogol's world is somewhat related to such conceptions of modern physics as the "Concertina Universe" or the "Explosion Universe"; it is far removed from the comfortable revolving clockwork worlds of the last century. There is a curvature in literary style as there is curvature in space, --but few are the Russian readers who do care to plunge into Gogol's magic chaos head first, with no restraint or regret. But the diver, the seeker for black pearls, the man who prefers the monsters of the deep to the sunshades on the beach, will find in "The Overcoat" shadows linking our state of existence to those other states and modes which we dimly apprehend in our rare moments of irrational perception. The prose of Pushkin is three-dimensional, that of Gogol is four-dimensional, at least. He may be compared to his contemporary, the mathematician Lobachevsky, who blasted Euclid and discovered a century ago many of the theories which Einstein later developed. If parallel lines do not meet it is not because meet they cannot, but because they have other things to do. Gogol's art as disclosed in "The Overcoat" suggests that parallel lines not only may meet, but that they can wriggle and get most extravagantly entangled, just as two pillars reflected in water indulge in the most wobbly contortions if the necessary ripple is there. Gogol's genius is exactly that ripple--two and two make five, if not the square root of five, and it all happens quite naturally in Gogol's world, where neither rational mathematics nor indeed any of our pseudophysical agreements with ourselves can be seriously said to exist."59

In none of his later stories does he display any disposition to return to romanticism. As his writing continued, it became even more realistic. He tried at length in his, "Correspondence with Friends" to change his style, and to depict Christianity as he saw it then; but evidently his genius did not lie in this kind of writing, or his critics were too set in their own prejudices to realize its value. Whatever the cause, this last writing has never been widely read or appreciated. He undoubtedly experienced a change of heart, but could not express this positive way of thinking appealingly after having written many years in a satirical vein.
5. GOGOL'S TRAGIC AND FUTILE SEARCH FOR A LIVING FAITH

After Gogol returned to Russia in 1848 he started writing a second part to "Dead Souls". However at this period of his life he was plagued with a futile search for a living faith and a living God that he could understand. He made one fruitless pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and his bitter quest to find a reasonable answer to the mysteries of God are particularly deserving of honor, and should be remembered by admirers of his genius.

We are given to understand by Gogol's biographers that in February, 1852 just before his death in March of the same year he purposely burned the second and third parts of "Dead Souls" and then lapsed into hysterical weeping and some kind of mental depression, from which he never fully recovered. It does appear at the last that his futile attempt to experience the genuine conversion, which he so earnestly sought, may have deranged his finely-balanced mentality:

"The high post to which Belinski assigned Gogol as "the chief of our literature, the chief among our poets," who "stands in the place left by Pushkin," is proof of the impact which Gogol had made upon Belinski's thought." 60

"On the stage, as in fiction, Gogol's action, historically, was in the direction of realism. This was historically the most important aspect of his work. Nor was the younger generation's general concept of him as a social satirist

60 H.E. Bowman, Vissarion Belinski, Harvard University Press, 1954, p. 82.
entirely unjustified. He did not paint (scarcely knew) the social evils of Russia. But the caricatures he drew were, weirdly and terribly like the reality about him; and the sheer vividness and convincingness of his paintings simply eclipsed the paler truth and irrevocably held the fascinated eye of the reader."61

CHAPTER IV.

REALISM AS ILLUSTRATED IN THE WRITING OF

IVAN SERGEYEVICH TURGENEV

(1818-1883)

1. Brief Sketch of the Life of Turgenev

2. Turgenev the Westerner

3. Turgenev's Realistic Pity of the Serfs as Revealed in "A Sportsman's Sketches"


5. The Narrator Rather Than the Reformer
1. BRIEF SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF TURGENEV

"In days of doubt, in days of oppreive pondering about the destinies of my Motherland—you alone are my sustainer, and support, o great, mighty, truthful, and free Russian language!—If it had not been for you—how is one not to fall into despair at the sight of all that is happening at home?—But it is impossible to believe that such a language was not given to a great people!"

--Ivan Sergeyevich Turgenev

"Ivan Sergeyevich Turgenev was born on October 28, 1818, in Orel. His father, a handsome but impoverished squire who had served in the cavalry, was married to an heiress older than himself. She had had a very unhappy childhood and girlhood and adored her husband, who never loved her. This combined with the control of a large fortune to make of Mme. Turgenev an embittered an intolerable domestic tyrant. Though she was attached to her son, she treated him with exasperating despotism, and with her serfs and servants she was plainly cruel. It was in his mother's house that the future author of "A Sportsman's Sketches" saw serfdom in its least attractive form.

In 1833 Turgenev entered the University of Moscow, but remained there only one year, for in 1834 his mother moved to Petersburg and he went over to the other university. He studied under Pushkin's friend, Professor Pletnev, and had occasion to meet the great poet himself. His first verses were published in Pletnev's, formerly Pushkin's, "Sovremennik" (1838). After taking his degree he went to Berlin to complete his philosophical education at the university that had been the abode and was still the temple of Hegel—the divinity of the young generation of Russian idealists. Several of them, including Stankevich and Granovsky, Turgenev met at Berlin, and henceforward he became the friend and ally of the Westernizers. When in 1841 he returned to Russia he at first intended to devote himself to a university career. As this did not come off, he entered the Civil Service, but there also he remained only two years, and after 1845 abandoned all pursuits except literature. His work at first was chiefly in verse, and in the mid forties he was regarded, chiefly
on the strength of the narrative poem "Parasha" (1843), as one of the principal hopes of the young generation in poetry.

In 1845 Turgenev fell out with his mother, who ceased to give him money, and for the following years, till her death, he had to live the life of a literary Bohemian. On her death he found himself the possessor of a large fortune. (1850)

Meanwhile Turgenev had abandoned verse for prose. In 1847 Nekrasov's "Sovremennik" started the publication of the short stories that were to form "A Sportsman's Sketches". They appeared in book form in 1852, and this, together with the publication, about the same time, of other stories gave Turgenev one of the first places, if not the first, among Russian writers. "A Sportsman's Sketches" was a great social as well as literary event. On the background of the complete silence of those years of reaction, the "Sketches", seemingly harmless if taken one by one, produced a cumulative effect of considerable power. Their consistent presentation of the serf as a being, not only human, but superior in humanity to his masters, made the book a loud protest against the system of serfdom. It is said to have produced a strong impression on the future Emperor Alexander II and caused him the decision to do away with the system. Meanwhile the authorities were alarmed. The censor who had passed the book was ordered to leave the service. Shortly after that an obituary notice of Gogol by Turgenev, written in what seemed to the police a too enthusiastic tone, led to his arrest and banishment to his estate, where he remained eighteen months (1852-53). When he was released he came to Petersburg already head of Petersburg literature, and his judgment and decisions had the force of law.

The first years of Alexander II's reign were the summer of Turgenev's popularity. No one profited more than he from the unanimity of the progressive and reforming enthusiasm that had taken hold of Russian society. He was accepted as its spokesman. In his early sketches and stories he had denounced serfdom; in "Rudin" (1856) he paid homage to the idealism of the elder generation while exposing its inefficiency; in "A Nest of Gentlefolk" (1859) he glorified all that was noble in the old Orthodox ideals of the old gentry; in "On the Eve" (1860) he
attempted to paint the heroic figure of a young girl of the new generation. Dobrolyubov and Chernyshevsky, the leaders of advanced opinion, chose his words for the texts of their journalistic sermons. His art answered to the demands of everyone. It was civic but not "tendentious". It painted life as it was, and chose for its subjects the most burning problems of the day. It was full of truth and, at the same time, of poetry and beauty. It satisfied the Left and Right. It was the mean term, the middle style for which the forties had groped in vain. It avoided in an equal measure the pitfalls of grotesque caricature and of sentimental "Philanthropy". It was perfect. Turgenev was very sensitive to his success, and particularly sensitive to the praise of the young generation and of advanced opinion, whose spokesman he appeared, and aspired to be.

The only thing he had been censured for (or rather, as everyone believed in the photographic veracity of Turgenev's representation of Russia, it was not he, but Russian life, that was found fault with) was that while he had given such a beautiful succession of heroines, he had failed to give a Russian hero; it was noticed that when he had wanted a man action, he had chosen a Bulgarian (Insarov in "On the Eve"). This led the critics to surmise that he believed a Russian hero an impossibility. Now Turgenev decided to make up for this shortcoming and give a real Russian man of action—a hero of the young generation. This he did in Bazarov, the nihilist hero of "Fathers and Sons" (1862). He created him with love and admiration, but the result was unexpected. The radicals were indignant. This, they said, was a caricature and no hero.

This nihilist, with his militant materialism, with his negation of all religious and aesthetic values and his faith in nothing but frogs (the dissection of frogs was the mystical rite of Darwinian naturalism and anti-spiritualism), was a caricature of the young generation drawn to please the reactionaries. The radicals raised a hue and cry against Turgenev, who was proclaimed to have "written himself out". A little later, it is true, a still younger and more extreme section of radicals, in the person of the brilliant young critic Pisarev, reversed the older radicals' verdict, accepted the name of nihilist, and recognized in Bazarov the ideal to be followed. But his belated recognition from the extreme Left did not console Turgenev for the profound wound inflicted on him by the first reception given to Bazarov.
He decided to abandon Russian and Russian literature. He was abroad when "Fathers and Sons" appeared and the campaign against him began. His decision to abandon literature found expression in the fragment of lyrical prose "Enough", where he gave full play to his pessimism and disillusionment. He did not, however, abandon literature, and continued writing to his death. But in by far the greater part of his later work he turned away from contemporary Russia, so distasteful and unresponsive to him, towards the times of his childhood, and old Russia of before the reforms. Most of his work after 1862 is either frankly memoirs, or fiction built out of the material of early experience. He was loath, however, to resign himself to the fate of a writer who had outlived his times. Twice again he attempted to tackle the problems of the day in big works of fiction. In "Smoke" (1867) he gave full vent to his bitterness against all classes of Russian society; and in "Virgin Soil" (1877) he attempted to give a picture of the revolutionary movement of the seventies. But the two novels only emphasized his growing estrangement from living Russia, the former by its impotent bitterness, the latter by its lack of information and of all sense of reality in the treatment of the powerful movement of the seventies. Gradually, however, as party feeling, at least in literature, sank, Turgenev returned into his own (the popularity of his early work had never diminished). The revival of "aesthetics" in the later seventies contributed to a revival of his popularity, and his last visit to Russia in 1880 was a triumphant progress.

In the meantime, especially after he settled in Paris, Turgenev became intimate with French literary circles—with Merimeé, Glaubert, and the young naturalists. His works began to be translated into French and German, and before long his fame became international. He was the first Russian author to win a European reputation. In the literary world of Paris he became an important personality. He was one of the first to discern the talent of Maupassant, and Henry James (who included an essay on Turgenev in a volume of French novelists) and other beginning writers looked up to him as to a master. When he died, Renan, with pardonable lack of information, proclaimed that it was through Turgenev that Russia, so long mute, had at last
become vocal. Turgenev felt much more at home among his French confreres than among his Russian equals (with most of whom, including Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, and Nekrasov, he sooner or later quarreled), and there is a striking difference between the impressions he produced on foreigners and on Russians. Foreigners were always impressed by the grace, charm, and sincerity of his manner. With Russians he was arrogant and vain, and no amount of hero worship could make his Russian visitors blind to these disagreeable characteristics.

Soon after his last visit to Russia Turgenev fell ill. He died on August 22, 1883, in the small commune of Bougival, on the Seine below Paris."

There is no doubt whatsoever that Ivan Sergeyevich Turgenev belonged to the Western camp. He spent most of his mature life abroad, returning to Russia only for brief visits. He visited England quite frequently and is said to have been interested in the United States, and wished he could see that country. He surely felt that one of the factors which had kept Russia back was the fact that scientifically, economically and industrially she was behind her Western neighbours. He would have agreed with Peter I and the modern Soviet Regime that vast scientific and industrial projects are of paramount advantage to progress. However, he would not have sided with such political leaders as Lenin and Stalin. He often voiced the belief that a spiritual quality was necessary in the process of the lives of human beings, although he did not praise Tolstoi's works of the latter period.

"Turgenev had taken a vow to fight against Russian serfdom, and as a professing Westernizer he fully approved the drastic work of Peter the Great, which he called a 'coup d'etat', one of the violent jerks from above which helped to push Russia into the European family of nations. 'The necessity of similar reforms has not ceased', he wrote in his "Literary Recollections". 'History will show what place we are destined to take, up to these times we have followed and are obliged to follow ways (in which the Slavophil gentlemen will not agree with me) other than the more or less organic development of Western nations.' Later on he remarked: 'We do not need now any unusual talents or outstanding minds--neither too large nor too individual--we must reconcile ourselves without disgust to the petty dull tasks and routine of daily life. The feeling of duty, and of patriotism in the genuine sense of that
word, is all that is necessary; we are entering a period of merely useful people—they will be better people; there will probably be many of them—but very few beautiful or charming ones.'

Yet Turgenev, in spite of his effort to see the best in them, did not really feel at home among the useful and rational beings who started to come to their own after the abolition of serfdom in 1861. He certainly could not find in these sober signposts of the future that rich and mellow background of the traditional pre-reform Russia to which he instinctively returned in the majority of his novels and stories. The gardens and parks of the 'noblemen's nests' were being overgrown with weeds, the ancient lime-avenues were cut down for timber, largely owing to the sheer fecklessness of their owners; Turgenev saw that such a mode of life was doomed, but his artistic genius was still irresistibly attracted by it. In this autumnal setting he created the figure of Lavretsky, the enlightened but unlucky landowner, and the devoted self-sacrificing Liza, a lineal descendant of Pushkin's Tatiana.'

Richard Hare, the critic, in making this comment surmises that Turgenev believed wholeheartedly in the emancipation—but also that its necessity must bring about a certain amount of ugliness and discomfort at first, as the result of the magnitude of its upheaval (he could not, of course, have guessed the magnitude of the Bolshevik upheaval in 1917). Hence he clung somewhat to the old ways and modes of life in many of his novels. However Mr. Hare goes on to comment that this was not always so, as "Rudin" and "Fathers and Sons" have their most important character picked from among those of revolutionary and scientific sentiments.

63 Richard Hare, Russian Literature From Pushkin To The Present Day, London, Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1947, pp. 9, 10.
3. TURGENEV'S REALISTIC PITY OF THE SERF AS REVEALED IN "A SPORTSMAN'S SKETCHES"

Ivan Turgenev, was acclaimed by many as one of the earlier reformers in Russia. He was brought up in a most inhibiting and drastic atmosphere. His mother, an heiress of Tatar ancestry, was one of those landowners who actually inflicted cruelty in the way of bodily pain on her unfortunate serfs and servants. The young Turgenev is said to have turned in disgust from this spectacle of his early childhood and youth. He inherited none of his mother's severe tendencies:

"Turgenev recalled how because of some slight misdeed he would be first lectured by his tutor, then whipped, then deprived of his dinner, finally wandering out, hungry and sore, into the park, and 'drinking with a kind of bitter pleasure the salt water which streamed from his eyes down his cheeks into his mouth.' He was given to exaggeration, but it is certain that his mother believed in the rod, and used it readily.

At another time the boy was made to recite a fable of Dmitriev's before the author himself, a venerable old man and a third-rate writer, who was visiting the house. Not content with the role of performer, Ivan assumed that of critic, and remarked to Dmitriev point-blank: 'Your fables are good, but Krylov's are much better.' In recounting the story later Turgenev said: 'My mother got so angry that she flogged me, and thereby fixed in my mind the memory of my first meeting with a Russian writer.'

Dmitriev, like not a few of his mother's friends, belonged to the age of the great Catharine. Indeed, representatives of that formally courteous, suavely cynical period were not infrequently to be seen at Spasskoye, and Ivan was also reminded of it by the ladies and gentlemen whose portraits stared at him from the walls of home. The exquisites and the skeptics of the eighteenth century were as irrelevant to
the Russian scene as a paste buckle to a bast shoe, and they themselves must have known it. This picturesque incongruity of crinolines, powdered wigs, patches, and quizzical eyebrows with coarse native rusticity, impressed itself on the boy indelibly."

As early as 1845 he had fallen out with his mother, chiefly because he objected to the way she mistreated her serfs. Because of this his mother ceased to send him his usual allowance. Turgenev is said, like the great author, Leo Tolstoi, to have contemplated the unfair status of the serfs (these, incidentally, are said to have accounted for over 90% of the population by the beginning of the 19th century) in Russia. He was grateful that he lived to see their emancipation in 1861, although this measure was not carried out effectively. Like, Tolstoi, Turgenev tried to better the condition of the serfs on his own lands to some degree, after he became master in 1850. When he started to write prose seriously in 1838 he chose, as a subject, his observations as a sportsman among the unfortunate serfs. His two volumes "A Sportsman's Sketches", which are certainly a realistic observation of the serfs on his lands, and the surrounding estates, was accepted by his generation with much approbation.

It has been suggested by some of Turgenev's biographers that he thought this problem of serfdom had become too great to be successfully tackled. It had gained huge proportions in

Russia. Like his Tatar mother, it smothered him, hence he fled from it to France and Germany where he lived most of his life, returning only to Russia for short visits. In these countries he spent many hours discussing the problems and philosophies of the day with men of diverse revolutionary ideals such as Bakunin, Chernyshevsky, Prince Kropotkin, and the great literary critic, Belinsky, and many others. Sometimes these debates were exceedingly long and wearisome, and left him feeling tired and worn out. He did not find any satisfactory solution, and in this way was no different from other idealists of his time, who could not seem to impress upon the government, the importance of giving the peasants back their land in fair distribution.

"A Sportsman's Sketches" is divided into sixteen stories. In these tales many pitiful incidents witnessed by Turgenev as he rode through his lands and the surrounding countryside are narrated with great depth of feeling. Not all the tales are of cruelty and hardship, for although these people were in bondage they also found much meaningfulness and happiness in their lives. The tales give the reader an intimate understanding of the relationship between serf and master—the pathetic, and the better side, where masters were neither severe nor cruel, but some even taking personal interest in the welfare of those entrusted to them.

Turgenev's descriptions of nature and the surrounding countryside are somewhat overdone in monotonous details. They do not come spontaneously from his pen like the magic scenes
depicted by Lermontov, Gogol and Chekhov. His more arresting passages are rather his characterizations and his writings which are pointed against evil and injustice.
Turgenev was undoubtedly a master of characterizations. He is a great portrayer of prototypes. That is, he set within his novels certain characters, who are exact replicas of men and women of his time engaged in some special department of knowledge or society. Turgenev's prototypes all have ideas and belong chiefly to men of differing ideologies in schools of philosophy, science and politics. There were many trends of thought in this regard just as there are to-day. The teachings of the Russian Orthodox Church were continuously being questioned at the time when Turgenev began to write seriously. This gave rise to the acceptance of many philosophical explanations, chiefly German, such as those advocated by the philosophers, Hegel and Schelling. Also the sciences of biology, mathematics and physics were for the first time being considered much more earnestly. Especially the ideas of Darwinian evolution were changing the minds of many who had before adhered strictly to the teachings of the Orthodox priest. In politics there were dozens of diverging groups, and Turgenev was the first to coin the word "nihilist", which means--one who genuinely believes in nothing!

Turgenev wrote seven major novels altogether, which are outstanding portrayals of prototypes of his time. He drew from the 19th Century intelligentsia, nobility and peasants for his models. His three most striking works are undoubtedly, "Rudin",

4. "RUDIN", "FATHERS AND SONS" AND "VIRGIN SOIL"
"Fathers and Sons" and "Virgin Soil". There is no doubt that "Rudin" is a character study of the strange revolutionary figure--Michael Bakunin, who was a close friend of Turgenev's during his stay in Paris. Bakunin was one of those persons, who held an unusually spell-binding charm on the minds of many of his acquaintances. In time he either completely dominated their thinking or they turned from his domineering mentality in disgust. The character, Rudin, is that of a "superfluous man"--one who spends his time simply roving from one country home to another, living on the hospitality of others while expounding to them his fantastic philosophy. Rudin is perhaps a gentler soul than Bakunin, who became a revolutionary of the most terroristic type in his latter years. Rudin goes on expounding his endless theories instead of making something out of his life. When the daughter of his current hostess is foolish enough to fall in love with him, he does not run off with her, and here shows better judgement than the young woman. He realizes his shortcomings and that he is only capable of inferior oratory, so concludes that he does not have the ability to maintain a family. Turgenev depicts this character with remarkable realism and understanding. The reader feels the futility of such a mind, which is totally absorbed in philosophies and abstract thinking. Bakunin, of course, developed into a man of dangerous action. This latter quality is not felt strongly in Rudin. Only in this way does he depart from the original pattern. However, his useless verbosity and theorizing, his wish to dominate all
around him and his determination to live a life of utter uselessness absorbs his entire strength and mentality, hence he fails to become a useful member of society. The reader comes to the conclusion that all who are spared his company and from listening to the monotony of his unending ravings are fortunate.

Turgenev was undoubtedly hoping that the character depicted in his book would be one that would cause his readers to ponder carefully before they allowed themselves to be swept away by the influence of such a mentality. That there must be a sound application to all theories or they are valueless, is the eternal message of this unusual novel.

In "Fathers and Sons" Turgenev again depicts an extraordinary prototype of his time. In the hero of the book, Bazarov, is found the man who is entirely absorbed in the study of biological science. What was known in those times as "the cult of Darwin", or the dissecting of frogs, held his entire attention. Skilfully Turgenev paints him in a rather unfavourable light—he has no faith in God—as one given over to atheism. The clash between the older order and the younger generation is felt keenly in this penetrating novel. Nikolai Kirsanov, the father, does not wholly approve of his son's or Bazarov's ways, once he gets to know them more intimately, when his son returns from the University. This book can be read with appreciation in the 20th century. There is the argument of the eager young scientist, and the distrust of such arguments by the previous generation.
However the older generation, although in many instances God-fearing, cannot answer all the questions of the Bazarovs satisfactorily. The solution of this controversy is still to be proved to the satisfaction of many serious thinkers. Of "Fathers and Sons" the critic, Thomas Seltzer, has said:

"Turgenev's art attained its climax in the unfolding of this theme. The unity of structure, the intense personal interest sustained throughout "Fathers and Sons" seems almost miraculous in a work in which the ideas loom so big that, handled by a less skilful artist, they would have drowned all interest in the characters. Turgenev succeeded not only in preserving the human interest, but in creating a character that must be pronounced one of the most striking in fiction. "When I meet a man", says Basarow, "who can hold his own beside me, then I'll change my opinion of myself."

In "Virgin Soil" the eager young revolutionaries come plainly into view, and not in a bad light. These young people are serious about the injustices of their time, and are not theoretical dictators like Rudin. Unfortunately the young populist, Nezhdanov, abandons his ideals and no longer cares for the woman he loved. Because he cannot come to a satisfactory understanding with himself he ends his life. Realism is felt strongly in this character who suddenly comes face to face with changes in his mind and heart. However the transition is all too overbearing and it is unfortunate that the ending is tragic. The novel depicts the times about which it was written very well, overwhelming changes were coming about in the minds and hearts of the populace,

who could no longer accept the old status quo. The strains of
the young energetic revolutionaries are impressively sounded in
this work. It is regrettable that many of them eventually
succumbed to the doctrines of Karl Marx. It is still hoped
that a broader horizon may yet be obtained by their descendants.
5. THE NARRATOR RATHER THAN THE REFORMER

Although Turgenev has been classed advantageously along with the reformers, he seemed to possess more the temperament of the successful narrator and describer of prototypes than that of the man of action. He exhorts people indirectly through his many characterizations, and he has given a realistic picture of serfdom, which was an institution to be deplored by all humane and deep-thinking individuals.

In "A Sportsman's Sketches" is glimpsed the true and sympathetic character which was Turgenev's, but we feel also that apathy which is also expressed in some of his writings about the landlords and the intelligentsia not being able to come to any solution whatsoever about the gigantic problems of their times. There is no doubt that Turgenev wrote hoping to alleviate the sufferings of those he portrayed, and he may have actually had some influence on the political policy of Alexander II.

It is interesting to consider the remarks of the great Russian literary critic, Vissarion Belinski, on Turgenev after describing Turgenev's early poem "Parasha" as one of "unusual poetic talent" Herbert Bowman has commented:

"Between this praise of Turgenev's first work and his last critical review, Belinski continued to discuss, for the most part with lively approval, all of Turgenev's writings as they appeared. It was inevitable that the critic of the new "realism" would find in "A Sportsman's Sketches" (Zapiski Okhotnika),
many admirable qualities: "accurate observation; deep thought, called up from the secret places of Russian life; a fine and elegant irony, beneath which so much feeling is concealed—all this shows that the author, besides having a creative gift, is a son of our time, who bears in his breast all its sorrows and questions." 66

CHAPTER V

REALISM AS ILLUSTRATED IN THE WRITING OF
FEODOR MIKHAYLOVICH DOSTOIEVSKY
(1821-1881)

1. Brief Sketch of the Life of Dostoievsky
2. Dostoievsky—A Realist from His Earliest Works
3. Consideration of His Greatest Works—"The Possessed", "Brothers Karamazov" and "Crime and Punishment"
4. Dostoievsky's Later Ideas on Orthodoxy and Slavophilism

(a) 1. Early Church History

2. Early Czars Who Prayed Hours but Failed in Their Highest Purpose

3. A Church Disrupted During the Reigns of Peter I (1689-1725) and Catharine II (1762-1796)

4. The Orthodox Church of the 19th Century with Which Dostoievsky Could Find No Flaw

(b) Slavophilism—To Dostoievsky—The Orthodox Church Triumphant and the Slavs a People Apart From Europe

5. (a) Dostoievsky's Short Stories

(b) His Last Tribute to Realism—The Address on Pushkin (1880)
1. BRIEF SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF DOSTOIEVSKY

"It is alleged that the Russian people is ignorant of the Gospels, and even the Commandments, which are the very foundation of our faith. Indeed, this is so, but the Russian people knows Christ and bears Him in its heart through all time."

—Feodor Mikhaylovich Dostoeievsky

"Fedor Mikhaylovich Dostoeievsky was born October 30, 1821, in Moscow, where his father was a doctor at a big public hospital. The Dostoeievskys were a family of southwestern (Volynian) origin, while Dostoeievsky's mother was the daughter of a Moscow merchant; so he united Ukrainian and Muscovite blood. Very early Fedor and his elder brother Michael (afterwards his associate in journalism) developed a passion for reading, and Dostoeievsky's cult of Pushkin dates also from very early. The brothers studied at a private school in Moscow, whence in 1837 Fedor went to Petersburg, to the Military Engineers' School. He remained there for four years, not very deeply interested in engineering but much more in literature and reading. In 1841 he obtained a commission but continued his studies at the school for another year, after which he received a post in the engineering department. In return for his five years at school he was obliged to serve two years in the army. He did not remain in the service any longer than was obligatory but resigned his commission in 1844. Dostoeievsky was not penniless, his father having left a small fortune, but he was impractical and improvident and thus often in financial difficulties. On leaving the service he decided to devote himself to literature and in the winter of 1844-45 wrote "Poor Folk". Grigorovich, a beginning novelist of the new school, advised him to take the novel to Nekrasov, who was then planning the publication of a literary miscellany. On reading it Nekrasov was overwhelmed with admiration and took it to Belinsky. "A new Gogol has arisen!" he exclaimed, breaking into the critic's room. "Gogols grow like mushrooms in your imagination," Belinsky replied, but took and read the novel and was impressed with it as Nekrasov had been. A meeting was arranged between Dostoeievsky and Belinsky, and the latter poured out to the young novelist all his enthusiasm exclaiming: "Do you yourself understand what you have written?" Dostoeievsky, remembering the whole business thirty years later, said that this was the happiest day of his life. "Poor Folk" appeared
in January 1846 in Nekrasov's Petersburg Miscellany. It was rapturously revised by Belinsky and by other critics friendly to the new school and received with great favor by the public. His second novel, "The Double", (1846), had a much cooler reception. His works continued appearing but met with little approval. He was a member of the socialist circle of Petrashevsky, who gathered to read Fourier, to talk of socialism, and to criticize the existing conditions. The reaction that followed the Revolution of 1848 was fatal to the Petrashevskians: In April 1849 they were arrested. Dostoyevsky was confined in the Peter and Paul Fortress for eight months while a court-martial was deciding on the fate of the "conspirators". He was sentenced to eight years' penal servitude. The sentence was commuted by the Emperor to four years, after which he was to serve as a private soldier. But instead of simply communicating the sentence to the prisoners, the authorities enacted a wantonly cruel tragicomedy: a sentence of death was read out to them and preparations were made for shooting them. All the prisoners naturally took the death sentence quite seriously. One of them went mad. Dostoyevsky never forgot the day; he remembers it twice in his writings—in "The Idiot" and in "An Author's Diary" for 1873. This took place in December 22, 1849. Two days later Dostoyevsky was taken off to Siberia, where he was to serve his term. For nine years he drops out of literature.

For his own sake it is convenient to regard the young Dostoyevsky as a different writer from the author of his later novels; a lesser writer, no doubt, but not a minor one, a writer with a marked originality and an important place among his contemporaries. The principal feature that distinguished him is his particularly close connection with Gogol. Like Gogol, he concentrated on style. His is as tense and saturated as Gogol's, if not as unerringly right. Like the other realists, he seeks, in "Poor Folk", to transcend Gogol's purely satirical naturalism by infusing it with elements of sympathy and human emotion. But while the others sought to solve the problem by adopting a middle way between the extremes of the grotesque and of the sentimental Dostoyevsky in a much more truly Gogolian spirit, and continuing, as it were, the tradition of "The Great-coat", sought to combine extreme grotesque naturalism with intense sentiment; without losing their individuality in a golden mean, the two elements are fused together. "Poor Folk" is the acme of the "philanthropic" literature
of the forties, and has a foretaste of the wracking vision of pity that are such a lurid feature of the Dostoyevsky of the great novels.

On completing his term he was transferred as a private soldier to an infantry battalion garrisoned at Semipalatinsk. In October 1856 his commission was restored to him. He was now free to write and receive letters and to resume his literary work. In 1857, while staying at Kuznetsky, he married the widow Isayeva. This first marriage was not a happy one. He remained in Siberia till 1859. During these five years he wrote, besides some shorter stories, the novel "The Manor of Stepanchilovo", which appeared in 1859, and began "Memoirs from the House of Death". In 1859 he was allowed to return to European Russia. Later in the same year he was finally amnestied and came to Petersburg.

He arrived in the midst of the great reform movement and was immediately sucked into the journalistic whirlpool. Together with his brother Michael he started the review Vremya (The Time), which began appearing in January 1861. In the first two years he contributed to a review a novel, "The Humiliated and Insulted", and "The House of Death", besides a great number of articles. Though the position that the Dostoyevskys took up fitted in with no part, their review was a success. What they stood for was a sort of mystical populism that did not want to make the people happy along Western and progressive lines, but to assimilate the ideas of the people. In 1863, like a bolt from the blue, came the suppression of Vremya for an article on the Polish question by Strakhov, which had been, quite literally, misread by the censorship. The misunderstanding was cleared up before long, and the Dostoyevskys were allowed to resume their review in January 1864 under the new name "The Epoch", but the financial damage caused them by the suppression were incalculable. For eight years Dostoyevsky was unable to free himself from them.

"The Epoch" began under the worst auspices. The action of the authorities prevented it from being advertised in due time, and it never succeeded in recovering the good will of the subscribers of Vremya. Soon after it was started, Dostoyevsky's wife and almost simultaneously, Michael Dostoyevsky died. Dostoyevsky found himself alone, and with the whole family of his brother to provide for. After fifteen months of hero-
ical and hectic labor he gave in, recognizing that "The Epoch" could not be saved. The review was closed.

To meet his enormous liabilities he set down to work at his great novels. In 1865-6 he wrote "Crime and Punishment". He sold the copyright of all his works for the ludicrous sum of three thousand rubles to the publisher Stellovsky. The contract stipulated that besides all previously published work Dostoyevsky was to deliver to Stellovsky by November 1866 a full-length unpublished novel. To meet this obligation he began writing "The Gambler", and, to be able to finish in time, he engaged a shorthand secretary, Anna Grigorievna Snitkin. Owing to her efficient help, "The Gambler" was delivered in time. A few months later he married his secretary (February 1867).

When they returned to Petersburg the Dostoyevskys, though not at first free from all difficulties, began to have better luck. The publication at their own expense, of "The Possessed" (1837) was a success. In the same year Dostoyevsky became editor of Prince V. Meschersky's "The Citizen". This gave him a settled income. The high-water mark of his popularity was reached in the year preceding his death, when "The Brothers Karamazov" appeared. The culmination was his famous address on the occasion of the unveiling of the Pushkin memorial in Moscow, delivered on June 8, 1880. The address evoked an enthusiasm that had no precedents in Russian literary history. The following winter he fell ill, and, on January 28, 1881 he died."67

2. DOSTOIEVSKY—A REALIST FROM HIS EARLIEST WORKS

It is astounding how many volumes, the great realistic author, Dostoievsky, wrote altogether. Between the years 1846-1880 at least thirty-two volumes were published. All show the same keen observations of life, his revolutionary sentiments, his forever probing into the reasons for extreme poverty, mental retardation, and particularly mental illness, and degeneracy of different kinds often resulting in crime. Dostoievsky laboured unceasingly to penetrate the extraordinary complexes of the human mind, going so far as to try to uncover the very roots of crime. Like Gogol, he was inclined to be too critically observant, and usually emphasized the negative and strange traits of persons, rather than their positive and nobler characteristics. He tried however to describe people as he believed them to actually be. Dostoievsky did not emerge from romantic or classical ideals in writing, but wrote realistically from his first book, "Poor Folk", to the end of his life:

"Dostoyevsky's realism is an inheritance from his normanised ancestors. All writers of Norman blood are distinguished by their profound realism." 68

Nekrasov exclaimed on reading, "Poor Folk", that a new Gogol had arisen. This first story also brought encouraging comment from

68 Aimee Dostoyevsky, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1922, p. 13. (Dostoyevsky's daughter in this biography of her father claims that the Dostoyevsky family was descended from Lithuanian stock, which she believes to have been originally Norman.)
the famous critic, Belinski. Gogol's works, however, are not so grim. He did not experience life in a political prison camp, as Dostoievsky had from the years 1849-53.

"Poor Folk", written in 1845 was the first work of Dostoievsky to bring him to the attention of the reading public. In this book he raises his voice on behalf of the oppressed. It exposed the deplorable conditions of the down-trodden, underfed and illiterate. "Poor Folk" revealed the genius of Dostoievsky as a writer, as a master of clever repartee and candid descriptions. He, like Gogol, saw very deeply into human frailties, and with a somewhat satirical turn. Dostoievsky relates bluntly many grim situations that existed in his time, such as the experiences of persons, who through sheer poverty had sunk far below decent living conditions. Persons, who could not get a fresh start are described with understanding and poignancy. Many readers complain that Dostoievsky's writings are depressing, because so much of it centers around degeneracy. In this modern age Dostoievsky would have made a competent psychiatrist. His father was a medical doctor, and the disposition to enquire into the reasons for misery, ill-health, poverty, insanity and crime, which is at the roots of his most prolific writing may have resulted from many conversations with his father regarding his medical practice, and scientific knowledge. Some of his shorter works are amusing. These were written chiefly to sell, as Dostoievsky had soon squandered a small fortune, left him by his father, and is said not to have been a practical man in his business affairs. He seemed to always have had to endure a certain
amount of poverty after his inheritance dwindled. This was especially true after his imprisonment in Siberia, and continued until almost the end of his life, when at long last, he was established as one of the great literary lights of his time.
3. CONSIDERATION OF DOSTOIEVSKY'S GREATEST WORKS--

"THE POSSESSED", "BROTHERS KARAMASOV" AND

"CRIME AND PUNISHMENT"

"The Possessed", written by Dostoevsky in 1870-72, is a masterpiece, describing with great accuracy and poignancy the events of the pre-revolutionary period. Its plot is centered chiefly around the intelligentsia. Varvara Petrovna, a widow of a Czarist general, typifies well the doubts and bewilderments of her generation, and those of her son's which directly followed. Her keeping of Stepan Trofimovitch, a flabby and irresolute man, as a sort of pet to wait upon her, was not uncommon, but typical of a type of Russian life at that time, based on a somewhat Goncharovian philosophy. Stepan takes to living in his dressing gown, does not even call the maid to dust out his little house, indicating he had virtually sunk into a kind of "Oblomovism", which is eventually his undoing, but more typical of 18th than 19th Century customs. The fact that Varvara never really forgave him on two occasions is a delicious piece of Dostoevsky's own special kind of infectious humor. On one occasion it was the fact that he allowed a bold "Hurrah" to escape from his lips before one of Varvara's special friends—a baron—when it was declared that the end of serfdom was certainly not very far off:

"When the baron positively asserted the absolute truth of the rumours of the great reform, which were then only just beginning to be heard, Stepan Trofimovitch could not contain himself, and suddenly shouted "Hurrah!" and even made some gesticulation indicative
of delight. His ejaculation was not over-loud and quite polite, his delight was even perhaps premeditated, and his gesture purposely studied before the looking-glass half an hour before tea. But something must have been amiss with it, for the baron permitted himself a faint smile, though he, at once, with extraordinary courtesy, put in a phrase concerning the universal and befitting emotion of all Russian hearts in view of the great event. Shortly afterwards he took his leave and at parting did not forget to hold out two fingers to Stepan Trofimovitch. On returning to the drawing-room Varvara Petrovna was at first silent for two or three minutes, and seemed to be looking for something on the table. Then she turned to Stepan Trofimovitch, and with pale face and flashing eyes she hissed in a whisper:

"I shall never forgive you for that!" 69

The other occasion had been before this incident shortly after the death of Varvara's husband and seemed to indicate that she thought perhaps Stepan was growing fond of her, as Dostoievsky assures us that as the result of meetings between Varvara and Stepan on warm May nights in the arbour the conversation sometimes reached a height of poetic sublimity!

"He (Stepan) had only just gone in, and in restless hesitation taken a cigar and not having yet lighted it, was standing weary and motionless before the open window, gazing at the light feathery white clouds gliding around the bright moon, when suddenly a faint rustle made him start and turn around. Varvara Petrovna, who he had left only four minutes earlier, was standing before him again. Her yellow face was almost blue. Her lips were pressed tightly together and twitching at the corners. For ten full seconds she looked him in the eyes in silence with a firm relentless gaze, and suddenly whispered rapidly:

"I shall never forgive you for this!" 70


70 Ibid., p. 15.
The term "Varvara Petrovna" became at length a word coined by the Russians of Dostoevsky's time to designate the type of woman portrayed in this novel—the imperious domineering and overbearing matron. "The Possessed", a remarkably realistic novel shows the trend of thought of the peoples of the intelligentsia as expressed explicitly in the rather lesser gentry. Even Varvara, had decided to proclaim herself a Nihilist, so it is easy to understand that Orthodoxy and other trends of Christian thought were losing their hold, and indeed had practically no support. Strange cults such as Nihilism, Marxism, Socialism, (the beginnings of the two Socialistic parties in Russia—the Revolutionary Socialists and the Social Democrats, the latter eventually becoming the Bolshevik Party), came into being in the newly formed Dumas of Nicholas II (1894-1917), after the 1905 Revolt. The Revolutionary trends as witnessed in the Provisional Government of 1917 were also gaining influence at this time.

In "The Possessed", there lurks a feeling of uncertainty in the minds of the principal characters. They do not know just which "ism" or cult to adopt. Their minds have become befuddled. The chief characters—the hero—Stavrogin, Kirilov, Shatov, Shigalov and others actually belong to an underground revolutionary group. Here Dostoevsky is reminiscing about his own grim experiences and the consequences which he endured from belonging to such an assembly in 1849.
In considering a few of the prominent characters of the book, there is found, Shatov, a kindly Russian soul seeking truth. He does not realize how corrupt some of his comrades have grown, and that his life is actually in danger when among them:

"The idea of the Russian Christ that Shatov proclaims in "The Possessed" is reasserted in the Diary: "I believe in Russia... I believe in her orthodoxy. One cannot have faith in the one without having faith in the other."71

However Shigalov, represents a sinister type, one who is an unrepentant, devilish kind of man. His eventual hounding to death, of the weaker character, Kirilov, is a blood-thirsty and horrible deed. He is also eventually responsible for Shatov's murder. Dostoievsky was realistic enough here, because many political bosses of the early Leninist regime were men with propensities such as Shigalov's, who was an insatiable fanatic in pursuit of his own particular kind of political intolerance. The character, Shigalov, is presented so realistically in Dostoievsky's book, that the term "Shigalovism" became at length a slang expression, with a definite meaning. At length Shigalov became afraid lest he be betrayed to the authorities, hence he ran away, and tried desperately to keep in hiding even at the expense of taking the life of the unfortunate Shatov, who became the last victim of his intolerant fanaticism.

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The suicide of the most important character, Stavroggin, the son of Varvara Petrovna, is not pleasant to contemplate, but realistic enough, since he is described as one who had been corrupt from his youth. Certainly in this sense his end is realistic. Such unfortunate persons more often than not experience a miserable fate.

This unusual novel gives, better than any historical document, a picture of immediate pre-revolutionary Russia. Its characters are representative portrayals of persons whom Dostoievsky knew. The circle described is based on facts:

"Every one of these five champions had formed this first group in the fervent conviction that their quintet was only one of hundreds and thousands of similar groups scattered all over Russia, and that they all depended on some immense central but secret power, which in its turn was intimately connected with the revolutionary movement all over Europe. But I regret to say that even at that time there was beginning to be dissension among them. Though they had ever since the spring been expecting Pyotr Verhovensky, whose coming had been heralded first by Tolkatchenko and then by the arrival of Shigalov, though they had expected extraordinary miracles from him, and though they had responded to his first summons without the slightest criticism, yet they had no sooner formed the quintet than they all somehow seemed to feel insulted; and I really believe it was owing to the promptitude with which they consented to join. They had joined, of course, from a not ignoble feeling of shame, for fear people might say afterwards that they had not dared to join; still they felt Pyotr Verhovensky ought to have appreciated their heroism and have rewarded it by telling them some really important bits of news at least. But Verhovensky was not at all inclined to satisfy their legitimate curiosity, and told them nothing but what was necessary; he treated them in general with great sternness and even rather casually. This was positively irritating, and Comrade Shigalov was al-
ready egging the others on to insist on his "explaining himself," though, of course, not at Virginsky's, where so many outsiders were present." 72

The aristocracy was not represented among them, although such women as Varvara Petrovna and Julia Mikhailovna, would have considered themselves paragons of the best society; even though Varvara's salon did not meet with much success in St. Petersburg, because she had neither the needed assets nor the intellect for such a venture. Anna Pavlova of Tolstoi's "War and Peace" had such facilities at her command. Varvara, after this disappointment, returned to her country dwelling, and spent the rest of her days there foisting her ideas on Stepan (until he at length gave up the quest and died), and the surrounding countryside, where for some reason the simple country folk thought they owed her homage. Her horror on learning of her son's suicide is the climax of the book. Certainly her Nihilism brought her no comfort in this overwhelming tragedy. She appears most pitiable in her extreme grief. She and indeed all the characters of the book illustrate the dreadful uncertainties of existence, which haunted the lives of all persons in Russia just before the Revolution. The Old Regime was fast crumbling, but those who wished to maintain it could not find the correct solution to uphold the old traditions. The various inequalities, although the serfs were theoretically emancipated after 1861, still persisted.

Hence there came about many cults above and under ground, that had as followers many sincere seekers of truth such as Shatov and Kirilov. However in larger numbers there were blood-thirsty, reckless characters, such as Varvara's son and Shigalov. "The Possessed" is not a work of exaggeration, rather an accurate and comprehensive statement of the prevailing ideas, under-currents and ideals of society in general in Russia immediately preceding the revolution.

"Brothers Karamazov", is considered by most critics to be Dostoievsky's greatest masterpiece. However it is not so realistically portrayed as "The Possessed". In "Brothers Karamazov" Dostoievsky tends to paint a more horrible and tragic picture than really existed among the majority of the people of pre-revolutionary Russia. In this respect this novel falls short of "The Possessed", in the light of realistic writing. It has been described, as an attempt to sum up all of Dostoievsky's mature ideals—religious, political, economic and social. The three brothers—Alyosha, Ivan and Dmitri Karamazov portray three distinct and representative individuals. Alyosha is the most spiritual of the three. That his soul is saved at last the reader feels assured, and his love for Lisa remained pure. Ivan could not reconcile the good and evil traits in his nature. At length, the evil triumphed. Dmitri is depicted as being between these two extremes. He wanted very much to live a good and glorious life, but did not have the strength of character to put these ideals into practice. In the characters of the three
brothers Dostoievsky attempts to describe what he considers to be three representative types of men of his time; firstly the one seeking spiritual truth, secondly the dominant and sensual, and thirdly the moderate, who sought the middle of the road, but because of his innate weakness attained no better life than his companions, who were perpetrators of wickedness. The vileness and the many human frailties of the elder Karamazov are probably exaggerated. There are few human beings surely so depraved as he is depicted.

The most outstanding part of this book, and the part most widely known, is the story which appears on page 292—"The Grand Inquisitor's Tale." This tale is an illustration of Dostoievsky's religious criticism. It is given to illustrate what Dostoievsky thought would have been the reception meted to Christ had he appeared in medieval Spain. Dostoievsky feels He would have been immediately cast into prison and there received as unfair a trial as was waged against Him by Pilate and the Rabbis. Christ's amazing trial given Him in 15th Century Spain is written with great spiritual power and beauty. The only part that is disconcerting, is that the reader knows Dostoievsky thinks Christ could never have suffered such an indignity in the precincts of Orthodoxy at the same period of history. He forgets about Avvakum's infamous martyrdom a century later!

It is interesting to note that "The Grand Inquisitor's Tale" also had a profound effect upon the mind of the great Russian
philosopher Nicholas Berdyaev. He felt that there he glimpsed more clearly, than elsewhere, the true image of Christ Jesus—His greatness, compassion, and suffering in an inhuman and evil world. This particular story in its spiritual content seems to have been of infinite blessing to Berdyaev. He came to believe at length that Dostoievsky was one of the few persons of his time who sensed the oncoming gigantic upheaval which took place in Russia in 1917. Both he and Dostoievsky, before his exile, were in sympathy with the Revolution, but Berdyaev, because he lived to see it actually happen, was forced to flee from the early Bolsheviks rather than renounce his Christian faith.

Referring to Dostoievsky, Berdyaev says:

"It was given to him to reveal the struggle in man between the "God-man" and the "man-god", between Christ and Antichrist, a conflict unknown to preceding ages, when wickedness was seen in only its most elementary and simple forms. To-day the soul of man no longer rests upon secure foundations, everything around him is unsteady and contradictory, he lives in an atmosphere of illusion and falsehood under a ceaseless threat of change. Evil comes forward under an appearance of good, and he is deceived; the faces of Christ and of Antichrist, of man become god and God become man, are interchangeable."73

"Crime and Punishment" written in 1865, is one of Dostoievsky's best known works. In it he tries, as ever, to search into the hidden motives for crime. The principal character, Raskolnikov, commits the vicious crime of murdering two old spinsters for their bag of money. He intends with this money

to finish his education, and talks himself into believing that this motive is legitimate grounds for committing the crime. However, like most criminal, he does not carry out the plan which his subconscious mind presents to his conscious mind in the way of justification. Raskolnikov, however, is not the most hardened kind of criminal, and after the infamous murder has been committed, his conscience is so tortured, that instead of going ahead with his education with the money thus obtained, he decides to give himself up to the authorities, and make a confession of his crime, which results in him receiving a heavy sentence to remote Siberia.

He is accompanied there by the woman he made his companion, and there Dostoievsky portrays him as finding through much hardship and privation, salvation at last. Just how close Dostoievsky comes to absolute truth in this tale is hard to estimate, but the struggle in the mind of the murderer is most realistic, and it is a book in which much careful and thoughtful study pertaining to the criminal instincts and the psychological impulses behind their desires, is given attempted rational explanation. A book which should be read by all persons who are interested either in criminology or in psychiatry.

It is unfortunate that the most important character in this story is given the name—Raskolnikov—but perhaps Dostoievsky is having a remonstrance with the old Raskolnik group, who were the remnant of Avvakum's followers known as Old Believers. This, no doubt, was done to boost 19th Century Orthodoxy in contrast.
Although this character is supposed to find eventual forgiveness and expiation for his crime, his name nevertheless, in the role of a cold-blooded murderer is continually associated with his crime more than with his redemption. This probably was the way Dostoievsky wanted it, although he may not have admitted such a motive even to himself. Unlike the author, Leo Tolstoi, who could quite readily see the glaring inadequacies of the Orthodoxy of his time, Dostoievsky chose to exalt it at the expense of all other demoninations and cults.

The group—the Raskolniki, which separated itself from the Church in the 17th Century under the leadership of Archpriest Avvakum, from historical accounts, unlike Dostoevsky's character bearing its name, was perhaps the closest of all to spiritual truth. But it was so savagely put down by both the Patriarch, and Church Council, and not upheld by the Czar as it should have been, with the result that in the 19th Century its torch was all but extinguished.
4. DOSTOIEVSKY'S LATER IDEAS ON ORTHODOXY AND SLAVOPHILISM

(a) 1. Early Church History

In studying the character and writings of Dostoeievsky, it is interesting to note his beliefs about the church of his time and some of the other trends of thought current in the mind of the populace which he knew.

In tracing the history of the Orthodox Church consideration must be given to the fact, that this church was brought to the South Slavs through the Greek Orthodox monks, who formulated their alphabet in the 9th Century—SS. Cyril and Methodius; and to the East Slavs chiefly through the Christian Princess Olga after her conversion in Constantinople in 957, and continued through her grandson, Vladimir I, who made Greek Orthodoxy the state religion of the Kievan Kingdom in 989. During the subsequent years this faith took strong root among the Eastern and Southern Slavs. Even the Tatar invasion affected the church but little, as the Tatars with all their devastation and cruelty for some inexplicable reason left the church alone. One of the sons of Khan Batu (1237-46) is said to have become a Christian; but certainly Christianity was not ever adopted resolutely or devoutly among the Mongols. Shamanism, Buddhism, and Islam were the chief religions among this people. Some of their descendants are now thought to be found chiefly interspersed throughout the Moslems of the Uzbek, Turkic and Kasakh S.S. Rs, also among the Bashkirs and other Siberian tribes. Among the peoples of the
Caucasus and Crimea are also believed to be remnants of the old tatars who have survived. After the expulsion of the Tatar Rule—approximately 1480—The Greek Orthodox Church again became the state religion of the new Nevski Muscovy Dynasty. Its teaching even became more dominant among the lives of the people of this new regime, since Constantinople had fallen to the Turks in 1453, and in 1550 Moscow became officially the Mother Church of Greek Orthodoxy, or Russian Orthodoxy as it then became more generally to be known:

Referring to the year 1444—"Nine years later Constantinople was stormed by the Turks. The Byzantine Empire was overthrown and the Cathedral of St. Sophia turned into a mosque. The Turks, however, did not destroy the Greek church as an institution and permitted a new patriarch to be elected. The church union was now repudiated and the Greeks returned to Orthodoxy. The Russians had no intention of breaking with their mother church in Constantinople but at the same time they now considered the church schismatic. They waited vainly for several years for the restoration of Orthodoxy in Byzantium. Finally Basil II convoked a council of Russian bishops to elect a new metropolitan. Bishop Iona, a wise old prelate, thus became the first head of an autonomous Russian church (1448). This act was not meant, however, as a definite separation from Constantinople. It was considered an emergency measure, and it was explained that when Orthodoxy was restored in Byzantium the patriarch's blessings would again be sought for future candidates to the see of Moscow. Orthodoxy was restored in Constantinople in 1453 but under political conditions which made it psychologically difficult for the Russians to subordinate their church to the patriarch once more since that patriarch's see was in the camp of infidels. Thus the Russian church became self-governing through the course of events and not as a result of any deliberate opposition of the patriarch."\(^74\)

The first Romanov Czar, Michael I, elected by the people in 1613, was the son of a Bishop of this church. He and his predecessors then continued to uphold Orthodoxy as the state church of Holy Russia in their subsequent reigns, as had the Muscovy and Kievan Dynasties before them.
2. Early Czars Who Prayed Hours But Failed In Their Highest Purpose

All went comparatively well with the Church until the reign of Czar Alexis (1645-76). In his reign the conflict or schism within the church, came prominently into being. This 17th Century schism began as the result of the assigning of the Patriarchate to the man, Nikon, who had become Metropolitan of Novgorod in 1648, and Patriarch in 1652. Czar Alexis, is purported to have been a pious Czar, one who spent hours in prayer, but he did not seem to have the resolve or spiritual understanding to manage the stormy affairs of the Church in his time. He merely kept out of all the bickering, and in time completely fell out with, and became entirely estranged from Patriarch Nikon, but did not appoint a competent man as his successor. Nikon is accused of allowing the re-editing of the Holy books to be inaccurately and carelessly carried out, after the deaths of Maxim the Grec and Abbot Dionysius, who had started this Holy project with resolute purpose and careful preparation. On the other side, opposed to Nikon and his methods, was the Archpriest Avvakum, who has been rightly described by many historians as a man of "vast spiritual powers". There seems to be no doubt whatsoever of Avvakum's superiority in conducting the affairs of the Church. This is the opinion of all competent writers, who have commented on this particular stage of Church History in Russia. It would seem also from accounts, that the roots of the schism went much deeper than just the re-editing of the prayer books. It would appear from
careful study, that a worldly clique had gained power within
the precincts of the Church at this time, and knew that Nikon
was not a strong enough man to oppose them. The Church Council
which met in Moscow in 1666, however, decided to condemn Nikon,
and reduce him to a monk of lowest order, but it also decided to
uphold his so-called reforms, which remained in force in the
Russian Orthodox Church. Such measures seem most contradictory.
They would suggest, that many did not like Nikon personally, but
were in favour of the lax type of worship which he advocated;
that they did not mind departing from the purer Orthodoxy advo-
cated by Avvakum and his followers. With the inhuman burning at
the stake of Avvakum in 1681, this group accomplished their pur-
pose within the church. After his unfortunate martyrdom, his
followers became known as a mere cult—the Raskolniki—which
became a small minority, and endured great persecution during
the years that followed. During the years 1681-1700 particularly,
thousands of Avvakum's followers are said to have perished through
self-immolation:

"The reform of the ritual was begun in 1653. At
the distance of nearly three centuries, the changes
made then appear of little moment. But to many of the
Russian Orthodox the slightest alteration in religious
practices which they had been taught to regard as
sacred and inalterable appeared to be the work of the
devil, and they were quick to interpret the reform as
an inspiration of foreigners who were seeking to cor-
rupt "Holy Russia". Opposition to reform grew both
among the Russian clergy and among the laity. In
1667 the Patriarch recognized it by anathematizing
all who expressed adverse opinion and by having many
of the opposition leaders burned. Still the changes
were not accepted by all; thousands of pious clergy
and laity committed suicide rather than face the necessity of living under the reign of the Anti-Christ, whom they expected to appear soon, and thousands more left the reformed Church. Those who left—known as the schismatics or as Old Believers—were vigorously persecuted by the government. But they survived to become a strong group in Russia.

After the reforms the Ukrainian Orthodox Church maintained close relations with the Russian Orthodox Church, but it did not agree to place itself under the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate until 1687."

It is most regrettable that Czar Feodor (1676-82) did not take an honourable stand in behalf of his devout archpriest. Here he most truly failed as the protector of the Holy Russian Orthodox Church. In the very year Avvakum was martyred, he is said to have been greatly displeased. No doubt he thought Avvakum was becoming a tiresome crank, and so allowed his enemies to do away with him, lending him no assistance in his hour of greatest need!

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3. A Church Disrupted During the Reigns Of

Peter I And Catharine II

In 1689, the Church again suffered a severe blow, with the coming to the throne of Peter I, who was the son of Czar Alexis and his second wife, Natalie Naryshkin. Peter was not in sympathy with the Russian Orthodox faith, and was in many ways an impious and profane man, although able and skilled in statesmanship and valiant in battle. Peter was more favourably disposed toward Lutheranism, if, in truth, he were disposed toward any church at all. He therefore abolished the Patriarchate in 1700, on the death of Patriarch Adrian. He then placed the Church under a Holy Synod, including a council of Bishops, of which he, himself, was the head. After Peter's reign the Church remained under the jurisdiction of the Emperor, losing her right to voice her opinion on matters which pertained to her welfare.

During the reign of the German Empress Catharine II (1762-96) Russian Orthodoxy suffered another set-back. Catharine although she remained in name the head of the Holy Synod, was hardly a devout ruler. More than any ruler before her, she encouraged at the Russian court the study of the philosophies of such men as Voltaire, Diderot, and other atheistic philosophers of their time. After the death of Catharine, and continuing into the rule of her son, the Emperor Paul (1796-1801) the Church had almost entirely lost its spiritual intent. Both Peter and Catharine tightened rather than alleviated the hapless hardships of the serfs. By the time of the reigns of the Czars Alexander I
(1801-25) and his brother, Nicholas I (1825-55), the Church as anything like a light for the people, particularly the poor and unfortunate, as a regenerator of the sinner, or reclamer of the infidel had practically ceased to function. It was most unfortunate, that during the reign of Peter, the Emperor had been made the official head of the church. It henceforth became just the tool of whatever Emperor happened to be in power. Thus the Church was bereft of either service to mankind or power in divinity.
4. The Orthodox Church Of the 19th Century With Which Dostoievsky Could Find No Flaw

During the reign of Czar Nicholas II (1894-1917) and also the Czars, who had directly preceded him, the church had no voice of her own. The voice of the Czar was the voice of the Church. After 1700 the Church no longer had a channel through which to express her ideals. If the patriarchs of the Church had been able to sponsor some of the needed reforms of these times, the later Revolution, which seems inevitable, might have been attended with less violence. After 1796 the Church had become practically a dead body. During the reign of the last Czar, it was used sometimes as a show piece on state occasions with great pomp and ceremony; but as a succour for the oppressed it had become practically void.

However Dostoievsky thought in his latter days, that he had indeed found Christ within the Russian Orthodox Church as it existed in his time. He, therefore, entirely refused to recognize its failings. He even boasted that within its sacred walls was to be found a salvation not only for Russians, but at length for the whole world. In his more mature writing, as just commented on, he quite scathingly condemned other churches and sects:

"Dostoievsky thought that his Christian freedom had been better safeguarded by Eastern Orthodoxy than by the Catholicism of the West. But he was often unjust to Catholicism and shut his eyes to the failures and defects of Orthodoxy: there was no liberty in the Byzantine imperial theocracy."76

In the 19th Century certain factions came into being known as the Slavophiles and Westerners. It is hard to distinguish in some instances just exactly what was meant by these terms. Generally speaking, the Westerners were supposed to favour the political union of Russia with the West. They wished to see an industrial revolution take place in Russia similar to that which had taken place in Western European countries after the middle of the 19th Century. They favoured the political policies of Peter and Catharine. To them the Orthodox Church was not of much consequence. Everything was to be concentrated on the catching up of Russia with the West, politically, industrially and economically. The Slavophiles, on the other hand, favoured the restoring of the Patriarchate, and held to the belief that politics, economics and industrial developments were of little value, if the souls of the people were starved through lack of spiritual growth, caused this time through having no channel either for expression or subsistence. Tolstoi and Dostoievsky have sometimes been given as exponents of the ideals. That is, Tolstoi has been described as favouring the ideals of the Westerners, and Dostoievsky as the champion of the Slavophiles. But this statement is hardly accurate, for Tolstoi, although he left the 19th Century Orthodox Church of his time, claiming it was no longer a practical vehicle for
religious expression, nevertheless did not admire Peter I, and was very outspoken in his beliefs that Russia should be allowed to develop in her own way; that it was not necessary at all that she adopt other methods, or try unceasingly to "catch up" with Western Europe. In this respect Tolstoi was no Westerner at all. In Dostoievsky's Slavophilism, the Orthodox Church, as it existed in the time of Alexander II and III and Nicholas II did not receive any censure.

It has been necessary to note these trends in Church History, because they do bear on the writings particularly of these two great masters of the Russian tongue, chiefly because through their writing it was expressed more deeply and broadly in all its aspects. Toward the close of the 19th Century this trend culminated in their great and massive collection of writings. Realism was considered by these authors not just a vehicle for voicing the truth in poetic beauty, as Pushkin and Lermontov had first voiced it, but was now considered in all its aspects from the standpoint of the human soul in religion, politics, economics and sociology. Dostoievsky makes an appeal for his pure Orthodoxy and Slavophilism and attacks through various mediums other trends of thought. Tolstoi who held a different conviction saw much fault in the fashionable Orthodoxy of his time. After his "conversion" in 1880 he embraced an entirely different vision. He found his Christ in the souls of the men and women near to him, in some instances in the souls of the
very humble. Such ideals had not been voiced in Russia since
the 17th Century. However the long drawn-out conversion of
Tolstoi must be discussed in another chapter referring expressly
to that great author and his works.
5.

(a) Dostoievsky's Short Stories

As well as being one of the most serious writers on matters pertaining to religion, ethics, and the very psychological make-up of mankind from the standpoint of Russian realism that the world has yet witnessed, Dostoievsky was also a great humorist. The humorous side of the great writer is depicted best in his short stories, most of which were written urgently to sell, and he therefore slips into a lighter vein knowing that that is the kind of material the public is most apt to buy and appreciate generally. However some of his shorter works are also in a very serious vein such as "Notes from Underground" and "The House of the Dead".

"The Gambler" published in 1866 is among the best of Dostoievsky's well written and keenly comical tales. In it he makes the best of all the deplorable mannerisms of the society which he is describing—one in which all the characters are trying to outwit each other with the same skill they use at the roulette tables in the evening. There is not a serious open-minded character in the whole gathering, which is realistic enough and very typical of the people he is here portraying, whose sole aim in life was to win as much as they could at Casino and do as little as possible. Even the old grandmother in the story completely gambles away what little she has left, and as a consequence did not lose too much sleep over it:
"In the first place, to finish with Granny. The following day she lost everything. It was what was bound to happen. When once any one is started upon that road, it is like a man in a sledge flying down a snow mountain more and more swiftly. She played all day till eight o'clock in the evening; I was not present and only know what happened from what I was told." 77

Dostoievsky's short story, "The Double" is not too convincing, and may be classed as one of the great writer's poorer stories. It has never been acclaimed enthusiastically by the reading public. It's theme is realistic enough in portraying an insane man who associates himself with another character to the extinction of his own personality. Such cases are to be found in the realm of the mentally ill, which was of course, of special interest to Dostoievsky's ever-probing mentality.

"Uncle's Dream" is one of the most amusing stories written in the countless realms of fiction. A reliable critic says:

"His (Dostoievsky's) story "Uncle's Dream" (1856), which has been magnificently dramatized for the Moscow Art Theatre, is an almost hilarious picture of provincial society, in which an ambitious matchmaker tries to marry off her daughter to a decrepit and nearly half-witted prince." 78

Some of the passages describing the prince's attempts to rejuvenate himself, and of the ambitious Marya Alexandrovna's regard for her husband—a man of quieter and more sensible disposition


than herself are among the most amusing passages of Dostoievsky's prolific pen:

"By the way, since we have mentioned him we will say a few words about Afanasy Matveyitch, Marya Alexandrovna's husband. In the first place he was a man of very presentable exterior, and indeed of very correct principles, only on critical occasions he somehow lost his head, and looked like a sheep facing a new gate." 79

And in regard to the old prince, who was fast falling apart:

"The ladies especially were in perpetual ecstasy over their charming visitor. A number of curious reminiscences of him were preserved. People said among other things that the Prince spent more than half of the day over his toilet, and was, it appeared entirely made up of different little bits. No one knew when and where he had managed to become so dilapidated. He wore a wig, moustaches, whiskers, and even a little "imperial"—all, every hair of it false, and of a magnificent black colour, he rouged and powdered every day. It was said that he had little springs to smoothe away the wrinkles on his face, and these springs were in some peculiar way concealed in his hair." 80

In trying to accomplish her design of obtaining this senile prince for her young and beautiful daughter solely for his money, and with the hope that the prince would soon die, the foolish Marya Alexandrovna decides to invite him to her country estate. She hopes in this way to keep him from the other feminine conquerors of Mordasov, and informs her bewildered husband that his whole duty on the arrival of their distinguished visitor is just to


80 Ibid., p. 230.
keep his mouth completely closed! "Molchat!" she might have conveniently commanded. Thus this humorous tale of folly proceeds to the merriment of either the reader or the audience.

"The Friend of the Family" (1859) is also a comical satire centering around a typical "leech". Foma is the duMaurier parasite. In some respects he resembles "Turgenev's "Rudin" only he is not even as intelligent a man as Rudin was purported to have been. He simply and effortlessly, despite his dull and blunted mentality, dominates a rather dense household and makes his stupid slaves utterly ridiculous under the reign of his petty tyranny.

"The Eternal Husband" (1880) is one of the last short stories to be written by Dostoievsy and to quite an extent reflected his own life at the time when it was written. At this time he experienced much unhappiness after his marriage with the widow Isayaev in 1857.

"He put all his bitterness as a betrayed husband into the novel "The Eternal Husband", which he wrote later. It is curious to note that he painted the hero of this story as a contemptible creature, old, ugly, vulgar and ridiculous. In spite of his sufferings and despair, Dostoievsy continued to send money to Maria Dmitrievna, placed confidential servants with her at Tver, and later went himself several times to see if she had all she needed. Their marriage was shattered, but the sense of duty toward her who bore his name remained strong in Dostoievsy's Lithuanian heart."81

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Dostoevsky's last tribute to realism came with his celebrated address on the unveiling of the Pushkin Memorial in Moscow in June of 1880. This great event took place just a few months before the death of Dostoevsky in January, 1881. At this literary festival in honour of the best-beloved of Russian poets both the Slavophiles and Westerners paid their homage to the great Russian poet of such singular genius. This festival was perhaps the greatest event of its kind occurring during the 19th Century. All political parties were represented on this occasion. All hates seemed to be forgotten, in the universal admiration of the great poet. People who had been enemies of long standing are reported to have become friends after listening to Dostoevsky's stirring words. His rival and colleague, the author, Ivan Turgenev, who had always acted most frigidly in Dostoevsky's presence pressed his hand affectionately at the close of his great and patriotic address. The leader of the Slavophiles, Aksakov, looked upon the speech as one of the greatest, in the cause which he represented, ever to have been voiced.

Dostoevsky's daughter in the biography of her father gives the following resume of the national part of her father's speech and comments:
"The speech, which is rather long, contains a very subtle analysis of Pushkin's poetry. The reader would do well to read the complete text. I only give my father's conception of the Russian people and its future. It was a new conception which had so fired the imaginations of our intellectuals."  

Her short resume reads as follows:  

"You are discontented, you suffer, and you ascribe your unhappiness to the system under which you live. You think you will become happy and contented if you introduce European institutions into Russia. You are mistaken. Your sufferings are due to another cause. Thanks to your cosmopolitan education, you are estranged from your people, you no longer understand them; you form a little clan, utterly foreign and antipathetic to the rest of the country, in the midst of a vast empire. You despise your people for their ignorance, and you forget that it is they who have paid for your European education, they who support by the sweat of their brows your universities and higher schools. Instead of despising them try to study the sacred ideas of your people. Humble yourselves, before them, work shoulder to shoulder with them at their great task; for this illiterate people from whom your turn in disgust bears within it the Christian word which it will proclaim to the world when it is bathed in blood. Not by servile repetition of the Utopias of the Europeans, which lead them to their own destruction, will you serve humanity, but by preparing together with your people the new Orthodox idea."

"These words went to the hearts of my compatriots, who were tired of despising their country. They were glad to think that Russia was no mere copy, no servile caricature of Europe, but that she in her turn might have a message for the world."  

With these inspiring words the career of Feodor Mikhailovich Dostoievsky distinguished particularly by his great realistic
writing came to a close. The zeal he put into the speech may have hastened his death. So earnest was he about his message to his people, that persons who witnessed the gathering say that sweat ran down his face and tears shone in his eyes. As well as being a great writer, Dostoievsky was also a great Russian patriot, and if the making of the triumphant speech did shorten his life, he probably was pleased that it happened that way. He would have given his life gladly at any moment in the cause of his Slavonic brethren whom he loved so well.
CHAPTER VI

REALISM AS ILLUSTRATED IN THE WRITING OF
LEO NICKOLAEVICH TOLSTOI
(1828-1910)

1. Brief Sketch of the Life of Tolstoi

2. Tolstoi--The Giant of Russian Realism

3. Tolstoi's Works of the Pre-Conversion Period
   (1852-1880)

4. Tolstoi's Works of the Post-Conversion Period
   (1880-1910)

5. Tolstoi's Parables--Monuments to Serious Theological Study
1. BRIEF SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF TOLSTOI

"For, indeed, all men live, not by the thought which they may take for themselves, but by the love which dwells in all mankind."

---Leo Nicolaevich Tolstoi

"Purity, humility, and love--these were Tolstoi's trinity. In times like these, when revision and reconsideration are going on in every direction, and old barriers are being swept away, it may be that our love for this noble Russian may help to bring about a better understanding of, and a closer brotherhood with, that great people to whom he belonged, and for whom he stands. We are beginning to realize that all nations, like all individuals, have their good qualities, and that it is a much more profitable thing to admire these than to be so constantly on the look-out for their weaknesses."

---Author Unknown

Count Leo Nikolaevich Tolstoi, that great Russian humanitarian and thinker, so lately dead, was born in 1828 on the maternal estate at Yasnaya Polyana in Tula Province, Russia. He received the usual education of an aristocrat of his day. After leaving Kazan University, where he studied Oriental languages and law, without taking a degree he entered the army, and fought in the Crimean War (1854-55). After a few winters spent in Petersburg and Moscow, and a journey to Europe he married in 1861 Sonya Andreyevna Behrs. The rest of his life was spent almost uninterrupted as a patriarchal country gentleman on his inherited estate, where he busied himself with his writings and in bettering the conditions of his serfs.

Tolstoi speaks of his recollections of a happy childhood in his work "Childhood" (1852). He was the fourth son of a family of five children, and he remembers life first with his younger sister, Maria, and his beloved Auntie Tatyana, who was a great inspiration to him during his tender years, his mother having passed away when he was little more than an infant. In the sequels of "Childhood"--"Boyhood" and "Youth", Tolstoi
was already proving himself a mature writer with a vigorous genius for portraying his characters' personalities "through a picture of their actions and physical mannerisms". About this time the developments in his own character were becoming more manifest, and there was already seen quite a conflict between the traits of the zestful, gay nobleman, and the deeper spiritual aspect of his soul which came to light in his later writings.

In his writings of "Sevastopol" (1856) Tolstoi relates his own experiences in that famous siege in the Crimean War, where he fought throughout the entire campaign. These battle preludes are broadened into a much wider theme in his great novel, "War and Peace", considered by many critics the greatest historical novel ever written. In "Albert" (1851) one feels the spiritual Tolstoi in the making. The poor ragged musician carries the guests away on his inspired bow. "A pure firm note rang out in the room and complete silence fell. Not a single false or exaggerated sound disturbed the harmonious absorption of the audience; every note was clear-cut, significant". The listeners are carried away to nostalgic scenes—a forgotten memory of some happy moment, and insatiable longing for power, a sense of dumb resignation, or of sadness." Later when the spirit was fully developed in the soul of Tolstoi he writes in the parable "Elias", after the old servant has given an account of the conversation of his old wife and himself, "Do not laugh, good sirs. This is no jest, but human life. Once I and my wife were gross of heart and wept because we had lost our riches, but now God has revealed unto us the truth, and we reveal it unto you again not for our diversion, but for your good." The great-master writer has turned from the reminiscing nostalgia of the sobbing violin to the great chords of the human soul, played in a divine harmony.

Tolstoi's great epic novel, "War and Peace" (1862-69), considered by most critics his greatest, describes the heroic fight of the Russians against Napoleon in 1812. The feeling is not so bitter at Austerlitz where the Russians and the Austrians fought the French. But when Napoleon actually violates Russian soil, the Russians see their glorious Moscow burn rather than listen to the dictates of the repugnant little Corsican. From the standpoint of history down to the intricate family lives of the Rostovs, the book gives a wonderfully
comprehensive study of a people at war, and at the same time the very inner temperament of that people itself. The fundamental Russian longing for truth is expressed throughout. This is strikingly revealed in the great inner struggles of Pierre Bezukhov—the hero—his repulsion for much of the corrupt society around him, his inner conflict over his unfaithful wife, his attempts to find his soul in Free Masonry—and his eventual marriage to Natasha Rostov, whose lively Russian vivacity he always admired. He takes to the road as a vagabond rather than leave Moscow when Napoleon enters—and finds in a fellow prisoner the extraordinary soul of the peasant, Karataev. It is indeed a glowing account of a vital freedom-loving people, with all their soul-searching loves and hates, caught in a gigantic thrust against their beloved country, by a barbaric conqueror. Every reader feels relieved when Napoleon's troops withdraw, and join in a vigorous "hurrah" for these brave, homeloving and staunch people. The gentle Princess Mary Volkonski is thought to be a portrait of Tolstoi's own mother, and the vivacious Natasha that of his sister-in-law, Tatyana Behrs Kuzminskaya; Nicholas Rostov, his father, and Pierre, to some extent the author himself, revealing many of his inner conflicts.

However the deep understanding and kindness of Tolstoi is felt in its fullest development in his novel, "Resurrection" (1899), and in his many beautiful parables. The hero of the latter, Nekhlyudov, indeed finds the true meaning of that great word—resurrection—in the great atoning sacrifice of helping one for whose downfall he feels he is to blame. He changes his way of life, and learns in his trek to Siberia that, many of the prisoners and strange outcasts whom he meets are merely unfortunates and, of course, in the case of political prisoners, most of them had been unjustly sentenced. An entirely new life opens for Nekhlyudov—he never returns to the old corrupt double-standard that he had previously accepted. This was the true meaning of Resurrection to Tolstoi—not the symbolic processions—but the new ideal of life through Christ grew to mean everything to him.

This urging for practical Christianity is felt even stronger in Tolstoi's collection of Parables. In "The Two Old Men", Tolstoi again brings out practical Christianity as the only salvation for the soul. The reader feels convinced that Elijah, the pilgrim, who redeemed the land of the starving peasants has found his blessing although he did not actually get to Jerusalem. Efim—the other old peasant sees him there though, at the
congregation—just in fancy? Tolstoi with his great mystical sense lets the reader guess. Again, in "Where Love is, There is God Also", the old shoemaker realizes at length, that just as he fed the hungry and clothed the naked did Christ in Truth visit him. In the parable "That Whereby Men Live" the soul of the departed mother of the homeless twins looks down with satisfaction and is recompensed through the love, which a woman she had not even known has bestowed upon them.

Space does not permit commenting further on some of Tolstoi's other great parables pertaining to the Christian faith, but this fine commentary on his character and works is worthy of note:—"This great Russian thinker and teacher was beloved to thousands who had never seen him. In the pages of his masterpeices, we first saw the new light and truth of the great field of Russian literature in which he stands pre-eminent. Unlike all other literature its keynote is sympathy with suffering, it is one continuous hymn to the unfortunate. Purity, humility, and love—these were Tolstoi's trinity. In times like these, when revision and reconsideration are going on in every direction, and old barriers are being swept away, it may be that our love for this noble Russian may help to bring about a better understanding of, and a closer brotherhood with, that great people to whom he belonged, and for whom he stands. We are beginning to realize that all nations, like all individuals have their good qualities, and that it is a much more profitable thing to admire these than to be so constantly on the look-out for their weaknesses. We shall do well in the future to study Tolstoi's countrymen at firsthand; and Anglo-Russian friendship could lead to as fine a human brotherhood as the world has ever seen."

Tolstoi died in November, 1910 after leaving his home and renouncing all worldliness.84

84 From excerpts by author.
TOLSTOI--THE GIANT OF RUSSIAN REALISM
(A Glance At The Early Tolstoi)

Count Leo Nikolaevich Tolstoi, has been described as the greatest writer produced by Russian realism. He was undoubtedly the greatest author of this new school of Russian thought, and is rated as one of the most spontaneous and competent writers the world has ever known. He has written an amazing quantity of material and in great detail. His life is divided into two distinct parts—the preconversion (1852-1880) and the post-conversion (1880-1910) period. Before his conversion, Leo Nikolaevich entertained similar views to most of the landed gentry of his time, but all through his life, as may be read in the interesting biographies of him, he had an unusual and mystical individuality. He deplored the many injustices in the society in which he lived, and very early in his life, when he was only in his late twenties, he expressed his disapproval of serfdom. Eventually this caused him much unpopularity among his own class, and led him to free his serfs. Even before the emancipation of 1861, he had established schools for the children on his lands, which often, in his youth, he himself taught. This was a new venture. Most of the landlords of the time had no notion at all for such humanities.

After his conversion in 1880 he renounced the vanity of this world and tried to practise and teach his new-found faith. The conclusions he came to at this time appear in his post-conver-
sion works. The reader need not always agree with Tolstoi on every point, but he most assuredly is one of the greatest humanitarians of his age. He genuinely wished to better the condition of all those around him. Although he undergoes considerable changes of thought throughout his life, one never doubts Tolstoi's sincerity. From his earliest works to the most mature his quality asserts itself, and never fails to grip and absorb the attention of those who have found this unusual author's ideals a guide and a help along the pathway of life.
3. TOLSTOI'S PRE-CONVERSION WORKS

Tolstoi's first writings to gain favour with the reading public were his books, "Childhood" (1852), "Boyhood" (1854) and "Youth" (1855-57). The experiences related in these books were taken from reminiscences about his own youth, which he seemed to remember in extraordinarily minute detail. They are retold directly and by means of characterizations in a very entertaining manner, which is not only readable, but displays the budding genius of a master writer.

Tolstoi's experiences in the Crimean War (1854-56), are vividly portrayed in three books, "Sevastopol" (1854-56), "Meeting a Moscow Acquaintance at the Front" (1856) and "The Two Hussars" (1856). Most of the notes for these books were jotted down during his soldiering days. The siege of Sevastopol is particularly well written. In this campaign, Tolstoi exhibited the qualities of a brave soldier, and felt keenly the Russian sentiment in defending this strategic post of the Russian lands against the Turks, who were aided by regiments of British and later French soldiers. Incidentally it is gratifying to note that after the Peace Treaty of Paris, concluded at the end of the war, the Fort of Sevastopol was returned to the Russians. In "Sevastopol" the reader is particularly struck with the daring exploits of the young Russian officers, fighting in defense of the Fort, and the Russian possession of the Crimean Peninsula. There were seemingly insurmountable odds against the, Turkey and her allies making a
determined stand for the coveted stronghold. The bravery of the Russian Cavalry, of which Tolstoi was a member is well described in realistic and colourful prose. His early work, "The Cossacks", also written in 1852 brought him immediate and well-earned praise from the critics; the colourful description of the grape-harvest in the land of the Terek Cossacks awakens the imagination, and the scene rises realistically before the eyes:

"It was also the season for the harvest work. The entire population of the village was busy in the water-melon fields and the vineyards. The gardens, thick with rank vegetation, alone offered a cool, pleasant shade. Everywhere ripe bunches of black grapes hung down among broad, semi-transparent leaves. Along the road which led to the gardens creaking carts, heaped to the very top with black grapes, were slowly dragged, and bunches of grapes, mashed by the wheels, lay about in the dust of the highway. In some court-yards the peasants had even begun to press the grapes, and the smell of new wine filled the air. The flat roofs of the cottages were quite covered with the large clusters, which were drying in the sun. Jackdaws and crows collected on these roofs, pecking among the grapes and flew cawing from place to place.

The fruit of the year's labour was being collected; and this year the vintage was unusually abundant and good. In the shady green gardens, amid the sea of vines, on every side one heard laughter and merry voices, and amid the leaves one obtained glimpses of the light-coloured garments of the women."85

Tolstoi early developed a masterful style in writing, and has produced more in bulk than any other Russian author. Once he started writing his pen became very prolific indeed. From his earliest years he observed and considered injustices.

The horrible spectacle of serfdom always touched and haunted him. He has been designated by most critics as a Westerner, but many of his sentiments, such as those expressed against the attempts to Europeanize Russia by Peter I, and his somewhat indifference to mechanical progress, place him with the Slavophiles. He particularly disliked the European reforms starting with Peter, and thought that Russia would have been better to develop in her own original way. Tolstoi was a reformer. Although this quality showed in his writing but faintly at first, it was always there. It grew immeasurably, as his novels and prose works developed. This trait was very much in evidence even before the experience, which he nominated "My Confession" or "Conversion" written during the years 1879-82. Some critics contend that Tolstoi was a moralist from the beginning; that even in casual conversation with his friends he could not refrain from moralizing. It is argued by those who do not like his philosophy, that this kind of moralization marred his writings, and that because of this tendency his later writings became intolerable. However, those who appreciate his deep insight into the good and evil traits in the characters of the people whom he knew, and his unusual grasp of Christianity elucidated in some of his later writings, consider him because of this moralizing propensity indeed one, if not the greatest writer of contemporary times. He made very practical suggestions for the alleviation of human misery, which set him apart from the average day-dreaming novelist.
After the liberation of the serfs in 1861 by Czar Alexander II, and some years before, the pitiable existence of this class, that had been ground under foot since 1689 by sheer poverty, exploitation, and ignorance roused in Tolstoi the determination to help alleviate their sufferings. In his later novels he raises a voice on behalf of all, who may have suffered through poverty or neglect in childhood. Tolstoi always sympathized with those whom he considered the victims of moral injustices. The unfortunate existence of the peasants appealed to his sympathy from his earliest youth. His novels overflow with pleas on behalf of these unfortunate persons. His sister-in-law relates in her memoirs, "Tolstoi, As I Knew Him", that no down-and-out pilgrim, feeble-minded person, or beggar was ever turned away unheeded from his door:

"Strangely enough, Leo Nikolaevich honestly loved these "God's folk": the feeble-minded, the half insane, the wanderers, religious pilgrims and even the alcoholics. Naturally, we, his listeners, questioned this good nature and this sincerity. The interest and hospitality he showed toward these people he inherited from his mother. (Princess Marya in "War and Peace" is modeled on his mother.)

The custom of offering hospitality to pilgrims was established long ago by his aunts and grandmothers. Many beggars, pilgrims and wanderers came to Yasnaya Polyana while on pilgrimage to Kiev, New Jerusalem, and the Trinity Monastery of St. Sergius. They were fed and given alms."86

"War and Peace" published in 1869 is considered by many critics to be the greatest novel ever written in any language. It appeals much more to the 20th Century reader than some of Tolstoi's other works criticizing 19th Century conditions that have now passed by. This historical novel is based on the great conflict which took place in Russia in 1812—the intrusion of Napoleon and his French Army upon Russian soil. It is a magnificent study in Russian History, apart from the appeal of its plot. The characters, as the characters in all Tolstoi's novels, are drawn from persons whom he knew intimately. This is the chief reason for their realism. The spritely heroine, Natasha Rostov, is said to be a study of Tolstoi's vivacious and charming sister-in-law, Tatyana Behrs Kuzminskaya, of whom he was extremely fond. She verifies this in her interesting and delightfully narrated memoirs, recently translated into English. There she describes with clarity and truthfulness many of Tolstoi's early comments, to her and to members of her family, against the evils of serfdom, which were not received with approbation by his listeners!

"It was the end of July and harvest time. The weather was splendid, and the fields were humming with activity. "How lovely it is in the fields now," I said, with the peasant women all in different colours."
"Yes, it is good to see, "Leo Nikolayevich agreed. "Those people out there in the fields are doing vital work, while we, the gentlefolk, do nothing."
"What do you mean we do nothing? Mama and Papa do a great deal," I said in a hurt voice. "And we children are having our school holidays now."
"Yes, of course," Leo Nikolayevich replied hastily, "Now you're vexed with me. Never mind, I shan't say another word."

The portrayals of historical personages such as Napoleon, General Kutuzov, General Bagration and Barclay de Tolly are given with commendable realism (although these historical figures were roundly criticized by General Saltykov, who at the same time praised Tolstoi's general criticism of the society of his times), as are the principal characters including, Pierre, the hero, who is thought to express much of Tolstoi's mature sentiments about life. Tolstoi's novels are remarkable in their striking characterizations. His characters life and breathe, there are no waxen models among them.

Tolstoi's impressions of his parents although they died young and when he was but a small child, have been strikingly described in his first books, "Childhood", "Boyhood" and "Youth". These narratives about his early life were the first stories that brought him recognition. The critics were amazed at their realistic charm, and the ease with which they were narrated. He was a master of this kind of prose from the beginning of his literary career, because he had leisure in which to develop his great talent. Some insist that because of this he is truly not a realistic writer. They prefer Dostoievsky or Maxim Gorky, who they claim really experienced the rigors of life. They maintain

that Tolstoi belonged to the class which the revolutionaries in Russia snuffed out with a single blow in Oct.-Nov., 1917. However, in regard to these criticisms, it should be remembered that Tolstoi himself was no ordinary landowner. He carried out an effective plan in regard to his peasants' maintenance which he considered just. Because he was a very unusual man for the class of persons to which he belonged, Tolstoi may be justly rated as indeed a great realist as well as a great man.
Tolstoi's unusually original ideas about land tenure are stated in his book, "Resurrection" published in 1899, after the experience he spoke of as "my conversion". It is interesting to note that Tolstoi's immediate family did not share his convictions regarding rehabilitation of the serfs, nor did they accept in general his thoughts as they became more transparent and spiritual. After 1880 Tolstoi grew tired of worldly vanity of any kind. He wished to give himself unreservedly to Christian living and teaching. From his religious conclusions at this time, the cult of Tolstoism emerged. Unfortunately toward the end of his life, Tolstoi no longer believed in the Divinity of Christ. This strange unbelief which seized upon him is very contradictory to the spirit of his great mystical writings, where the Holy Spirit of Christ shines so realistically in his great parables. These are without question the best fabulous fiction pertaining to the Christian faith to be found in the Russian language. Tolstoi's spiritual interpretation is difficult to understand to some extent, because of his break with Russian Orthodoxy, which he condemned quite resolutely after the experience of his conversion. He, at length, came to the conclusion that Orthodoxy taught a "Divinity dogma", but did nothing in the spirit of Christian charity to relieve human misery and oppression. He thought that many of the priests did more in the way of robbing the peasants, than in helping them either materially
or spiritually. He then turned from the fashionable prelates about him, and believed he found the true Christ for the first time in his own soul, and reflected in the souls of others. Most of the God-fearing men he admired at this period, he found among the old peasantry. He may have to some extent over-rated their sincerity, but in many instances the peasants because they lived more simply, glimpsed Christ more clearly than the courtiers of the day, whose lives of empty superficiality more often than not, left them shorn of any spiritual experience whatsoever.

Thus Tolstoi reasoned, that Orthodoxy indeed was dead in spirit, and that he had found the great heart of Christ, outside of the church, in the lives of simple and kindly folk. He determined to pursue this new-found Truth as long as he lived. Even before his conversion, he, to some extent, exhibited this side of his character, and tried to educate his children in simplicity, and without ostentation.

Although the magnitude of the Bolshevik Revolution would certainly have amazed Tolstoi, he probably would not have been so shocked at some phases of it. The clouds of revolution do not hang so heavily in his writings as in those of Anton Chekhov. They burst with full vehemence in the works of Maxim Gorki, who was to some extent a Bolshevik himself. One of the factors which closed Tolstoi's eyes to it somewhat, was that he himself was a member of the nobility. That he did have such a clear comprehension of his own class is amazing in itself. This comprehension was much more strikingly true after his conversion in 1880.
5. TOLSTOI'S PARABLES--MONUMENTS TO SERIOUS THEOLOGICAL STUDY

After Tolstoi's conversion to a new way of thinking and of life in 1880, he wrote many works pertaining to these new-found ideals. Among them notable are, "My Confession" (1879-82), "My Religion" (1884), "The Death of Ivan Ilich" (1884-86), "Thoughts on God" (1885-1900), "On the Meaning of Life" (1885-86), "What Shall We Do There?" (1886), "The Power of Darkness" (1886), "The Fruits of Enlightenment" (1889), "The Kreutzer Sonata" (1889), "The Kingdom of God is Within You" (1893), "Religion and Morality" (1894), "What is Art" (1897), "Patriotism and Christianity" (1894), and many beautiful parables on the teaching of the Christian faith which have been published together as "Parables and Tales" with his short story "Master and Man" (1895). In all of these works the new Tolstoi comes to light, and they should be examined carefully by all persons deeply interested in his interpretation of the Christian faith.

Among the most notable of the Parables are, "The Two Old Men" (1897), "That Whereby Men Live" (1881) and "Where Love is There is God Also" (1885). "The Two Old Men" is not only unusually beautiful in its explanation of simple homely virtues, but it is extremely appealing in its mysticism—the mystic part of Tolstoi's character is revealed in this tale, which was evident even when he was just a young man, and noted by those close to him:
"When he was young, Leo Nikolayevich was always tormented by his personal appearance. He was convinced that he was repulsively ugly. I have heard him say this more than once. Naturally, he did not realize that his charm lay in the spiritual strength which was ever visible in his searching, thoughtful gaze. He could not see or appreciate this expression in his own eyes, but in it lay all the charm of his face."88

Such people as the two old pilgrims described in this work did live in Tolstoi's time and their lives are everlasting, invisible monuments to the nobler side of Russian Orthodoxy, which had survived despite the havoc played within the church by various monarchs and prelates during the centuries. It is believed that several million of the type of Christian peasant described by Tolstoi in his parables were transported to Siberia, under the early Bolshevik regime, where most of them are said to have perished from starvation!

In the parable, "The Two Old Men", two old friends determine to go together on a pilgrimage to ancient Jerusalem. They start out with high hopes and inspirations, and all goes well the first few miles. However when they reach the country of the Tuftedmen (Bashkirs) Elijah stops to beg a drink of water at a hut. His old friend Efim, strolls on. Elijah finds to his amazement that the people in the hut where he begs are on the point of starvation. He then proceeds to redeem their land and set them on their feet again; he can do no otherwise in Christ's name. He then has no money to proceed on his journey, so returns

to his old wife before the winter has set in. Efim, however, continues his journey and arrives in Jerusalem safely after his tramp overland from Odessa. He is sure somewhere his old friend will catch up with him. He does not find Elijah, but three times he sees him in the church with the pilgrims at the head of the congregation—here the mystical part of Tolstoi's writing shines with superb significance and inner meaning. When he at length returns toward his own village once more, he passes through the village where Elijah had redeemed the land of those starving to death. Then he understands partly the great mystery of Elijah's disappearance. On his return home he presents his old friend with a bottle of holy water from the river Jordan:

"Then Elijah's wife called out: "Husband! A friend has come to see you." Elijah looked round, his face broke out into smiles, and he ran to meet his comrade, gently brushing some bees from his beard as he did so. "Good day to you, good day to you, my dear old friend!" he cried. "Then did you get there safely?"

"Yes of a surety. My feet carried me safely, and I have brought you home some Jordan water. Yet I know not if my task has been accepted of God, or—"

"Surely, surely it has. Glory be to Him and to Our Lord Jesus Christ!"

Efim was silent a moment; then continued: "Yes, my feet carried me thither; but whether I was there also in spirit, or whether it were another who—"

"Nay nay. That is God's affair, my old comrade—God's affair." Well, on my way back," added Efim, "I stopped at the hut where you parted from me."

Elijah seemed frightened, and hastened to interrupt him. "That also is God's affair, my friend—God's affair," he said. "But come into the hut, and I will get you some honey"—and he hurried to change the conversation by talking of household matters.
Efim sighed, and forebore to tell Elijah of the people in the hut or of his having been in Jerusalem. But this clearly did he understand: that in this world God has commanded everyone, until death, to work off his debt of duty by means of love and good works. 89

The parable, "Where Love is There is God Also" relates the conversion of one, Martin Avdeitch, a shoemaker, and the great blessings that came to his soul when he found that the truest Christian experience is to be attained in the helping of others. He extends Christian kindliness to three groups of persons in one day—a poor old soldier, a woman and her baby, who are suffering from cold and hunger, an elderly woman selling apples in the street and a young boy who tries to rob the old peddler. On picking up his Testament in the evening and reading, he realizes that just as he truly helped the souls and bodies of these needy persons did Christ in Truth visit him:

"Next he lifted the lamp down, placed it on the table, and took his Testament from the shelf. He had intended opening the book at the place which he had marked last night with a strip of leather, but it opened itself at another instead. The instant it did so, his vision of the last night came back to his memory, and, as instantly, he thought he heard a movement behind him as of someone moving toward him. He looked round and saw in the shadow of a dark corner what appeared to be figures—figures of persons standing there, yet could not distinguish them clearly. Then the voice whispered in his ear:

"Martin, Martin, dost thou not know Me?"

"Who art Thou?" said Avdeitch

"Even I!" whispered the voice again. "Lo, it is I!" and there stepped from the dark corner Stepanitch. He smiled, and then, like the fading of a little cloud, was gone.

"It is I!" whispered the voice again—and there stepped forth the old woman and the boy with the apple. They smiled and were gone.

Joy filled the soul of Martin Avdeitch as he crossed himself, put on his spectacles, and set himself to read the Testament at the place where it had opened. At the top of the page he read:

"For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in."

'And further down the page he read:

"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto Me."

Then Avdeitch understood that the vision had come true, and that his Saviour had in very truth visited him that day, and that he had received Him."

In the third parable of particular note, "That Whereby Men Live", Tolstoi gives the account of the experience of a supernatural being on earth, and his conclusion before returning to Heaven, that men here on earth truly Live only in helping one another in brotherly acts of kindliness, as the Master required of his disciples and followers many hundreds of years ago:

"And the Angel said:

"Yes, I learnt that every man lives not by taking thought for himself, but by Love. "It was not given to the childing woman to know what was needful for the preservation of her children's lives. It was not given to the rich man to know what was needful for his body. Nor is it given unto any man to know whether, before the sun shall have set, it may be boots for his living body or bosoviki for his corpse that he shall require.

"When I was a man, my life was preserved to me, not by taking thought for myself, but by the love which dwelt in a passer-by and his wife, so that they could feel for me pity and affection. Again, the two orphans were preserved alive, not by any thought which was taken for them but by the love which dwelt in the heart of a

strange woman, so that she could feel for them pity and affection. For, indeed, all men live, not by the thought which they may take for themselves, but by the love which dwells in all mankind. "I had known before that God gave life to men, and that He would have them live; but now I understood another thing. I understood that God would not have men live apart from one another—wherefore He had not revealed to them what was needful for each one: but that He would have them live in unity—wherefore He had revealed to them only what was needful both for themselves and for their fellows together. "Yes, at last I understood that men only appear to live by taking thought for themselves, but that in reality they live by Love alone." 91

Certainly Tolstoi, as the above illustrations confirm, became after his conversion, one of the greatest writers on Christian themes pertaining to practical Christianity that the world has ever known. One need not accept all his views, and in his latter days just before his death his vision may have become to some extent dimmed. But he indeed reached out successfully to the souls of men and women in his wonderfully inspired and clear perception of the Christian faith. He progressed from being perhaps the greatest writer of the realistic historical novel that the world has ever seen, to one of unusual profundity and understanding in the field of realistic literature pertaining to the human soul, as it reaches out in its quest of the Divine. This did not spoil his creative genius as some avow, it rather climaxed a glorious career, which was inspired as few have been by the Christian faith.

CHAPTER VII

REALISM AS ILLUSTRATED IN THE WRITING OF

ANTON PAVLOVICH CHEKHOV

(1860-1904)

1. Brief Sketch of the Life of Chekhov

2. The Nostalgic Mood Which is Peculiar to Chekhov

3. Chekhov's Distress at the Passing of the Intelligentsia of His Time

4. Chekhov's Great Realistic Plays and Short Stories

5. Chekhov's Amazing Grasp of Realism to the End of His Life
1. BRIEF SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF CHEKHOV

"On July evenings and nights already there cries neither a quail nor a corncrake, nor does a nightingale sing in the forest glad, nor is there to be found the perfume of flowers, but on the steppe everything is still beautiful and radiant. Scarcely has the sun disappeared and the earth become covered with shadows, than the cares of day are forgotten, everything is forgiven, and the steppe breathes a wide sigh. The soul experiences a longing for the beautiful, severe nativeland, and wishes to fly over the steppe with the night bird."

—Anton Pavlovich Chekhov

"Anton Pavolich Chekhov was born in Taganrog, on the sea of Azov. The family consisted of several sons and a daughter. They were all given a liberal education. Anton, who was the youngest but one, was sent to the gymnasium (secondary school) of Taganrog. In 1879 he finished his time at the gymnasium and went to Moscow to join his family. He was matriculated as a student of the Faculty of Medicine. After the normal course of five years, he took his degree in 1884. From his arrival in Moscow to his death he never parted from his parents and sister, and his literary income soon became important, he early became the mainstay of his family.

Checkhov began working in the comic papers the year he came to Moscow, and before he left the university he had become one of their most welcome contributors. So on taking his degree, he did not settle down to practice as a doctor, but fell back on his literary work for subsistence. In 1886 some of his comic stories were collected in book form. The book had an immediate success with the public and was soon followed by another volume of comic stories. The shrewd and clever Suvorin at once saw the great possibilities of Chekhov and invited him to contribute to his paper, where he even started a special weekly literary supplement for Chekhov. They became close friends, and in Chekhov's correspondence his letters to Suvorin form undoubtedly the most interesting part. Chekhov had now gained a firm footing in "big literature" and was free from the tyranny of the comic papers. At the same time Chekhov wrote his first play, "Ivanov", which was produced in Moscow in December 1887
and in Petersburg a year later. It is characteristic of this period of transition that Chekhov continued working at these pieces after their first publication; "The Steppe" and "Ivanov" that are now reproduced in his "Works" are very different from what first appeared in 1887. Henceforth Chekhov's life was rather uneventful, and what events there were, are closely connected with his writings. An isolated episode was his journey to Sakhalin, the Russian Botany Bay. He went there in 1890, traveling through Siberia (before the Trans-Siberian) and returning by sea via Ceylon. He made a very thorough investigation of convict life and published the result of it in a separate book (Sakhalin Island, 1891). It is remarkable for its thoroughness, objectivity, and impartiality, and is an important historical document. It is supposed to have influenced certain reforms in prison life introduced in 1892. This journey was Chekhov's greatest practical contribution to humanitarianism that was so near his heart. In private life he was also very kindhearted and generous. He gave away much of his money. His native town of Taganrog was the recipient of a library and a museum from him.

In 1891 Chekhov was rich enough to buy a piece of land at Melikhovo, some fifty miles south of Moscow. There he settled down with his parents, sister, and younger brother, and lived for six years. He took part in local life and spent much money on local improvements. In 1892-93, during the cholera epidemic, he worked as head of a sanitary district. He remained at Melikhovo till 1897, when the state of his health forced him to move. This was not the only change in his life. All his surroundings changed, owing to his new connection with the Moscow Art Theatre and his more decided political orientation toward the left. During these last years he saw much of Tolstoy. In the popular opinion of that time, Chekhov, Gorky, and Tolstoy formed a sort of sacred trinity symbolizing all that was best in independent Russia as opposed to the dark forces of Tsarism. After "Ivanov", Chekhov had written several light one-act comedies that had a considerable success with the public but added little to his intrinsic achievement. In 1895 he turned once more to serious drama and wrote "The Seagull". It was produced at the State Theatre of Petersburg in 1896. It was badly understood by the actors and badly acted. The first night was a smashing failure. The play was hissed down, and the author, confounded by his defeat, left the theatre after the second act and escaped to Melikhovo, vowing never again to
write a play. Meanwhile K. S. Stanislavsky (Alekseyev), a wealthy merchant of Moscow, and the dramatist Vladimir Nemirovich-Chanenchko founded the Art Theatre, which was to be such an important landmark in the history of the Russian stage. They succeeded in getting "The Seagull" for one of their first productions. The cast worked at it with energy and understanding, and when the play was acted by them in 1898, it proved a triumphant success. Chekhov turned with new energy towards dramatic writing, and wrote his most famous plays with a direct view to Stanislavsky's casts. "Uncle Vanya" (which had been planned as early as 1888) was produced in 1900, "The Three Sisters" in 1901, and "The Cherry Orchard" in January 1904. Each play was a greater triumph than the preceding one. There was complete harmony among playwright, actors, and public. Chekhov's fame was at its height. However, he did not become so rich as to be compared with Kipling, or D'annunzio, or even with Gorky. For like his favorite heroes, he was eminently unpractical; in 1899 he sold all the works he had hitherto written to the publisher Marx for 75,000 roubles. It turned out after the transaction that Marx was not aware of the extent of his writings—he had reckoned on four volumes of short stories, and he had unconsciously bought nine! In 1901 Chekhov married an actress of the Art Theatre, Olga L. Knipper; so his life became further changed. He was constantly besieged by importunate admirers, with whom he was very patient and kind. In June 1904 his illness had so advanced that he was sent by the doctors to Badenweiler, a small health resort in the Black Forest, where he died. His body was brought to Moscow and buried by the side of his father, who had preceded him in 1899."92

2. THE NOSTALGIC MOOD WHICH IS PECULIAR TO CHEKHOV

The works of Anton Chekhov were written in an atmosphere saturated with heavy hanging revolutionary clouds. Things were getting worse, and Chekhov knew only too well what the final outcome must be. However, he kept veering away from it. He knew the inevitable consequences of which most of the old Russian landowners could not become convinced. Some of them had actually become Micawber-like in their attitude. They were sure to the last, "that something would turn up", which, of course, did not happen. Chekhov was too clever and realistic to indulge in such vain hopes. He knew that things would not change for the better in the affairs of the nobility or the intelligentsia, of which he himself was a member.

Chekhov was educated in the field of medicine, however he plunged more wholeheartedly into writing, and is said to have supported in one way or another his entire family from almost the first publication of his stories in 1880. Thus he knew all the rigors of a severe discipline, and was entirely free from illusions. But at the same time he was a gentle soul, and one very kindly disposed toward all mankind. He did not enjoy, as did Tolstoi, the reputation of being a literary giant, but he was a very great realist. Chekhov saw events realistically. In all his plays and stories which have been dramatized, particularly the great ones, his nostalgia for a regime that he knew was fast crumbling almost overpowers the audience. In most of his lengthy works the atmo-
sphere is permeated with foreboding revolutionary clouds. The air hangs heavy in them as a sultry evening in June. Chekhov knew what was coming. He felt ineffective in preventing it, so wrote his stories as a last evening song of praise to a dying regime. This does not mean that he was unsympathetic with revolutionary ideals. He was definitely sympathetic, but he feared and rightly so, the oncoming slaughter of all classes but the proletariat, and he deplored the fact that such people, as his character, Lopakhin, in "The Cherry Orchard", were gaining the upper hand. He loved the 19th Century Russian intelligentsia. Their mental alertness was dear to him. He loved the Uncle Vanyas and Mme. Ranevskys portrayed in his plays. He valued them more than the nobility, because he thought them usually more intelligent and interesting. Chekhov was not bound to Russian Orthodoxy, the nobility, the merchant class, or the peasants. He belonged rather to an enlightened intelligentsia.
Chekhov's intelligentsia was by no means free from faults. Mme. Ranevsky's treatment of her old servant, in the play, "The Cherry Orchard", is an example of some of their flagrant inconsistencies. Chekhov was not blind to the failings of this group, otherwise he would not have given to the theatre such a character as Mem. Ranevsky. Perhaps in portraying such a character he was trying to exhort the intelligentsia to improve their behavior, but this hardly seems true. Chekhov, a literary genius, had not found life particularly easy. Most of his vitality had been spent in a battle for existence and in supporting his family as his generous soul chose to see them. He does not try to reform people, there is none of the moralist in him that was in Tolstoi. Chekhov portrayed the characters in his plays just as he knew, admired or disdained them. He did not think they would change, perhaps ever. In some instances we feel he would not have them change. He grappled to his soul the people with whom he lived, and was fond of them to the point of liking their defects. He felt had they recovered altogether from unlovely traits, they would no longer have been human beings, but gods. He would not have considered this realistic. Chekhov did not have enough physical reserve left to become a patriotic leader. But he understood well his people, their needs, and the needs of his country. Much of his writing is tinged with feelings of
regret. He waits for the very last curtain call on the Old
Regime. A certain part of it was so dear to him. Could it
have partly survived! He lingers longingly in the old Cherry
Orchard, the garden of Peter Nicolayevich Sorin, and the house
of Uncle Vanya. One feels he wished that the characters in
his plays could live forever. Despite their lightness and fail­
ings he lived them deeply and tenderly to the last. Like, Tolstoi,
Chekhov did not witness the Revolution of 1917. The reader is
grateful for this. It would have been too much for his sensi­
tive soul. If he had lived he might easily have met the same
fate as Uncle Vanya or Konstantin Tryeplyev, as he was indeed the
creator of these characters. The impending disaster may have
unconsciously affected Chekhov's sensitive nature. Many persons
of his class did do away with themselves voluntarily after 1917.
The onslaught was too much for them to meet. In many instances
the Bolsheviks, would not have liquidated them, if they had
manifested great talent. However many were done away with, if
thought to be wholly unsympathetic toward the new regime. Hence
they voluntarily took their own lives. Chekhov's friends, who
he so interestingly describes in his great plays, are the very
ones, who might eventually have met a dastardly end.

Even the author Tolstoi, would have endured the shock
of the Bolshevik revolution better than Chekhov. He had a hardi­
er constitution, and had he been banished, or sentenced to
execution, until the last bullet was fired he would have been sure
he could have reasoned or written them out of it. Not so Chekhov. He would have known the inevitable fate that waited. Nor would he have been as resentful. He had tasted to some extent the burden of the landlord. However he would have continued, as he always had, inconsolable about such persons as are characterized in his great plays. The plight of the nobility did not appeal to him with much regret; it was rather the fate of the intelligentsia which he deplored.
4. CHEKHOV'S GREAT REALISTIC PLAYS AND SHORT STORIES

"The Cherry Orchard", which Chekhov finished writing in 1903, just a year before his death, is considered his best play. Certainly it is the most widely known and liked by Russian theatre audiences. This play centers around the hapless plight of a family of the failing intelligentsia. The heroine—Mme. Ranevsky, well known and beloved of Russian theatre audiences, (a part which Chekhov's famous actress wife, Olga Knipper, was renowned in) just cannot believe that her beautiful old orchard and home is about to be sold for debt. Right to the last she foolishly squanders her money. She never understands the down-to-earth side of life. As a result, her dear old home is sold, because she cannot raise the needed funds to pay off the long overhanging mortgage. Mme. Ranevsky is an interesting character study. Always she had squandered, lived comfortably and somewhat dangerously. After the death of her husband, she had become involved with a worthless man and had gone to live with him in Paris. Finally he deserts her, and she makes a futile attempt to take her own life. Later her little boy, Grishka, was accidentally drowned. She could not become reconciled to this tragedy. She then decided to return to Russia and her Cherry Orchard. She recounts, when reminiscing to her brother Gayev:

"And suddenly I felt a longing for Russia, for my native land."93

Her return there is most touching. She arrives in the early morning of a spring day. The cherry trees are in full bloom. Fondly she looks out of the old room in which she had been so tenderly cared for as a child. However, her unfortunate past weighs heavily on her mind, and she does not seem capable of much change. Yermolay Lopakhin, a tightfisted business man, urges her to have the orchard demolished and to lease the land to contractors for the building of bungalow. This plan he maintains might save her land for her. She would have done better to have carried out his plan, for in the end he buys the property himself, and carries out the plan, even to the cutting down of the last beautiful cherry tree. She is sure that her mother or aunt, who are still living, may send her enough money to save her home. But her hopes are not realized, the mortgage itself being more than the money they do eventually send to her.

Chekhov like Gogol and Tolstoi, voices his love for his native Russian land through his characters. The character Trofimov, who at one time had been employed by Mme. Ranevsky as a tutor for her little son, exclaims when addressing her daughter, Anya:

"The whole of Russia is our orchard. The land is great and beautiful, there are many wonderful places in it. Now, think Anya: your grandfather, your great-grandfather, and all your ancestors were serf-owners, proprietors of living souls. Don't you see that from every cherry in the orchard, from every leaf, from every trunk, human beings are looking at you; can't you hear their voices? . . . Oh, it is dreadful, your orchard is terrible, and when on an evening or at night I walk in it, the old bark on the trees glows dimly and the cherry trees seem to see in their sleep what happened a hundred, two
hundred years ago, and sombre visions visit them. Why say more? We have lagged behind, we are at least two hundred years behind, we have not yet achieved anything at all, we have no definite attitude toward the past, we do nothing but theorize, complain of nostalgia, or drink vodka. Indeed, it is so obvious: in order to start to live in the present, we must first of all redeem our past, have done with it, and its redemption can be achieved only through tremendous, incessant labour. Do realize it, Anya."94

Chekhov through his character reminisces over the spectacle of serfdom in Russia over a period of approximately two hundred years (1689-1861), and masterfully gives his musings on the times at hand. Anya, Mme. Ranevsky's daughter, must mend her ways, he says, and not succumb to the trivialities, which spoiled her mother's life. She must learn to live in harmony with her generation. Chekhov keenly sensed the oncoming change. The reader feels sure that Anya did not, and could not change her way of life. Just what became of her type in Russia is hard to estimate. Such persons surely are not to be found there now. At length, after much verbal contriving, Mme. Ranevsky's orchard is sold to the highest bidder. The buyer is none other than the disliked Lopakhin. As the play closes Chekhov explains dramatically:

"They go out, the stage is empty. The doors are heard all being locked, and then the carriages driving away. It grows quiet. In the stillness is audible the dull thud of an axe on a tree, a forlorn and melancholy

Footsteps are heard. Through the door on the right appears Feers. He is dressed as usual in a jacket and white waistcoat, with slippers on his feet. He is ill."

Feers, the eighty-seven year old servant, who had been born into the family's service even before the emancipation in 1861 then speaks:

"He goes to the door, trying the handle—It is locked. He exclaims—They have gone... (Sitting down on the sofa.) They have forgotten me... No matter... I'll sit down here for awhile... And I am sure Leonid Andreyevitch (Gayev) has not put on his fur coat, he's gone off in his coat. (With anxious sigh) I ought to have seen to it. Young people never stop to think. (He mutters something which cannot be understood) Life has gone by as though I hadn't lived... (lying down) You have no more strength left; there's nothing left, nothing—Oh, you.nyedotyopa!... (He lies without motion) There is a far-off sound, as though out of the sky, the sound of a snapped string, dying away, mournful. A stillness falls, and there is heard only, far away in the orchard, the thud of axes striking on trees."

Thus the curtain rings down on the poor old servant—forgotten—and left alone to die! As the carriages draw away, Mme. Ranevsky and her family hear the thud of the axes striking on the trees, and the audience is reminded of the tragedy that awaited the beautiful orchard. How quietly and yet how realistically Chekhov condemned ingratitude. How keenly he felt the charm of Mme. Ranevsky and her home—the laughter and the tears. He was indeed a very great realist, and a perfect example of the Russian intel-

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96 Ibid.
ligentsia as it existed at the close of the 19th Century.

Chekhov's well-known play, "The Seagull" echoes many of the strains heard in "The Cherry Orchard". Irene Arkadin, the actress is not so shallow or so impractical as Mme. Ranevsky, but she, or her son, Nina Zaryechny (who aspires to the stage), Boris Treegorin, the novelist, Sorin (Mme. Arkadin's brother), his steward—Ilya Shamrayev, his daughter, Masha, and Semyon Myedvyedenko, are all persons of similar emotions and aspirations, as were the characters in "The Cherry Orchard". In this play one again feels so strongly the suspense and uncertainty of the times. This is Chekhov's mood. Mme. Arkadin's son is a particularly miserable creature. He feels that no one really likes him for himself, but merely because he is the son of Mme. Arkadin. Instead of honouring his mother's achievements, he has become thoroughly spoiled. He is charming and very good-looking. Masha is in love with him. However he is interested in the would-be-actress, Nina. He ruthlessly kills a beautiful seagull on Zaryechny's estate, where the setting of this play takes place, the characters being guests there during several days. This gross act of Konstantin gives a hint as to his own fateful end, as despite his love for Nina he eventually shoots himself. The audience may feel this tragedy might have been better omitted. But quite often Chekhov's heroes can find nothing better to do than shoot themselves! Is the author's subconscious mind somehow satiated here in portraying such actions, by knowing that such characters after they are shot, are at least
finally safe from the executions which came later with the revolution? One cannot know. He did possess a somewhat prophetic and very intuitive nature. Chekhov certainly did not take his own life. He loved it dearly, passing on his keen and amusing observations to his fellow beings. He is said to have been fonder of writing than anything else in the world, and usually slipped away to his writing desk in the midst of social gatherings given in his home. He has a unique style of humour. It has been ably described by some critics as "laughter through tears". Many of the situations in his plays and stories are unusually humourous, but always in the background there is nostalgia; the weeping of Mme. Ranevsky, the despair of Konstantin Tryeplyev, and the tragic exit of Uncle Vanya—such strains as these echo throughout his works. With all the laughter, one cannot escape the tears, he seems to eternally keep reminding his readers and audiences.

In his little play within a play enacted in "The Seagull", which is supposed to be written by the author, Treegorin, and enacted in the play by Nina for the few guests assembled at the home of Zaryechny—the author expresses some of the opinions he envisions in the world to come after many thousand of years have lapsed and "the sad cycle" has been accomplished—everything has at last become petrified! The speaker tries to unravel the mysteries of eternity—and feels that after all human life has ceased from this earth there will still be, what is described as eternal matter expressed in rock and petrified substance. She voices the author's belief that a common universal soul must live
on and on in some mysterious shape. These surmisings do not make a great deal of sense, but the audience generally is pleased and diverted with their abstract ideas. No mention is made of an eternal Spirit, but rather "the devil", who is described as, "the father of eternal matter", is the character that, Dr. Dorn, one of the guests, finds most realistic.

After the play, the guests resume their trivial conversations. When Dr. Dorn, a rather unlovable but practical character, realizes that Konstantin has shot himself--his only wish is to remove his mother as quickly as possible from the scene. The reader ponders--does the play end realistically in Konstantin having shot himself? The end, it seems, could have been so much pleasanter for the audience. But Chekhov, here again, re-echoes realistically his nostalgic and revolutionary moods. Stark tragedy resulted for many in the years just following his death. Fatal shots rang out many times indeed, especially for persons of Konstantin's type, who had become n'er-do-wells. In Chekhov's plays the element of tragedy is regrettable, but remains realistic in the light of the era in which he lived, and that which directly followed. His sensitive soul, unfettered, caught the sombre warnings of the future, and breathed them unknowingly through the medium of his sensitive pen.

After "The Cherry Orchard" (1903), and "The Seagull" (1900), Chekhov's bestknown play is "Uncle Vanya" (1895) which was first written as "The Wood Demon". This play is a comedy in four acts, but the ending is hardly comical, and there is much
food for serious thought throughout its discourse. Here again the characters are similar to those in both "Cherry Orchard" and "Seagull". They are the same sensitive persons of the Russian intelligentsia, most of them consciously or unconsciously wearied and bewildered by the unpredictable and everchanging times in which they lived.

Chekhov's many stories run into the hundreds, and have been edited in nine volumes. Among the best known translated into English are: "The Black Monk" (1894), "My Life" (1896), "The House with the Mezzanine" (1896), "Typhus" (1887), "Gooseberries" (1898), "In Exile" (1892), "The Lady with the Toy Dog" (1898), "Goussiev" (1890), "A Moscow Hamlet" (1888), "Schulz" (1896-97), "Life is Wonderful" (1885) and "A Fairy Tale" (1890). Perhaps Chekhov's greatest novel of the last period of his life is that known as "The Steppe". It chiefly concerns his visit to the Ukraine in 1888, and is also known as "The Story of a Journey". Strictly speaking it belongs to the group of descriptive narrations, rather than the novels. This work actually contains no plot. It is Chekhov's marvelous impressions during his visit to the Ukraine. He wonderfully describes the subtle beauty he felt in the Russian steppe-land particularly during the summer evenings. These descriptions are rare in the realm of all realistic literature. They are narrated with such vividness and their moods become so hauntingly realistic, that one feels actually transported both in body and soul to the scenes described:
"More and more frequently in the midst of the monotonous crackle, disturbing the motionless air, someone’s astonishing "Ah! ah!" (is heard,) and one can hear the cry of a raving bird, which has not yet fallen asleep. Broad shadows come and go on the plains, like clouds on the sky, and in the incomprehensible distance, if you look at it for a long time, there arise and pile up foggy and fantastic images. You go on an hour or two. There turns up on your way a silent, ancient grave, or stone woman, noiselessly there flies over the earth the night bird. And then in the crackle of insects, in the suspicious figures and graves, in the light blue sky, in the light of the moon, and the flight of the night bird, in everything you see and hear, seems to appear the triumph of beauty, youth, and flowering of strength and a passionate thirst of life." 97

Chekhov caught the spirit of the mood of his generation—that of the Russian intelligentsia just before the revolution, as few artists have portrayed a mood in any language. An appreciation of this fact is witnessed particularly in the fact that in the present day Soviet Union "The Cherry Orchard" and the dramatization of other Chekhov’s plays and stories are still among the most popular in the repertoire of the great Moscow Art Theatre. Regimes of one kind or another may come and go, but the music of the soul and the nostalgic longings glimpsed in the realistic plays and stories of Anton Chekhov must remain unchanged, as long as men and women are sensitive to the beauty and pathos of life around them.

5. CHEKHOV'S AMAZING GRASP OF REALISM TO THE LAST OF HIS CAREER.

Anton Chekhov undoubtedly remained a great writer of realistic plays and stories until his untimely death in 1904. He was ever fond of and searching out the truth about human beings and nature. It was a great tragedy that his death came so soon after his happy marriage to Olga Knipper, an actress of the Moscow Art Theatre:

"Chekhov's wedding to Olga Knipper took place on Friday, May 25th, 1901, in a small Moscow church in the presence of only four witnesses, two of them Olga Knipper's uncle and brother. None of Chekhov's family was present. His brother Ivan had been to see him a few hours before the wedding, but he did not tell him anything about it. And he made sure that none of his numerous friends turned up at his wedding by arranging with Vishnevsky to invite them all to a special luncheon. While they were all waiting and wondering what the idea of the luncheon was, Chekhov and Olga Knipper got married, and, after paying a visit to Olga's mother, took a train to Nizhny-Novgorod, where they went to see Gorky, who was under house arrest at the time. From Nizhny-Novgorod they went by boat to Ufa and from there by coach to the sanatorium at Axenovo, where they spent their honeymoon.

'In Axenovo', Olga Knipper writes, 'Chekhov liked the countryside, the long shadows on the steppe after six o'clock, the snorting of the horses in the droves, the flora, the river Dema to which we drove to fish one day. The sanatorium was in a beautiful oak wood, but everything there was rather primitive and uncomfortable. At first Chekhov liked the 'kumys', but soon he got tired of it and after six weeks we returned to Yalta'. Chekhov loved to sit on the steps of their Axenovo bungalow and watch the sunset, the distant hills and the wide steppe.
They returned to Yalta at the beginning of July. Soon Olga Knipper left for Moscow, where the rehearsals at the Moscow Art Theatre were due to begin on August 20th, and Chekhov joined her there on September 16th.98

Chekhov was anxious that his wife's marriage should not in any way impede her career, and he often went to the theatre with her for rehearsals. He is said to have been especially fascinated while watching the actors and actresses put on their makeup! His wife was always exhorting him to write, and not to let his talent lie dormant. He finished "The Bishop" in February, 1902, and wrote his last story, "The Bethrothed" in October of the same year.

In June, 1904 he was ordered to Badenweiler in the Black Forest as a last resort to gain his health. At first he seemed to improve but the end came suddenly on the night of July 15th.

"His last words were: 'I'm dying'; then in a very low voice to the doctor in German 'Ich sterbe'. His pulse was getting weaker. He sat doubled up on his bed, propped up by pillows. Suddenly, without uttering a sound, he fell sideways. He was dead. His face looked very young, contented and almost happy. The doctor went away. A fresh breeze blew into the room, bringing with it the smell of newly mown hay. The sun was rising slowly from behind the woods. Outside, the birds began to stir and twitter, and in the room the silence was broken by the loud buzzing of a huge black moth, which was whirling round and round the electric light, and by the soft sobbing of Olga Knipper as she leaned with her head against Chekhov's body."100


100 Ibid., p. 388.
Thus the curtain rang down quietly and slowly on Chekhov's life as it does on the stage after one of his inspiring plays. From then on he must be remembered in the "laughter and tears" he has brought his countless readers. He would rather they remembered him in his happy roamings of an enchanted evening over the beautiful steppe-land--humming and bursting with life. He would have no mourning or muffled funeral drums. He loved life and wrote realistically about it to the last.
CHAPTER VIII

REALISM AS ILLUSTRATED IN THE WRITING OF

MAXIM GORKI

(1868-1936)

1. Brief Sketch of the Life of Gorki

2. A Child of the Revolution

3. Gorki's Innate Longing for a Faith in his Early Days, and the Amazing Genius of his Early Realistic Short Stories

4. Gorki's Later Works—Concentrated on a Theme Difficult to Grasp—His Faith Grown into "The Quest of God"

5. Gorki's Part in the Russian Theatre After the Revolution
197

1. BRIEF SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF GORKI

"Opening the book at random, I read the words: "A land unappointed that shall produce a nourisher of humanity, a being that shall put forth the bounty of his hand to feed every creature."

"A nourisher of humanity". Before my eyes that "nourisher" lay outspread, a nourisher overlaid with dry and fragrant herbage. As I gazed, in the haze of a vision, upon that nourisher's dark and enigmatical face, I saw also the thousands of men who have seamed this earth with furrows, to the end that dead things should become things of life."

"Nay, and never would this man rise again?"

—Maxim Gorki

"Maxim Gorky (pseudonym of A. M. Pshkov, 1868-1936) had a truly wonderful career. He was not yet thirty when he became the most popular writer and the most discussed man in Russia. After a period of dazzling celebrity, during which he was currently placed by the side of Tolstoy and unquestionably above Chekhov, his fame suffered an eclipse, and he was almost forgotten by the Russian educated classes.

Gorky has told us the story of his "Childhood" and drawn unforgettable portraits of his close and harsh grandfather and of his charming, beauty-loving, and kind grandmother. His grandfather sent him out into the world to earn his bread, and for more than ten years he made the acquaintance of every conceivable kind of drudgery. At fifteen Gorky tried to get into a school at Kazan, "but as", he says, "It was not the fashion to give education for nothing," he did not succeed in the attempt. In Kazan he came into contact with students who sowed in him the seeds of his future revolutionism, and he became familiar with the life of those "ex-people" who were to become his stepping stone to celebrity. Leaving Kazan, he moved from place to place over the whole of southeastern and southern Russia, taking odd jobs, working hard, and often remaining without work. He soon left his work and again went wandering over Russia. During these wanderings he began to write. In the following years he continued writing for the provincial press and was soon able to rely on his literary work for a livelihood. But it was not till 1895 that he definitely entered into the "big-literature", when Korolenko
had one of his stories "Chelkash" printed in the influential monthly "Russkoye bogatstvo". Though he continued working for the provincial press, he was now a welcome guest in the Petersburg magazines. In 1898 his stories came out in book form (two volumes).

Their success was tremendous and, for a Russian author, unprecedented in the strict sense of the word. From a promising provincial journalist, Gorky became the most famous writer of his country. From this date to the First Revolution, Gorky was, next to Tolstoy, the figure in Russia that aroused the greatest public interest. Interviews and portraits of him flooded the press, and everyone thought it his duty to have a look at his person. International fame was not slow to follow.

In Petersburg, Gorky came in contact with the Marxists and became himself a Marxist and a Social Democrat. It was also for a poem by Gorky that the review was suppressed. This poem was the "Song of the Petrel": the Russian name for "Petrel" means storm messenger, and the "Song" was a very transparent allegory of the coming Revolutionary storm. It was easy to become a martyr in Russia about 1900, and Gorky was very soon arrested and banished to Nizhny.

In 1902 he was elected an honorary member of the Imperial Academy of Science. This was an unprecedented act in regard to a writer of thirty-three. Gorky played a prominent part in the First Revolution. In January 1905 he was arrested for taking part in the First Revolution. In January 1905 he was arrested for taking part in a protest against the "9th of January", and his arrest became the cause for world-wide demonstrations in his favor.

In 1906 he left Russia for the United States. His journey through Finland and Scandinavia was a triumphal procession. His arrival in New York was equally triumphant. On his return to Europe he settled in Capri, where he remained till shortly before the first World War, and where he became immensely popular with the natives. His Italian popularity was increased by the active part he took in the relief work after the terrible "Messian" catastrophe.

When the first World War broke out, Gorky took up a distinctly international and "défaitiste" position, and in 1917 he gave his support to his old
friends the Bolsheviks. But this support was quite unconditional, and though the balance of Gorky's influence was in favour of Lenin and his policy, he did not this time identify himself with the party, but rather tried to assume the role of a non-party umpire and champion of peace and culture.

The debt of Russian culture to him is very great. Everything that was done between 1917 and 1921 to save the writers and other higher intellectuals from starvation was due to Gorky. This was chiefly arrived at by a whole system of centralized literary establishments where poets and novelists were set to work at translations.

In 1921 Gorky left Russia and settled in Germany. In 1924 he moved to Sorrento, in Italy, returning to the Soviet Union in 1928 for the celebration of his sixtieth birthday. The following year he returned for good as the unquestioned dean of Soviet letters, laboring indefatigably for the improvement of literary standards and the encouragement and training of younger writers. He also became an ardent apologist for the Stalinist regime, and his death in 1936 was according to the allegations of Prosecutor Vyshinsky two years later, the result of a Trotskyite plot.\footnote{D.S. Mirski, \textit{A History of Russian Literature}. New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1949, pp. 376, 380.}
2. A CHILD OF THE REVOLUTION

In the works of Maxim Gorki the Russian revolution really comes to life. He was in every sense a true child of the Revolution. During his earlier years he was subjected to abject poverty. He experienced the soul-searching exigencies that often develop Marxian tendencies; although Gorki was never a real Bolshevik of the cruel type. His literary works are written with great skill from his earliest efforts to his more mature and voluminous texts. The reasons which brought about the Revolution are keenly and realistically portrayed in Gorki's writings, and yet they never become entirely brutal. Gorki witnessed such dreadful examples of brutality all through his life from infancy and was somewhat subdued as a result of these experiences. He believed rightly in the cause behind the Revolution and he knew the privations which kept the regime of Czar Nicholas II intact. Often he was the victim of dire poverty and his stories give accounts of starvation, bleak suffering and the inhuman conditions under which many persons of his time were compelled to eke out their existence.

Gorki lived to witness the Revolution. He was the first author commented on in this series who actually experienced the great upheaval that took place in 1917. Here in the most gigantic transition in the history of the Russian people the reader finds Gorki believing in the spirit of it all, but not in many of the methods of cold steel that made up part of the sum and total of
Bolshevism. Gorki tried valiantly towards the end of his life to lead the Revolutionaries in the great traditions of Russian literature, but at length some antagonistic clique is thought to have snuffed out his life in 1936. After working in many menial jobs he gained a little business training, and was able to work as secretary in a lawyer's office. Here his literary talent was noted, and soon after he began to publish his first short stories, which still remain among his outstanding contributions to Russian realistic literature. Some of his longer novels will never be read extensively, particularly in this country. Characters such as Klim Samgin would hardly make a realistic appeal to readers in contemporary North American civilization. Such writing made altogether a quest from the standpoint of spiritual life, politics, and economics in the Russian social structure of that time, which were so removed from Western ideals and background, that they seem tedious and often meaningless to our readers. However Gorki's short stories and his play, "Mother", which describes a pathetic facet of the revolution very realistically, is likely always to be read and appreciated by sensitive and searching readers of any tongue.

Gorki's most famous short stories are written around little incidents in which he himself took part, or was the observer of in his early youth. They have a freshness and charm that is typical of realistic Russian writing. In his younger days Gorki seems to have experienced an innate spiritual longing,
which he could not quite understand. This quality may have been inherited from his maternal grandmother, who was an unusual person--marvelously courageous--one who made the best of heart-rending meagre conditions. Until her death she kept encouraging her daughter and little grandson, who had been so sadly bereaved by the loss of their beloved husband and father.
Gorki's innate longing for an understanding of spiritual truth is expressed in his remarkable short story, "The Dead Man". This story is an account of his youthful wanderings, as a tramp over the Russian countryside. He stops to beg a morsel of bread at a hut, only to find that the old man there has died, and the poor old woman and those with her ask if he will be kind enough to read a prayer over the corpse of the deceased before burial. He complies with the request, although he finds the book handed to him is not the usual prayer book, but instead a grammar of the Church-Slavonic dialect! Just as he is about to pronounce some kind of a benediction on the one about to be laid to rest, the half-intoxicated priest arrives and proceeds with the service more professionally. He learns from the old woman that this priest has for years been the victim of drunkenness, due to grief caused by stories circulated about his wife:

"And, the next moment, a bulk so large and shapeless that it might well have been the darkness of the night embodied stumbled against the outer side of the door, grunted; hiccuped, and, lurching head foremost into the hut, grew well nigh to the ceiling. Then it waved a gigantic hand, crossed itself in the direction of the candle, and bending forward until its forehead almost touched the feet of the corpse, queried under its breath:
"How now Vasil?"

Thereafter the figure vented a sob, whilst a strong smell of vodka arose in the room, and from the doorway the old woman said in an appealing voice:

"Pray give him the book, Father Demid".

"No indeed! Why should I? I intend to do the reading myself." 

The picture of the besotted priest rises before one's imagination. All is still in the quiet little cottage, yet along with the ragged, eager young adventurer, the old drunken priest, the corpse, and the deserted old woman, one feels that perhaps the eternal Spirit of God might be there too. This story creates an unusually quiet, meditative, and thoughtful mood. This is part of the genius of the Russian writers and their realistic interpretations. In this light the writings of Gorki deserve the title of realism in every sense. At length in the story, he leaves the dreary scene with the mumblings of the old priest still echoing in his ears. He does not take a small coin offered him by the grief-stricken old woman, but proceeds on his way with only a crust of bread which she has given to him. He is off again as the sun comes over the hills, and Gorki ends this tale with the unusual lines:

"O Thou of intangible greatness
Reveal now that greatness to me!
Enwrap me within the great vestment
Of light which encompasseth Thee!
That, with Thy uprising, my substance
May come all-prevailing to be!"


103 Ibid., p. 276.
Other short stories containing the same simple realistic charm contained in "The Dead Man", which have been translated into English include: - "The Icebreaker", "Gubin", "Nilushka", "On a River Steamer", "A Woman", "In a Mountain Defile" and "Kalinin".
4. GORKI'S LATER WORKS—CONCENTRATED ON A THEME

   DIFFICULT TO GRASP—HIS FAITH GROWN INTO

   "THE QUEST OF GOD"

Gorki's writings of the later period are more difficult for the Western reader to grasp as has already been mentioned. Through them he weaves his sentiments on the Revolution and also his mystical philosophy. The novels of note which belong to the period 1899-1910 are "Foma Gordeyev", "Three of Them", "Okurov City", "A Confession" and "Matvey Kozhemyakin":

"Of the later novels, "Okurov City" and "A Confession" are better than the others, first of all because they are shorter. "A Confession" is, as far as about the middle, a good story of the adventures of the tramp after truth, with a rapid development of narrative on which there lies a pale and distant (very distant but unmistakable) reflex of Leskov's narrative masterpiece, "The Enchanted Wanderer". 104

Works of the period after 1910 include three volumes of autobiographical series, "Childhood" (1913), and a volume of "Recollections" commenting on his reminiscences of such well-known personages as Tolstoi, Korolenko, Chekhov, Andreyev and others. "Notes from a Diary" was published in 1924.

In speaking of Gorki's great genius, D. S. Mirski, the literary critic, has commented, "He is a realist—a great realist finally freed from all the scales of romance, tendency, or dogma". Gorki believed to the last of his life that the virtues which must ultimately save humanity were "enlightenment, beauty and .

sympathy". In "Notes from a Diary" the patriotic Gorki shines through with superb strength and everlasting faith in his country:

"Originality is the keynote. Some of the characters are those of very eminent men: two fragments are devoted to Alexander Bloc. Memorable portraits are drawn of the well-known Old Believer millionaire Bugrov, who himself used to cultivate Gorky as an original; and of Anna Schmidt, the mystical correspondent of Vladimir Soloveiv. With the exception of "Recollections of Tolstoy", this last book is perhaps the best Gorky ever wrote."105

In the latter novels of Gorki his characters are either in pursuit of the religion which became known as "bogostroitelstvo" (the making of God), as contrasted with "bogoiskatelstvo" (the quest of God). Gorki thought in his latter days that the people must reconstruct their own true concept of God again through a return to ancient miracles and the old faith which was rooted and grounded in the devoutness of the Russian Christians of the 17th Century, and which was subsequently lost through the secularization of the church in the succeeding centuries. This kind of faith is understood better by the Russians of Eastern tradition where every man from the tramp to the privileged had some great "quest of God" hidden deeply in his soul, and which he was striving to understand and unravel.

In the West we have attained a better expression of individual freedom and enterprise through our Western Christianity and political system, but we are still behind the East in the realm of individual expression of religious beliefs and phil-

osophies. Unfortunately many of us here, although able to express ourselves freely, have no inner spiritual life. The peoples of the East are more meditative. Thus Gorki describes through many hundreds of pages in his longer novels, the spiritual struggles and inner quests of man in the shaping of his beliefs. After having read these books, the average Western reader is often left in somewhat of a quandary, as to the exact meaning of many of the terms used in describing Eastern trends of mystical thinking.
All people who have studied the life of Maxim Gorki know that he returned to Russia in 1929, after living for some years on the Isle of Capri. He threw himself wholeheartedly into the recovery of his country in the field of the arts. As the biographical note states at the beginning of these remarks—he spent all of his time and energy in trying to encourage and sustain the artists during those dreadful years of the late twenties and thirties in post-Revolutionary Russia.

Perhaps his greatest single contribution to the arts apart from his books was the part he played in the reconstruction of the Moscow Art Theatre in Moscow founded in 1898. He became one of the chief contributors and supporters of the actors of the new repertoire after the revolution. Fortunately the Bolsheviks even during their worst purges of the late thirties under Stalin's iron hand still encouraged in their works of genius the great artists of the time. Great actors, actresses, ballet dancers and others were paid adequate salaries and given good living conditions under which to develop their talents. Gorki contributed plays to the Russian theatre which include—"Suburbans", "The Children of the Sun", "The Barbarians", "Enemies", and "Vassa Zheleznova" and also acted himself in many productions of the famous Russian theatre. His best-loved plays are "The Lower Depths" and "Mother", which were and still are frequently
applauded by large audiences. The setting of the latter is said to have been portrayed with such realism in the Bolshoi Theatre that members of the audience have left the Theatre spell-bound and speechless. Along with Anton Chekhov, Gorki must ever be remembered as one who tried throughout his lifetime to advance the literature and arts of this native land, which he continued to love with a deep regard despite the conditions, which ultimately brought his untimely death. Like Pushkin he believed that such conditions would ultimately give place to those of peace and prosperity in the experience of the peoples of the vast Russian lands.
CONCLUSION

The great 19th Century Russian realistic writers have expressed life just as it appeared to them. All who admire good literature must ever be grateful to these authors for giving the candid descriptions of Russian living and ideals of the time in which they were written. The amazing trend in writing portrayed in the 19th Century, known as realism, is one which deserves lasting praise from all serious students of literature. Added to their literary genius was their heroic and transparent interpretations of reality. Each of the masters considered in the preceding pages contributed immeasurably to the new trend, and each in his own individual way.

In Pushkin's works the trend was portrayed through his immortal verse,—his reminiscences of the Old Kievan Kingdom, of Poltava and in his exhortations to faith and liberty. Lermontov's genius has given us lasting word-images of the picturesque and treacherous Caucasus with its heroic adventure, both grim and gay. In similar vein Gogol wrote of adventures in the beauteous Ukraine and of all Russia speeding wildly on troika wheels. Realism is somewhat subdued in the writings of Ivan Turgenev, but its spirit is not entirely absent. He makes his plea for the unfortunate serf and exhorts the older generation to be tolerant with the new. Dostoievski presents to the reader the perplexing and realistic problems pertaining to 19th Century
Russian Orthodoxy, Slavophilism and the reasoning of the human mind. Tolstoi, considered the greatest writer of the realistic group, brought his readers closer to the spirit of Christian truth. We are ever grateful to Chekhov for his realistic plays and short stories—heavy with nostalgic longings for a passing regime. The writings of Maxim Gorki—particularly his early short stories, make an indelible impression on the reader seeking a realistic interpretation of life. Always with Gorki was the unfailing search towards "enlightenment, beauty and sympathy" even under the most pathetic and difficult conditions.

Through the writing of all these authors the realistic ideal was adhered to, giving their works a vitality and realness unknown before in the world of writing. Their torch, although in some measure dimmed, has not been extinguished. May Russian writers of to-morrow carry it proudly, and fan its flame into an even greater radiance.
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