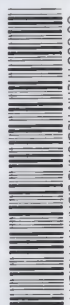


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Poet Lore Plays

SUMMER FOLK

(DATCHNIKI)

MAXIM GORKI

*Richard G. Badger, Publisher, Boston*

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# Poet Lore

VOLUME XVI

AUTUMN 1905

NUMBER III

## SUMMER-FOLK\*

[DATCHNIKI]

*Scenes from Life*

BY MAXIM GORKI

*Translated from the Russian by Aline Delano*

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

- SERGUEY VASSILIEVITCH BASSOFF, *Lawyer*, 40.  
 VARVARA MICHAILOVNA, *his wife*, 27.  
 KALERIA, *his sister*, 29.  
 VLASS, *brother of BASSOFF'S wife*, 25.  
 PIOTR IVANOVITCH SUSSLOFF, *Civil Engineer*, 42.  
 YULIA FILLIPOVNA, *his wife*, 30.  
 KYRILL AKIMOVITCH DUDAKOFF, *Physician*, 40.  
 OLGA ALEKSEYEVNA, *his wife*, 35.  
 IAKOV PETROVITCH SHALIMOFF, *Author*, 40.  
 PAVEL SERGUEYEVITCH RUMIN, 32.  
 MARYA LVOVNA, *Physician*, 37.  
 SEMION SEMIONYTCH DVOETCHIE [*Colon*], *Sussloff's uncle*, 55.  
 NIKALAY PETROVITCH ZAMYSLOFF, *Bassoff's junior partner*, 28.  
 ZIMIN, *a student*, 23.  
 PUSTOBAIKA [*Talker*], *First Watchman*, 50.  
 KROPILKIN, *Second Watchman*.  
 SASHA, *Bassoff's Maid-Servant*.

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A woman with a bandaged cheek.

MR. SEMINOFF.

A lady in a yellow gown

A young man in a plaid suit

A young lady in blue

A young lady in pink

A Cadet

A gentleman in a tall hat

Theatrical  
Amateurs

SCENE: *A Country place near St. Petersburg.*

TIME: *The Present.*

Act I. A Summer room in Bassoff's country-house.

Act II. A Field in front of the house.

Act III. A Glade in the Forest.

Act IV. Same as Act II.

## ACT I

**T**HE Bassoffs' Country-house. A large room which is both parlor and dining-room. In the rear, to the left, an open door leading to BASSOFF'S study, to the right, a door into his wife's bed-room. These rooms are separated by a corridor, of which the entrance is draped by a dark curtain. To the right a window and a wide door leading to the veranda, to the left two windows. A large dining-table in the middle. A grand piano opposite the door of the study. Wicker furniture. The sofa near the entrance has a gray linen cover. Evening. BASSOFF at the desk in his study has a lamp with a green shade before him. He writes and hums, then turns his head, listens, and peers into the twilight of the larger room. VARVARA comes out of her room noiselessly, strikes a match, holds it up,

and looks about. *The match goes out. As she moves in the darkness toward the window, she stumbles against a chair.*

*Bassoff.* Who's that?

*Varvara.* I.

*Bas.* Oh!

*Var.* Did you take the candle?

*Bas.* No.

*Var.* Ring for Sasha.

*Bas.* Has Vlass come?

*Var.* [*near the veranda door*]. I don't know.

*Bas.* Absurd house! Electric bells and chinks in the wall! — and a creaking floor. — [*Hums.*] Varya, where are you?

*Var.* Here.

*Bas.* [*gathering up his papers*] Is your room draughty?

*Var.* It is.

*Bas.* So I thought. [*SASHA enters.*]

*Var.* Bring a light, Sasha.

*Bas.* Sasha, has Vlass Michailovitch come?

*Sasha.* Not yet. [*She goes out and returns with a lamp which she places on the table beside the easy chair. Empties the ash-tray and straightens the table-cloth on the dining-table. VARVARA pulls down the window-shade, takes a book from the book-case and seats herself in the easy chair.*]

*Bas.* [*good naturedly*]. Vlass is getting unreliable — and lazy. — He has acted very — absurdly, of late.

*Var.* Will you have some tea?

*Bas.* No; I am going to the Susloffs'.

*Var.* Sasha, go over to Olga Alekseyevna and find out if she can come and take tea with me. [*SASHA goes out.*]

*Bas.* [*locking his papers in the desk*]. There! That's done. [*He comes out of the study and stretches himself.*] I wish you'd tell him so, Varya, without hurting his feelings.

*Var.* What do you want me to say?

*Bas.* Well! — that he ought to pay more attention to his duties. Don't you think so?

*Var.* Very well. I'll tell him. But it seems to me you ought not to

speak so of him before Sasha.

*Bas.* [*looking around the room*]. Oh! That's all right. You can't hide things from servants. — How bleak it looks here! It would be well to cover up these bare walls. — Hang some frames — or pictures — It looks forlorn! Now then I'm off. Give me your little paw. How indifferent you are to me! You hardly say a word. What's the reason? And you look so solemn. Tell me! What's the matter?

*Var.* I thought you were in a hurry to go to the Susloffs'.

*Bas.* Yes. I must be going. I haven't played chess with him for an age. And I haven't kissed your little paw, for an age, either. How's that? Strange, isn't it?

*Var.* [*concealing a smile*]. We had better postpone talk about me until you are more at leisure. It's not important, is it?

*Bas* [*reassured*]. Of course not. I only said so because — What can be the matter with you? You are a charming woman — clever — frank — and so forth. If you had any grievance against me, you would say so. — Why do your eyes shine? — Are you not feeling well?

*Var.* No, I am well.

*Bas.* Let me suggest that you busy yourself with something, my dear Varya! You are reading too much. All excesses are injurious, you know. It's a fact!

*Var.* Don't forget that fact when you are drinking red wine with Susloff.

*Bas.* You are sarcastic. But all these spicy, up-to-date books are worse than wine, I believe. I am in earnest. There is something narcotic in them. — They are all written by these neurotic, morbid gentlemen. [*Yawning.*] You are soon to behold a real author, as the children say. I am interested to see what he's like, now. No doubt he has a high opinion of himself. — These public characters are consumed by ambitions, generally abnormal. — Kaleria, too, isn't normal, though, strictly speaking, she isn't much of an author. She'll be pleased to see Shalimoff. She ought to marry him! I mean it! She is getting old, — yes, she is rather old, — and she whines as though she had a chronic tooth-ache — and she's no great beauty, either.

*Var.* What senseless talk, Serguey!

*Bas.* You think so? Never mind. Nobody hears us. — I like to

chatter now and then. [*A dry cough is heard behind the drapery.*] Who's that?

*Sussloff* [*Behind the drapery*] I.

*Bas.* [*goes to meet him*]. I was just leaving for your house.

*Sus.* [*silently exchanges greetings with VAR.*] Come along! I came to fetch you. — You haven't been in town today?

*Bas.* No. Why?

*Sus* [*smiling with a grimace*]. They say your junior partner won 2,000 roubles at the Club.

*Bas.* You don't say so!

*Sus.* Won it, — from some drunken merchant.

*Var.* Just as you usually put it.

*Sus.* How is that?

*Var.* This way: — he 'won,' you say. Then you add emphatically, 'from some drunken fellow.'

*Sus.* [*with a smirk*]. I didn't emphasize.

*Bas.* What of it? If he had said Zamysloff made the merchant drunk and then won from him, that *would* be bad taste. Come along, Piotr, — Varya, when Vlass comes — Oh! there he is!

*Vlass* [*enters with an old portfolio*]. You missed me, Patron? I am glad to hear it! [*Addresses SUSSLOFF with a mock warning*] There's a man just arrived who's looking for you! He is going about from house to house inquiring loudly where you live. [*He goes to his sister.*] How are you, Varya?

*Var.* How are you?

*Sus.* The deuce! It must be my uncle.

*Bas.* Then it will not be convenient for you to have me?

*Sus.* Nonsense! What do I care for my uncle, whom I hardly know! I have not laid eyes on him for ten years.

*Bas* [*to VLASS*]. This way. [*They go into the study.*]

*Sus.* [*lighting a cigarette*]. Won't you come, too?

*Var.* No. Is your uncle poor?

*Sus.* No. Rich. I suppose you think it's only poor relations I don't like.

*Var.* I don't know.

*Sus.* [*coughs irritably*]. Now let me tell you that Zamysloff of yours



will some day compromise Serguey. Indeed, he will! He's a rogue! You don't believe me?

*Var.* [*quietly*]. I don't wish to talk to you about him.

*Sus.* All right. [*After a silence.*] And you—I suppose you're proud of your directness. Take care!—The part of a direct person is a difficult one. To play it even passably, one must have lots of backbone, audacity, and wit.—I don't want to hurt your feelings.

*Var.* I don't care.

*Sus.* You don't care to argue? Perhaps you really agree with me?

*Var.* [*simply*] I don't know how to argue.—I don't know how to discuss.

*Sus.* [*gloomily*]. Pray don't resent it. It's hard to believe that there are persons who dare to be true to themselves.

*Sasha* [*entering*]. Olga Alekseyevna desired me to say that she is coming. Shall I get the tea ready?

*Var.* Yes, please.

*Sasha.* Nikolai Petrovitch is coming, too. [*Goes out.*]

*Sus.* [*going to the study door*] Serguey, are you coming soon?

*Bas.* Yes.

*Zamysloff* [*enters*]. My greetings to my patroness! How do you do, Piotr Ivanovitch.

*Sus.* [*coughing*]. My respects! Well, you are a butterfly!

*Zam.* I am light-hearted! My purse is as light as my heart and my head.

*Sus.* [*with irony*]. I will not dispute as to the head and heart, but as to the purse—they say you won it away from somebody at the Club.

*Zam* [*softly*]. You should have said I won it without adding more. To win away from anybody is said of a man who cheats.

*Var.* We are always hearing something sensational about you. That's the fate of uncommon men!

*Zam.* At any rate when I hear some scandal about myself I begin to be convinced of my own excellence.—Unfortunately I won only 42 roubles.

*Sus.* [*coughs, goes to the left and looks out of the window.*]

*Bas* [*coming out*]. Is that all! And I was dreaming of champagne.—Well, have you anything to say? I am in a hurry. . . .

*Zam.* Are you going out? Then I'll speak to you later, there's no

hurry. — Varvara Michailovna, I am so sorry you were not at the play. Yulia Phillipovna acted splendidly!

*Var.* I know; she generally acts well.

*ZAM.* [*with enthusiasm*]. She has talent! Cut my head off if she hasn't.

*Sus.* [*smiling sarcastically*]. And if it were cut off? What would you be without it? Well! Let's go, Serguey. Au revoir, Varvara Michailovna. Your servant. [*He bows to Zamysloff.*]

*Bas.* [*peeping into the study where VLASS is sorting papers*]. So! by nine tomorrow morning you'll have all these papers copied! — can I count on it?

*Vlass.* You may. And may you have a sleepless night, honored patron!

[SUSSLOFF and BASSOFF go out.]

*Zam.* I am going, too. — Pray give me your hand, my patroness.

*Var.* Stay and have some tea.

*Zam.* I will come later if you will allow me. [*He goes out briskly.*]

*Vlass* [*coming out of the study*]. Varya, are they to have tea here?

*Var.* Call Sasha. [*She places her hands on his shoulders.*] Why do you look so tired?

*Vlass* [ *rubs his cheek against her hand*]. I am tired. I was in Court from 10 until 3. Then from 3 on, I ran about on errands, and had no time to dine.

*Var.* You are only a clerk. You should be above that, Vlass.

*Vlass.* [*sheepishly*]. One should "aim for the top," I know. — But Varya, — since I love examples, I will take the example of the chimney-sweep on the roof. — To be sure he has climbed higher than any one, but is he higher than himself?

*Var.* Don't be silly. Why don't you look out for another kind of work, more useful, more important?

*Vlass* [*making believe he is excited*]. Madame! I take a strenuous, though indirect part in the defence and guardianship of the sacred right of property — and you call this useless labor! What degenerate ideas!

*Var.* You don't wish to talk seriously?

[SASHA enters.]

*Vlass* [*to SASHA*]. Highly honored lady! Be generous, bring some

tea and also something to eat.

*Sasha.* I'll bring it directly. Would you like some croquettes, too?

*Vlass.* Yes, croquettes, or anything like that. I wait!

[SASHA goes out.]

*Vlass* [*puts his arm round his sister's waist and walks with her up and down*]. Well! How goes it?

*Var.* Somehow I feel sad, dear Vlass. You know, sometimes, all of a sudden — without thinking, one feels as though one were in prison. — Everything seems strange and unfriendly — useless — and no one seems to be living in earnest. — You, for instance, — you are joking, fooling. —

*Vlass* [*assumes a comic pose*].

Don't chide me, my friend,  
For my often joking;  
I wish to hide my woe  
By my merry joking —

My own verses! far superior to Kaleria's! But I refrain. They are 5 yds. long. — My dear sister! You want me to be serious? So a one-eyed man wants everyone else to have only one eye.

[SASHA enters with the tea things and bustles around the table. The rattle of the night watchman is heard outside.]

*Var.* Don't, Vlass! Do be sensible.

*Vlass.* Very well [*sadly*]. [*A pause.*] But you are not generous, sisterkin! All day I am mum; I copy all sorts of petitions and complaints . . . naturally I feel like chattering at night.

*Var.* Now, I feel more like going somewhere, where simple, wholesome people live, where they talk differently and work earnestly, at something that everyone needs. — You understand?

*Vlass* [*thoughtfully*]. Yes, I understand. But you cannot escape, Varya!

*Var.* I may. — I will go somewhere. [*A pause.*] [SASHA brings the samovar]. Shalimoff will probably arrive tomorrow.

*Vlass* [*yawning*]. I don't care for his last things. — They are dull and uninteresting. They lack power.

*Var.* I saw him once at a party. — I was a schoolgirl then. — I remember as he came into the room he looked so strong, so energetic with



his unruly thick hair, and the frank, open face of a man who knows what he loves and what he hates—who realizes his power. I looked at him and trembled for joy that such men exist. Yes, I was happy! I remember how energetically he shook his head; how a dark strand of hair fell over his forehead; and I can still see his inspired eyes. That was six or seven years ago, no, eight years.

*Vlass.* You dream like a schoolgirl over a new teacher! Beware, sister! Authors are masters in the art of conquest over women's hearts.

*Var.* Don't say that, Vlass, that's vulgar.

*Vlass [warmly].* Don't be angry, Varya.

*Var.* Can't you understand that I am looking for him . . . as I look for Spring!—My life is hard to bear.

*Vlass.* I understand, I understand. My life, too, is hard.—In fact I am ashamed to live.—I can't see what's coming.

*Var.* Yes, yes, Vlass! But why do you——?

*Vlass.* Act like a clown? I don't like to have any one see that I feel unhappy.

*Kaleria [entering].* What a beautiful night. And there you are,—and what's more there's an odor of charcoal fumes here.

*Vlass [awakening].* Good evening, Miss 'Abstraction.'

*Kal.* The forest is so silent, so plunged in thought. Oh, it's beautiful! The moon is soft, the shadows deep and warm. The day is never as fine as the night.

*Vlass [imitating her].* Yes,—old ladies are always jollier than young girls,—and cray-fish fly faster than swallows.

*Kal. [seating herself at the table].* You don't understand things. Pour me out some tea, Varya. Has any one called here?

*Vlass [still jestingly].* No one.—'To be or not to be.'—Since no one *is!*

*Kal.* Please let me alone. [*Vlass bows silently and withdraws to the study, sorting papers on the table. The watchman's rattle and soft whistle are heard from the window.*]

*Var.* Did Yulia Fillipovna come to see you?

*Kal.* Me? Yes, yes, she came to talk over the theatricals.

*Var.* Were you in the woods?

*Kal.* Yes, I met Rumin.—He talked a great deal about you.

*Var.* What did he say?

*Kal.* You know. — [*A pause, VLASS hums softly.*]

*Var.* [*sighing*]. That's too bad!

*Kal.* For him?

*Var.* He told me once that to love a woman is man's tragic duty.

*Kal.* You thought differently of him once.

*Var.* You think then that it is my fault. Is that it?

*Kal.* Oh, no, Varya, no indeed!

*Var.* I tried at first to divert his mind. — And I showed him a great deal of attention. — Then I saw what all that leads to. — And then, he went off.

*Kal.* Did you have a final talk?

*Var.* No, no! not a word. [*A pause.*]

*Kal.* His love must be lukewarm and lack passion — all words. — It lacks joy! And a joyless love offends a woman. Isn't he a humpback?

*Var.* [*surprised*]. I never noticed it. Do you think so? Aren't you mistaken! . . .

*Kal.* There is something inharmonious in his soul — and when I see that in a man, I begin to think that he is a physical monstrosity.

*Vlass* [*coming out of the study in a sad mood, shuffling his papers*]. Taking into consideration the number of these briefs, I humbly represent to you, my patroness, that with the best intentions, it will be impossible for me, in accordance with the wish of the patron, to complete the unpleasant duty he has assigned me!

*Var.* I will help you later. Drink your tea!

*Vlass.* Sister! Indeed you are a sister! Be proud of this! Miss 'Abstraction,' learn to love your neighbor as long as I and my sister are alive.

*Kal.* Let me tell you, you are a humpback, too.

*Vlass.* From what point of view?

*Kal.* Your soul is humpbacked.

*Vlass.* I hope it does not spoil my looks.

*Kal.* Rudeness is as much of a defect as a hump. — Foolish men! how much like humpbacks they are!

*Vlass* [*imitating her*]. Those who are lame according to your aphorisms.

*Kal.* Vulgar men are to me as though they were marked with small-pox, and they are generally blonde men.

*Vlass.* All dark men marry early; while the metaphysicians are blind and deaf. — It's a pity they are not dumb.

*Kal.* That's not even witty! Most likely you are not familiar with metaphysics.

*Vlass.* Yes, I know; tobacco and metaphysics are delectable things for amateurs. I don't smoke, so I am ignorant as to tobacco, but I have read the works of metaphysicians, and I can say that they produce nausea and vertigo!

*Kal.* Weak brains grow dizzy even on the perfume of flowers.

*Var.* You will end by quarreling.

*Vlass.* I will eat; that's more to the point.

*Kal.* And I will play on the piano. — That's better. How hot it is here, Varya!

*Var.* I will open the door of the veranda. — Olga is coming.

[*A pause.* VLASS sips his tea. KALERIA seats herself at the piano. The soft whistle of the watchman is heard. KALERIA wanders softly over the keyboard of the middle register. OLGA ALEKSEYEVNA enters, pulling the drapery aside quickly, as though she were a large frightened bird. She throws off her grey shawl.]

*Olga.* Here I am! — I had difficulty in getting away! [*She kisses VARVARA.*] Good evening, Kaleria Vassilievna. Please go on playing; no need to shake hands. How are you, Vlass?

*Vlass.* Good-evening, mutterchin!

*Var.* Sit down, sit down! Will you have some tea? Why didn't you come before?

*Olga* [*nervously*]. Wait a moment. I was afraid. I thought some one was hidden in the forest, — some tramp. — The watchmen keep whistling and it's such a shrill, doleful whistle. Why do they whistle so?

*Vlass.* Yes, that's very alarming! Aren't they hooting at us?

*Olga.* I wanted to run up here before, but Nadya was naughty. Perhaps she wasn't feeling well. You know, Volka is ill, — feverish. — Then I had to give Sonya a bath, and Meesha ran off into the woods after dinner and has just come back, ragged, dirty, and hungry, of course. Then my husband returned from the city out of sorts. Quite mum and scowling

I was in a whirl. And the new maid is impossible! She plunged the glass milk jars into boiling water and they cracked, of course.

*Var.* [*smiling*]. Why, my poor dear! You are tired.

*Vlass.* Oh, Martha, Martha! You care for much — that's why everything comes out overdone or underdone! What wise words! —

*Kal.* But inelegant — 'underdone,' 'overdone'! Fie!

*Vlass.* Pray pardon me. I am not the author of the Russian language.

*Olga* [*somewhat offended*]. Of course you find all this ridiculous. It does not entertain you? I understand. Well, what of that? We all speak of what interests us most. When I think of the children, it's as though I heard a bell within me. Yes, it's so difficult to manage children, Varya!

*Var.* Forgive me, dear, but I think you exaggerate.

*Olga* [*excitedly*]. No, no, don't say that. You can't judge. You don't know what an oppressive feeling it is, — this responsibility for children! They will ask me some day how they ought to live! And then what am I to say to them?

*Vlass.* But why do you borrow trouble? They may not ask. — They may find out themselves how they'll have to live.

*Olga.* That's all you know! They are asking already! Terrible questions such as no one can answer! What a hardship, what a pity it is to be a woman!

*Vlass* [*in an undertone but with much earnest feeling*]. One ought to be human. [*He goes into the study, sits at a table and writes.*]

*Var.* Vlass, stop! [*She rises and slowly approaches the door leading out of the veranda.*]

*Kal.* [*romantically*]. The smile of twilight puts out the starlight. [*She rises also from the piano and stands in the doorway beside VARVARA.*]

*Olga.* I have made you all gloomy. — Like a night-owl! Oh, Lord! — Well! I'll say no more. Why did you go away, Varya? Come here, or I will think that you can't bear to be with me.

*Var.* Nonsense, Olga! I am simply touched.

*Olga.* Don't, dear! I feel disgusted with myself, — it's as though my soul were shriveled like a little dog's. You know there are lap-dogs like that. They are vicious, love no one and always want to snap at some



one on the sly.

*Kal.* The sun rises and sets, but twilight reigns in the hearts of men.

*Olga.* What's that?

*Kal.* Nothing. I am talking to myself.

*Vlass* [*in the study dolefully humming from the litany for the dead*].

'Family happiness! Family happiness!'

*Var.* Stop, Vlass, I beg of you!

*Vlass.* All right, I am mum.

*Olga.* It's my fault.

*Kal.* See all the people coming out of the forest. What a pretty sight! But how comically Pavel Sergueyevitch is swinging his arms!

*Var.* Who is with him?

*Kal.* Marya Lvovna, Yulia Fillipovna, Sonya, Zimin, and Zamysloff.

*Olga* [*wraps herself in her shawl*]. I am not properly dressed. That elegant Madame Susloff will make fun of me. I can't bear her!

*Var.* Vlass, call Sasha.

*Vlass.* My patroness, you are taking me away from the straight path of duty. Beware!

*Olga.* The 'elegant' lady neglects her children; but strange to say, they are always well.

*Marya* [*entering by the door of the veranda*]. Your husband told me you were not feeling well. Is that so? What is the matter?

*Var.* I am glad you called, but I am quite well.

*Mar.* You look nervous. [*To OLGA*]. You here also? It's a long time since I saw you.

*Olga.* You say it as though you were pleased to see me, and I am always complaining.

*Mar.* Perhaps I like complaints. How are the children?

*Yulia* [*entering from the veranda*]. Just see all the guests I bring you! Never mind, we will not stay long! How are you, Olga Alekseyevna! Why don't you gentlemen come in? Varvara Michailovna, Pavel Sergueyevitch, and Zamysloff are out there. Shall I call them in?

*Var.* Certainly.

[*The following speeches are spoken quickly.*]

*Yulia.* Come, Kaleria.

*Marya* [*to VLASS*]. Why, have you lost flesh?

*Vlass.* I don't know.

*Sasha* [*entering*]. Shall I fill the samovar?

*Var.* Yes, do, and be quick about it.

*Marya* [*to VLASS*]. Why are you making faces?

*Olga.* He always does.

*Vlass.* That's my specialty!

*Marya.* Trying hard to be witty. Yes? And without success?

My dear Varvara, your Pavel Sergueyevitch has nervous prostration.

*Var.* Why do you call him *mine*?

[*Enter RUMIN followed by YULIA and KALERIA. VLASS with a scowl enters the study and shuts the door. OLGA takes MARYA aside and whispers to her, pointing to her heart.*]

*Rumin.* You will forgive our late intrusion?

*Var.* I am always pleased to see guests.

*Yulia.* That's the principal charm of country life. But if you had heard their disputes! He and Marya Lvovna.

*Rumin.* I cannot speak indifferently of such important matters, — of what demands an explanation. . . . [*SASHA brings the samovar. VARVARA at the table gives her directions and prepares the tea-cups. RUMIN at the piano keeps his eyes on her.*]

*Yulia.* You are too nervous, and that's why your arguments fail to convince. [*To VARVARA*] Your husband and mine are together armed with weapons of suicide; they are drinking cognac, and I prophesy that they will drink too much. My husband's uncle has arrived unexpectedly, — he is a beef-dealer or butter-merchant, — some kind of a merchant. He is noisy and jolly, with grey hair and a stub-nose. He is quite entertaining! But where is Zamysloff? My 'reasonable' knight?

*Zam.* [*from the veranda*]. 'I am here, Inezelia, under your window!'

*Yulia.* Come in here. What have you been talking about?

*Zam.* [*entering*]. I have been demoralizing the young generation. . . . Sonia and Zimin were trying to convince me that man has life given him for the purpose of solving various social, moral and other problems, while I tried to convince them that life is an art. You understand, an

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\* The first verse of a Spanish ballad by Pushkin.

art to look at everything with your own eyes and hear with your own ears.

*Yulia.* That's all bosh!

*Zam.* I have just invented it! But I feel this will be my firm belief. Life is the art of finding beauty and joy everywhere, even in eating and drinking. . . . They dispute like vandals.

*Yulia.* Kaleria, stop your chatter.

*Zam.* I know you are a lover of beauty, Kaleria Vassilievna, — Why don't you love me? That's a glaring contradiction.

*Kal.* [*smiling*]. You are so noisy, so loud.

*Zam.* Hm! But that's not to the point. I and this fine lady . . .

*Yulia.* Stop it! We came . . .

*Zam.* [*bowing*]. To you!

*Yulia.* To ask . . .

*Zam* [*bowing lower*]. You!

*Yulia.* I can't go on! Let's go into your charming little room. . . . I am so fond of it. . . .

*Zam.* Yes! Everything hinders us here.

*Kal.* [*laughing*]. Yes, come!

[*They go towards the corridor.*]

*Yulia.* Wait a moment! Fancy, my husband's uncle's name is *Colon!*

*Zam.* [*makes two dots with his fingers in the air*]. *Colon!* You understand.

[*They disappear behind the drapery, laughing.*]

*Olga.* She is always so jolly, and yet, I know that her life with her husband is not always pleasant. . . .

*Var.* I don't think that concerns us, Olga.

*Olga.* I haven't said anything improper, have I?

*Rumin.* Family tragedies are common now-a-days.

*Sonya* [*looking in at the door*]. Motherkin, I am going to take a walk.

*Marya.* Again?

*Sonya.* Again! There are so many women here, and that's always a bore.

*Marya* [*jestingly*]. Be careful what you say; your mother is also a woman.

*Sonya* [*running towards her*]. Is that so, motherkin? How long since?

*Olga*. What is she chattering about?

*Var*. She hasn't even stopped to say good evening.

*Marya*. Soynka! You are improper!

*Sonya* [*to VARVARA*]. We saw each other today. But I'll kiss you once more with delight. . . . I am kind and generous when it suits me . . . or at least when I can be so without an effort.

*Marya*. Sonya! Stop fooling and run away.

*Sonya*. See what a mother I have! She called herself a woman just now. It is eighteen years since I made her acquaintance and I hear this acknowledgment for the first time! Remarkable!

*Zimin* [*putting his head beyond the draperies*]. Are you coming or not?

*Sonya*. Allow me to introduce my slave.

*Var*. Why don't you come in?

*Sonya*. He is impossible in good society.

*Zimin*. She tore out the sleeve of my smoking-jacket, — that's what's the matter!

*Sonya*. Is that all? He is not satisfied with that, but wants more! Motherkin I will call for you, will that be all right? I am going to hear how Max will talk to me of love eternal.

*Zimin*. Not much! . . .

*Sonya*. We'll see, young man. Au revoir. Is the moon up?

*Zimin*. I am not a young man — in Sparta. Now, look here, Sonya, why do you jostle a man who . . .

*Sonya*. You are not a man yet. Go on, Sparta!

[*Their voices and laughter are heard for some time near the house.*]

*Rumin*. You have a fine girl, Marya Lvovna.

*Olga*. I was like that at her age.

*Var*. It's delightful to see how you treat each other. Delightful.

[*To all.*] Please be seated and drink your tea!

*Marya*. Yes, we are friends.

*Olga*. Friends! How did you do it?

*Marya*. What?

*Olga*. Win your child's friendship.



*Marya.* Very simply. We should be sincere with our children, not hide the truth from them, or deceive them.

*Rumin* [*with a smile*]. This is somewhat risky, you know. Truth is cold and stern, and the pernicious poison of skepticism is ever concealed therein. You may thus poison a child's mind at once, revealing to it the terrible face of truth.

*Marya.* And you prefer to poison it gradually? So as not to notice yourself how you will distort it?

*Rumin* [*excitedly and nervously*]. No, no, I never said so. I am only opposing those unwise and unnecessary revelations, those attempts to strip life of the beautiful garb of poetry which conceals its rude and frequently hideous aspects. We should embellish life! We should prepare new garments for it before discarding the old ones!

*Marya.* What are you talking about? I don't understand.

*Rumin.* I am speaking of man's right to covet deception. You speak of life often enough. *Life!* But what is life? When you speak the word, it rises before me like a giant monster, constantly calling for human victims. It devours the brain and force of man daily, greedily drinks his blood. [*VARVARA listens attentively to RUMIN's words, and an expression of wonder gradually steals over her face. She makes a motion as though to stop RUMIN.*] Why is it thus? I see no reason in it, but I know that the longer a man lives the more filth, vulgarity, vileness, and roughness he sees . . . the more he longs for beauty, brightness, and purity! . . . He can't do away with the contradictions of life, can't banish all its evil and filth! Don't, then, take from him the right to see what kills the soul! Grant him the right to turn aside from the facts that offend him! A man seeks rest and oblivion, peace! [*He meets the eyes of VARVARA, trembles and breaks off.*]

*Marya* [*quietly*]. Your ideal man has become a bankrupt? I am very sorry. Only in this way do you claim for him the right to rest peacefully. I am sure you don't flatter him.

*Rumin* [*to VARVARA*]. Excuse me for talking so loud. . . . I see, you oppose this.

*Var.* If I do, it isn't because you are nervous.

*Rumin.* What, then, is your reason?

*Var.* [*slowly and calmly*]. I remember two years ago, you spoke dif-

ferently, but with as much fervor and conviction. . . .

*Rumin* [*agitated*]. A man grows, develops, as well as his thoughts.

*Marya*. This tiny, *dark* thought flutters like a frightened bat.

*Rumin* [*still agitated*]. It rises in a spiral, but still it rises higher. You suspect me of insincerity, *Marya Lvovna*?

*Marya*. I? No; I see you are sincere. You are excited, and although hysterics fail to convince me — I am at a loss to understand. It is as though something had frightened you . . . you would like to hide from life. . . . But I know you are not the only one who does. There are many such frightened people.

*Rumin*. Yes, there are hosts of them, because men feel more and more keenly that life is cruel. Everything in it is strictly foreordained . . . only man's being is accidental, senseless, and aimless.

*Marya* [*calmly*]. Then you should try all the more to make this accident a fact of social necessity; — then your life would not be senseless.

*Olga*. Heavens! When people say anything severe and condemning, I shrivel up, as though I were condemned. How little kindness there is in life. Well, I must go home! It's so cosy here, *Varya*, . . . and then one hears something interesting, and the better part of the soul seems to respond. . . . It's getting late, too, and it's time to go.

*Var*. Don't go yet, my dear. Why are you in such haste, all at once? They'll send for you if they need you.

*Olga*. Yes, that's so. Well, I'll stay awhile. [*She goes and sits down on the sofa and curls herself up like a ball. RUMIN nervously taps his fingers on the panes of the glass door.*]

*Var*. [*pensively*]. We live strange lives! We talk and talk, and there it ends. . . . We have many opinions, . . . we accept and reject them with unwholesome speed. . . . But when it comes to wishes, — defined and strong, — we don't have them at all.

*Rumin*. Is that meant for me?

*Var*. I include all. We live an ugly, dull and insincere life.

*Yulia* [*rushing in*]. Help me, gentlemen!

*Kal*. Really, that's unnecessary!

*Yulia*. She has written a new poem and has promised to read it at our *soirée* for the benefit of the children's colony. . . . I request that it shall be read here, now. Gentlemen! ask her!

*Rumin.* Please read it! I love your caressing verses.

*Marya.* Yes, I should love to hear it. We grow rude in discussions.

Do read it, my dear.

*Var.* Is it something new, Kaleria?

*Kal.* Yes, but it's poetry in prose and rather uninteresting.

*Yulia.* Do read it, sweetheart. It's so little trouble to you! Do!

[*She drags her off.*]

*Marya.* But where is Vlass?

*Var.* He is in the study. He has a great deal to do.

*Marya.* I was somewhat curt with him. Really it's too bad to see him making a clown of himself.

*Var.* Yes. But you should be a little more lenient with him. He is a dear man, much advised, but never petted.

*Marya* [*smiling*]. Like the rest of us. . . . That's why we are all rude and rough.

*Var.* He lived with his father, a tippler, who abused him.

*Marya.* I'll go to him. [*She goes to the door of the study, raps and enters.*]

*Rumin* [*to VARVARA*]. You are becoming more and more intimate with *Marya Lvovna*, isn't that so?

*Var.* I like her.

*Olga* [*in an undertone*]. How severely she judges everything!

*Rumin.* *Marya Lvovna* possesses in a high degree the severity of the faithful . . . a blind and cold severity. How can this please?

*Dudakoff* [*enters from the corridor*]. My greetings to you. You here, *Olga*? Coming home soon?

*Olga.* I am ready. Have you been walking?

*Var.* Would you like a glass of tea, *Kyrill Akimovitch*?

*Dud.* Tea? No. I don't drink it at night. . . . I should like to see you, *Pavel Sergueyevitch*. Can I see you tomorrow at your house?

*Rumin.* Certainly.

*Dud.* It's in regard to the colony of the minor criminals. . . . They are again in mischief . . . devil take them!

*Rumin.* They are abused, I know, and yesterday the papers accused us . . . you and me.

*Dud.* Yes; — in general, — there is no time to look into everything. Everybody has his own affairs to manage, . . . and they can't do it. Why? I am tired. I walked out into the woods. It did me good. My nerves are on edge.

*Var.* You look careworn.

*Dud.* Very likely. This donkey of a mayor reprimands me. He says: 'You don't economize enough! The patients eat too much and use too much quinine.' The idiot! In the first place, that's none of his business. . . . He ought to drain the streets in the lower part of the city, then I wouldn't touch his quinine. I don't use it myself? Do I? I despise it . . . and his insolence as well.

*Olga.* Is it worth while to get vexed at such trifles? You should have been used to them, long ago.

*Dud.* But if all life is made of trifles? And what do you mean when you say 'used to them'? Used to what? To have every idiot stick his nose into your business and interfere with your life? Yes, I am getting used to that. My reason tells me I must economize . . . all right! I'll do so! It's bad for the business, but I'll economize. I have no other practice and can't give up the devilish place.

*Olga* [*reprovingly*]. On account of your family? Yes? This is not the first time I hear this from you, and you could have spared me here — you rough and tactless man! [*She throws her shawl over her head and quickly goes into Varvara's room.*]

*Var.* Olga! What's the matter with you?

*Olga* [*almost sobbing*]. Let me be, let me be! . . . I heard what he said. . . . [*Both disappear in Varvara's room.*]

*Dud.* There! I had no idea, Pavel Sergueyvitch, forgive me, please. This is quite unexpected. I am so upset. [*He turns quickly and collides with KALERIA and YULIA in the doorway.*]

*Yulia.* The Doctor has almost taken us off our feet. What's the matter with him?

*Rumin.* Nerves. . . . [*VARVARA enters.*] Has Olga Alekseyevna gone?

*Var.* Yes, she's gone.

*Yulia.* I distrust this doctor. He is such a sickly-looking person . . . stammers . . . and is so absent-minded that he tucks the



teaspoons into his spectacle case and stirs his tea with his surgeon's hammer.  
 . . . . He may make mistakes in his prescriptions and give some injurious drug.

*Rumin.* I believe he will end in suicide.

*Var.* You say it so calmly.

*Rumin.* Suicides among doctors are frequent.

*Var.* Words agitate you more than men do. Don't you think so?

*Rumin* [*shuddering*]. Oh, Varvara! [*KALERIA seats herself at the piano, ZAMYSLOFF is beside her.*]

*Zam.* Are you comfortable?

*Kal.* Yes, thank you.

*Zam.* Attention, gentlemen!

[*MARYA and VLASS enter; they are both animated.*]

*Vlass.* Is the poetry to be read here?

*Kal* [*with temper*]. If you wish to hear it you must stop talking.

*Vlass.* Let all life cease.

*Marya.* Silence! Silence!

*Kal.* I am very glad. This is poetry in prose. Music will be set to it in time.

*Yulia.* Melo-declamation! How fine! I love it! I love everything original. Automobiles, colored postal cards please me like a child.

*Vlass* [*imitating her*]. Earthquakes, gramophones, influenza.

*Kal.* [*in a loud, shrill voice*]. Will you allow me to read?

[*All are seated. KALERIA softly touches the piano.*]

It's called 'Edelweiss.'

The ice and snow with their eternal robe cover the Alpine summits and over them cold silence reigns — the wise silence of the haughty summits.

Boundless above them is the desert of skies and the myriad eyes of the planets look sadly down upon the snow-bound heights.

At the foot of the hills, yonder, on the narrow valleys of the earth, life grows and struggles, while the sad lord of the plains — man — suffers.

In the dark caves of the earth groans and laughter, cries of rage and whispers of love unite in one sad chord. But the stillness of the summits and the gaze of the passionless stars disturb not the deep sighs of men.

Ice and snow with their unchangeable robe eternally cover the summits of the Alps, and cold silence, — the wise silence of the haughty heights

reigns above them.

But on the border line of the ice, in the kingdom of perpetual silence, grows the sad mountain flower — the Edelweiss — as though to tell some one of the sorrows of earth and of the sufferings of weary men.

Above it, in the endless space of heaven, the proud sun moves silently, the dumb moon sheds a sad light and the mute stars glimmer and shine.

And the icy robe of stillness descending from above, surrounds the lonely flower — the Edelweiss.

[*A pause. All remain silent and wrapt in thought. The watchman's whistle is heard in the distance. With wide open eyes, KALERIA looks before her.*]

*Yulia* [*in an undertone*]. How beautiful! So sad — so pure! —

*Zam.* I say, when you read this, you ought to wear a loose white gown, as fluffy as the Edelweiss, you understand. That would be intensely beautiful! charming!

*Vlass* [*approaching the piano*]. I like it, too! [*Laughs bashfully.*] I do like it! It's fine! — It's like an iced cranberry drink on a hot day.

*Kal.* Go away.

*Vlass.* Don't be angry, — I am sincere.

*Sasha.* Mr. Shalimoff has arrived.

[*General commotion. VARVARA goes towards the door and pauses as she sees SHALIMOFF, who enters.*]

*Shal.* Have I the pleasure of seeing — ?

*Var.* [*hesitating*]. Pray — walk in. — Serguey will return presently.

## ACT II

*A meadow in front of the BASSOFFS' veranda, thickly encircled with pines, firs, and birches. In front, on the left, under some pines, a round table and three chairs. In the rear the low veranda of the house with an awning. Opposite, a wide settee, fitted in between the trunks of a group of trees. Beyond, the road. Still more to the rear, on the right, a small, open, shell-shaped stage. On the left, a road leading to the SUSSLOFFS' country-house. A few seats face the stage. Evening. Sunset. KALERIA is playing on the piano at the BASSOFFS'. PUSTOBAIKA, the watchman, moves about in a leisurely way, placing seats for the audience. KROPIL-*

KIN, *with a gun slung behind his back, stands near the pines.*

*Kropilkin.* All new folks?

*Pustobaïka.* What's that?

*Kro.* I say, all new folks? Not the same people who rented it last Summer?

*Pus* [*taking his pipe out*]. They're all alike.

*Kro.* [*sighing*]. To be sure. They are all the same kind of gentry. Oh, oh, oh!

*Pus.* Summerfolk are all alike. I have seen hosts of them, these five years. To me they are like bubbles in a puddle of water, they swell and burst,—burst. . . . That's the way of it.

[*Young people with accordions, mandolins, and guitars appear on the forest road.*]

*Kro.* They have music, too! Are they going to play on the stage?

*Pus.* Certainly. Why shouldn't they?

*Kro.* I never saw the gentry act. I suppose it's funny? Have you seen them?

*Pus.* Yes, many times. I have seen many sights. [*On the right COLON'S distant laughter is heard.*]

*Kro.* How do they do it?

*Pus.* Very simply. They dress up in other men's clothes and say—all sorts of things,—just what suits them best.—They shout and bustle about as though they were doing some work—they make believe they're angry and deceive one another. One makes believe he's honest,—another that he's clever—or unhappy. . . . Whatever suits 'em, they act. [*A whistle on the left, and a voice calling a dog: 'Bayan! Bayan!' PUSTOBAÏKA strikes the seat with the back of his axe.*]

*Kro.* Is that so? So that is how they do it! And do they sing?

*Pus.* They don't sing much. The engineer's wife squeals now and then, but she has a thin voice.

*Kro.* The gentry are coming.

[*COLON appears on the right of the stage, followed by SUSSLOFF.*]

*Colon* [*good-naturedly*]. Don't laugh at me! You can't compete with me! You are only 40 and you are bald; I am about 60 and my hair curls even though I am grey. So! There you are! Oh! Oh! Oh!

[*PUSTOBAÏKA still goes on clumsily arranging the seats. KROPILKIN carefully withdraws.*]

*Sus.* That's your luck! Go on. — I am listening.

*Colon.* Let's sit down. Well, then! as I said, the Germans came. My factory was an old one, the machinery not good for much — whereas they set up new machinery, — and their goods were superior to mine and cheaper. I saw that my business would run down. I thought it over, — I couldn't compete with the Germans. So I decided to sell out to them. [*He lapses into silence.*]

*Sus.* And you sold everything out?

*Colon.* I left my city house, an old and extensive house. And now I am out of business, — I have only one business — that's to count my money. Oh! Ho! I am an old fool, if the truth be known. . . . I sold out and at once felt like an orphan. — I am lonesome and I don't know what to do with myself. Here are my hands, for instance, . . . I never noticed them before — now they swing like useless things.

[*He laughs. A pause. VARVARA appears on the veranda with her hands behind her back and slowly walks up and down.*] There is Bassoff's wife walking up and down. A fine woman. She draws like a magnet! If I only were ten years younger. —

*Sus.* I thought you were married?

*Colon.* I have been married several times. — But some of my wives died, and others ran away. — I had children, too; two girls. Both died. — And a boy. — He was drowned. — I was lucky where women were concerned. — I got them all here, in Russia, and easily, too, — it's not hard to get wives away from husbands in Russia! Russians make bad husbands! . . . Sometimes I came and looked about me and I saw that the wife was a worthy woman, while the husband was a nonentity. So I would win her over. — Oh! oh! [*Vlass appears on the veranda; he stands and looks at his sister.*] Yes, all that is past and gone. — And now there is nothing more, — nobody and nothing, — you understand!

*Sus.* How do you expect to live now?

*Colon.* I don't know. Advise me! By the way, my dear boy, your botvinya \* and suckling pig are impossible dishes; whoever eats pig in Summer. — It's an anachronism.

*Vlass [speaking to VARVARA].* Well, Varya?

\* A cold soup of kvas, sliced cucumbers, sifted spinage, and cold fish.



*Var.* [to VLASS]. Nothing. — I am a poor mortal, am I not?

*Vlass* [putting his arm about her waist]. I would like to tell you something comforting — but I don't know what to say.

*Var.* Don't mind me, dear.

*Colon.* Mr. Chernoff is coming our way.

*Sus.* Clown!

*Colon.* He is not the bashful kind, but a loafer, I believe.

*Vlass* [approaching]. Who is a loafer?

*Colon.* My nephew. Oh! oh! Perhaps you too are not much of a business man? Are you?

*Vlass.* Since I have had the pleasure of your acquaintance, estimable Semion Semionovitch, I take it that when you say 'business' you mean squeezing your neighbor out of his worldly goods? Alas! I am not a business man in that sense of the word.

*Colon.* Oh! Oh! Don't despair! In youth, you understand that's not an easy matter; the conscience is still tender, and the head is filled with pink jelly instead of brains. But when you mature, you will stride someone's neck most comfortably. Oh! oh! Prosperity is attained much more easily if you stride your neighbor's neck.

*Vlass.* I believe you; you are surely an experienced man in such matters.

[*He bows and withdraws.*]

*Colon.* I suppose he is tickled at saucing me. Well, let him; let the youngsters have their fun.

[*His head droops and he is silent.*]

*Kal.* [appearing on the veranda]. You don't wish to make up?

*Var.* [in an undertone]. I can't.

*Kal.* Whose advent are you expecting now?

*Var.* I don't know; I don't know.

[*KALERIA shrugs her shoulders, descends the steps of the veranda, goes to the left and disappears round the corner of the house.*]

*Colon.* Well, Petrucha, how am I to live now?

*Sus.* It can't be decided right off. I must think it over.

*Colon.* Can't be decided, eh? — What did you say?

*Sus.* I didn't say anything.

*Colon.* No, and you never will, that's what I think. [*BASSOFF and*

SHALIMOFF *are seen coming out of the forest on the right. They bow as they pass and sit down at the table under the pines. BASSOFF has a towel hanging round his neck.*] There are the lawyer and the author. [*Addressing them.*] Are you taking a walk?

*Bas.* We've just had a dip.

*Colon.* Is the water cold?

*Bas.* So, so.

*Colon.* I think I'll take a bath, too. Come, Piotr; I may be drowned; then you'll get your legacy all the quicker!

*Sus.* No, I can't go. I must speak with them.

*Colon.* Well, I am going. [*He rises and goes into the forest on the right. SUSLOFF follows him with his eyes. Smiles and goes towards BASSOFF.*]

*Bas.* Varya, order a bottle of beer here, order three bottles. Well, how is your uncle?

[*VARVARA goes in.*]

*Sus.* He annoys me. . . .

*Bas.* Yes, old people are not entertaining. . . .

*Sus.* It looks as though he meant to live with me.

*Bas.* Does he? Is that so? Well, what are you going to do?

*Sus.* Deuce knows! I suppose it will be as he wishes.

[*SASHA brings the beer.*]

*Bas.* Well, Iakov, why don't you say something?

*Shal.* I am tired. — By the way, what's the name of this belligerent lady?

*Bas.* Marya Lvovna. — Eh, Piotr, such a battle of words as we had at dinner!

*Sus.* With Marya Lvovna, of course.

*Shal.* A fierce woman, I say!

[*VARVARA reappears on the veranda.*]

*Sus.* I don't fancy her.

*Shal.* I am gentle, but I confess I was almost rude to her.

*Bas.* She abused you!

*Shal.* [*to SUSSLOFF*]. Put yourself in my place. A man writes, feels deeply — finally he simply becomes exhausted. He comes to his friends to rest, to rusticate, to collect his thoughts. . . . All at once a lady appears

and begins to question him: What are your beliefs? What are your ideals? Why don't you write of this? Why don't you mention that? Then she says, this passage is clear, and that one — false, ugly. — My dear woman, write it yourself, then it will be clear, and true, and noble! Write like a genius, only leave me alone! Oh my!

*Bas.* You must bear it, my friend! When people travel on the Volga they make a business of eating Sterlet soup; — so it is when people meet an author, — every one else wants to seem clever. You must bear it!

*Shal.* It's indelicate! It's not clever! Does she come here often?

*Bas.* No. — I mean, yes, rather often. I am not fond of her, either! She is as straight as a ramrod. — She is my wife's friend, and (I confess) she has spoilt my wife. [*He looks round and sees VARVARA on the terrace.*] You here, Varya?

*Var.* As you see.

[*ZAMYSLOFF and YULIA FILLIPOVNA are walking briskly on the road that leads from SUSSLOFF'S house. They are laughing. SHALIMOFF with a smile looks at BASSOFF, who seems uneasy.*]

*Zam.* Varvara! We are getting up a picnic.

*Yulia.* How do you do, my dear!

*Var.* Come in.

[*They disappear in the house. SUSSLOFF rises and slowly follows them.*]

*Zam.* Is Kaleria Vassilievna at home?

*Shal.* [*laughing*]. I believe you are a little afraid of your wife, Ser-guey?

*Bas* [*with a sigh*]. Nonsense! She is a splendid woman!

*Shal.* [*with a smile*]. Then why do you say it so dolefully?

*Bas.* . You see she is jealous of me — in regard to my assistant. You understand? — And *his* wife, . . . just observe *her*. — I tell you, she is a most fascinating woman!

[*SONYA and ZIMIN pass at the back of the stage.*]

*Shal.* Is that so? We'll keep an eye on her. But let me tell you that this Marya Lvovna takes away all my desire to get acquainted with the ladies of the neighborhood!

*Bas.* Well, this lady is entirely different. I tell you she is simply a stunner! You will see for yourself. [*A pause.*] You haven't published

anything for some time, Yacov. Are you writing anything important?

*Shal.* [*annoyed*]. Absolutely nothing, I tell you! What can I write when I can't understand anything. Men seem to be somehow tangled up, contradictory, slippery, intangible. —

*Bas.* That's what you should portray, — you should say: 'I don't understand it.' Be sincere above all things.

*Shal.* Thank you for the advice. Sincerity! It isn't that! I certainly could do one thing sincerely: I could lay down my pen and like Diocletian start a cabbage patch.

[*Beggars are heard singing softly round the corner of BASSOFF'S house: 'Benefactors who feed us; give us alms for Christ's and the holiday's sake, — we will pray for your parents.'* PUSTOBAIKA *appears and goes towards the sound to drive the beggars off.*] No, I must eat, which means that I must write, and for whom am I writing? I am at a loss to know. The reader ought to be clearly conceived in one's mind. Who and what he is. Five years ago I was sure I knew my reader and what he expected of me — and all at once, — I can't explain how, — I lost him. That's where the tragedy comes in. They say a new reader has come to the front now. Who is he? —

*Bas.* I don't understand you. What do you mean by 'losing your reader'? Here am I . . . all of us, the intelligent public of the land, — are we not readers? I don't understand. How can you lose us?

*Shal.* [*thoughtfully*]. The intelligent public — of course I am not thinking about that — but about this 'new' reader.

*Bas.* [*shakes his head*]. Well, I don't understand.

*Shal.* Neither do I. I go about and see people. They are a distinctly different type, face, eyes, everything. I look at them; I feel that they won't read me; they are not interested in that sort of thing. 'Last Winter I read at a social gathering — the same thing happened. I saw many eyes attentively fixed on me, examining me, but they were strangers to me, — they don't sympathize with me. — They don't need me — any more than they do Latin. — I am too old for them — and all my thoughts are old. — I don't know who they are, whom they love, what they want.

*Bas.* Yes; that's interesting. Only I think your nerves are playing you a trick. You will rest here and relax, then you will find your reader. The principal thing in life is a calm, attentive attitude towards everything —



that's what I believe in. Well, let's go in. Now, Yasha, I have a request to make. I wish you would — somehow — in one way or another — act the peacock's part.

*Shal.* [*surprised*]. What's that? — the peacock's part. What's that for?

*Bas.* I mean open your peacock's fan and show off your feathers to my wife — Varya — get her interested — for friendship's sake.

*Shal.* [*after a pause*]. You mean I must play the part of a lightning conductor. You are a queer man. All right, if you say so.

*Bas.* No, no, don't think I mean anything — she's a dear girl — only somehow she pines for something. Everybody's longing for something now — a certain attitude of mind, perhaps. Queer conversations — all bosh, you know! By the way, are you married? I heard you were, that is, I heard that you were divorced.

*Shal.* Yes, and married again, and divorced again. It is not easy, you know, to find a comrade in a wife.

*Bas.* Yes, that's true, very true, my dear fellow. [*They enter the house. A lady in a yellow dress and a young man in a plaid suit come out of the woods.*]

*The Lady.* No one yet! And it was to begin at 6! I like that!

*The Man.* I really ought to act the leading man's parts.

*The Lady.* That's what I thought.

*The Man.* Yes, the leading man's parts, and he gives me the comic parts! It's absurd, I say!

*The Lady.* He keeps all the best parts for himself. [*They re-enter the forest on the right. SONYA and ZIMIN appear from the opposite direction. In the rear of the stage SUSSLOFF is seen walking slowly towards his house.*]

*Zimin* [*in a low voice*]. I won't go, Sonya. I leave tomorrow, you know.

*Sonya* [*also speaks low*]. Yes, go, but do be careful, Max, I beg of you. —

*Zimin* [*takes her hand*]. And you, too, . . . .

*Sonya.* Au revoir! — We'll meet in three weeks, not before?

*Zimin.* No, not before. Au revoir, dear Sonya. In my absence, don't — [*He hesitates and is silent.*]

*Sonya.* Well?

*Zimin.* No; nothing — just foolishness. Au revoir, Sonya! —

*Sonya* [*detaining his hand*]. No; tell me, 'in your absence,' what?

*Zimin* [*softly, looking down*]. You won't marry?

*Sonya.* Don't you dare to speak that way, Max, nor think, either! Do you hear me! That's absurd, and mean. You understand, Maxim!

*Zimin.* Don't, don't be offended! Forgive me, please! All sorts of foolish thoughts come into my head! A man is not master of his thoughts, you know.

*Sonya* [*excitedly*]. That's not true! That's a lie, Maxim. I want you to know that it's a lie, invented to justify weakness; remember, Maxim, I don't believe it. Go! . . .

*Zimin* [*presses her hand*]. Yes, dear Sonya, I will remember . . . I will! Au revoir, my darling! [*Zimin hastily disappears behind the corner of the house. SONYA looks after him and slowly mounts the steps of the veranda, and then goes into the house. DUDAKOFF, VLASS, and MARYA LVOVNA come out of the woods on the right, followed by COLON. MARYA LVOVNA sits down on the settee. COLON sits beside her. Yawns.*]

*Dud.* Men are thoughtless, and life is hard. Why is that?

*Vlass.* I am aware of that, doctor! I'll go on with my story: My father was a cook, a man of changeable moods; he loved me devotedly and took me along wherever he went — like his pipe. I ran away several times to my mother, but he would come to the laundry where she worked, smash things generally, and recapture me. While he was with the Bishop a fatal thought entered his head — to educate me! He put me into a seminary for the clergy. But after a few months, my father left the Bishop's service and hired himself out to an engineer, and I was transferred to a school for railway engineers. Next year I was put into an agricultural school, because my father entered the service of a president of a Zemstvo commission. The art school and the commercial school had also the honor of harboring me. Briefly, at seventeen, the distaste for science absolutely prevented my studying anything, even a game of cards or how to smoke. Why do you look at me in that way, Marya Lvovna? —

*Marya* [*lost in thought*]. It is all so sad.

*Vlass.* Sad? But it is all in the past.

*A woman with a bandaged cheek.* Say, have you seen Genitchka? He is a little boy. Didn't he come this way? He wore a straw hat. He

has flaxen hair.

*Marya.* No, we haven't seen him.

*The Woman.* That's too bad! He is the Rozoffs' boy! He is real smart; haven't you seen him?

*Vlass.* No, we haven't see him.

[*The woman mutters something and disappears in the woods.*]

*Colon.* Well, Mr. Chernoff, I must say that — you understand —

*Vlass.* What? No, I don't.

*Colon.* I like you.

*Vlass.* Really?

*Colon.* That's the truth.

*Vlass.* I am delighted for your sake! [*COLON laughs.*]

*Dud.* You will not get on, Vlass!

*Vlass.* When?

*Dud.* Never. In general.

*Colon.* Of course, you won't get on — because you are *honest* and upright, . . . and every one, you understand, is interested to try, — whether you will ever bend.

*Vlass.* That remains to be seen! Meanwhile let's have some tea. The folks are probably at the tea-table.

*Dud.* Yes, that's the thing to do.

*Colon.* I wouldn't object to going. But is it proper for me to go?

*Vlass.* Certainly, gran'pa. I'll lead the way. [*He runs ahead, the rest slowly follow.*]

*Colon.* A very nice fellow.

*Marya.* Yes, a good fellow, only he shouldn't mock at life.

*Colon.* That's nothing. That will right itself in time. In general, honesty is fastened to a man somewhere on the outside, like a necktie, so to speak. A man usually advertises himself: 'I am honest!' 'I am honest!' When a girl says about herself, 'I am a maiden!' 'I am a maiden!' it's a sure sign she is no longer a maiden! Ha! ha! ha! I beg your pardon.

*Marya.* Who can stop you! [*They go up on the veranda. SUSSLOFF meets them.*]

*Colon.* Where are you bound, Piotr?

*Sus.* Nowhere. To get a smoke outdoors.

[*SUSSLOFF goes slowly towards his house. The woman with a band-*

*aged cheek runs towards him. A gentleman wearing a tall hat comes out of the forest, stops and shrugs his shoulders.]*

*The Woman.* Have you seen a little boy, sir? Kolichka. — I mean Genitchka. — He wore a jacket!

*Sus.* No. Off with you!

*[The woman runs away.]*

*The Gentleman [bowing politely].* I beg your pardon, sir, were you looking for me?

*Sus. [surprised].* I wasn't looking for anybody. That woman *was*.

*The Gentleman.* You see I was invited to play the leading part.

*Sus. [walking away].* That does not concern me!

*The Gentleman [offended].* But, allow me, whom does it concern? Where can the stage manager be found? I have been looking for him for two hours. Is he gone? — The ignoramus! *[Goes up on the stage and disappears behind the scenery. OLGA is coming on the road from SUSSLOFF'S house.]*

*Olga.* How do you do, Piotr Ivanovitch?

*Sus.* Good evening. Don't you think it is sultry?

*Olga.* Sultry? I think it's —

*Sus. [lighting a cigarette].* I am stifling. I met some crazy people. They are looking for boys and stage managers.

*Olga.* Is that so? You are tired? Your hands shake.

*Sus. [goes back with her to BASSOFF'S house].* It's because I drank too much last night and slept poorly.

*Olga.* Why do you drink?

*Sus.* To live merrier.

*Olga.* Have you met my husband?

*Sus.* He is drinking tea at the Bassoffs'.

*Var. [appearing on the veranda].* Are you coming to see me, Olga?

*Olga.* I am taking a walk.

*Var.* Why did you leave Piotr Ivanovitch?

*Sus. [smiles].* I am about, as usual. I was tired of listening to the honorable author and Marya Lvovna.

*Var.* Is that it? You are not interested? I am. —

*Sus [shrugs his shoulder].* You are at liberty to be. Au revoir, meanwhile.

*[He goes towards his house.]*



*Olga* [*in a subdued voice*]. Do you understand why he acts like that?

*Var.* No. I don't care to. Shall we go in?

*Olga.* Stay with me awhile; they won't miss you.

*Var.* Certainly not. What ails you?

*Olga.* How can I be indifferent, Varya? He returned from town, looked in for a minute and disappeared. . . . Surely you don't think that can make me happy?

*Var.* He is at our house. [*They walk slowly towards the group of pines.*]

*Olga* [*excitedly*]. He runs away from me and the children. I understand he needs rest from his work. But I am tired, too, very tired! I can't do anything, everything falls from my hands. This maddens me! He should remember that I gave him my strength and youth — everything!

*Var.* [*kindly*]. My dear Olga. It seems to me you like to complain. No? Am I mistaken? [*Muffled voices are heard disputing within; they grow louder.*]

*Olga.* I don't know. Perhaps you are right! I shall tell him — that it's better that I should go — and the children. —

*Var.,* That's a good plan! You must simply part for a while. Go — I'll give you the money.

*Olga.* I already owe you so much.

*Var.* Nonsense! Calm yourself. Let us sit down here.

*Olga.* I hate myself because I cannot live without your help. You think it's easy for me to take your money — your husband's money? How can I respect myself if I don't know how to live — if I must have some one to brace me up all my life. Sometimes, let me tell you, I don't even like you, — I hate you! Because you are so calm, and you only reason; you don't feel.

*Var.* Dearest, I only know how to be silent. I can't allow myself to complain — that's all!

*Olga.* Those who help men, must despise them in their hearts. I want to be the one to help. [*RUMIN passes quickly and enters the house of the BASSOFFS.*]

*Var.* So that you could despise men?

*Olga.* Yes, I don't love them. I don't like Marya Lvovna, — why

does she judge so harshly? I don't like Rumin — he only argues and does nothing, dares nothing. I don't like your husband. He has become as soft as putty, he is afraid of you. Is that nice? And your brother — is in love with that arguer, that wicked Marya Lvovna.

*Var.* [*surprised, reprehensively*]. Olga! Olga! What ails you! You are wrong — listen!

*Olga.* Yes, yes, I may be wrong! And that haughty Kaleria! She talks of beauty! — she simply wants to marry!

*Var.* [*coldly and sternly*]. Olga! You must not give vent to such feelings. It will put you in such a bad light.

*Olga* [*under her breath, but emphatically and viciously*]. I don't care where it puts me if only I escape this slow torture! I want to live! I am as good as anybody else! I understand everything! I am not a fool! I see that you, too — oh! I understand! You can enjoy life. Your husband is rich — he is not any too scrupulous in business matters — everyone says that. You must know it! And you, too, — you have planned some way to have no children. —

*Var.* [*rises slowly and looks at OLGA in surprise*]. Planned? What do you mean?

*Olga* [*hesitating*]. I didn't mean anything. I only wanted to say — my husband told me that many women don't want to have children. —

*Var.* I don't understand; but I feel that you suspect me in something low. I don't choose to ask what it is.

*Olga.* Don't talk so, Varya. Don't look at me in that way. Only it's true that your husband — people talk about him.

*Var.* [*shuddering, speaking deliberately*]. You were like a sister to me. Had I not known how hard your life was — if I hadn't remembered that once we planned a different life.

*Olga* [*sincerely*]. Forgive me — do! I am wicked. —

*Var.* We planned a good, cheerful life and we have both buried our dreams. It hurts me, Olga. Did you mean it? It hurts. —

*Olga.* Don't, Varya, don't!

*Var.* I am going. [*OLGA rises*]. No, don't follow me, don't!

*Olga.* Forever, Varya, forever?

*Var.* Don't speak! Wait — I don't understand why you should have attacked me?

[COLON *quickly comes down the steps of the veranda, and approaching VARVARA, takes her hand.*]

*Colon.* I ran away, madam! Mr. Rumin is an interesting philosopher — he got the better of me, so I had to leave! I can't argue. So I ran away! Let him talk! I would rather chat with you. This old devil likes you very much. Indeed he does. But what's the matter with you? You seem disturbed?

[*He looks at OLGA and groans.*]

*Olga* [*gently*]. Shall I go, Varya?

*Var.* [*firmly*]. Yes. [OLGA *goes quickly. VARVARA looks after her and then addresses COLON*] — You made some remark — What was it? Excuse me.

*Colon* [*simply and in a friendly manner*]. Madame, the more I observe you the more I become convinced that you are not happy. Isn't that true? [*He laughs.*]

*Var.* [*measuring him from head to foot, speaks calmly and deliberately*]. Can you tell me, Semion Semionovitch, who gave you the right to speak to me in this manner?

*Colon.* Eh, eh! Don't talk that way! My age and my experience gave me the right.

*Var.* Excuse me. But it seems to me — that is not sufficient to allow you to interfere. —

COLON [*good-naturedly*]. Nobody interferes. I see you are, so to speak, a stranger and so, you understand, I thought I would tell you something — but I suppose I went awkwardly about it, — so forgive me, if that's the case.

*Var.* [*smiling*]. Forgive me, too. I may have expressed myself too abruptly, — but really I am not used to such insinuations.

*Colon.* I understand. I see you are not used to it! How *could* you be! Let us go and take a walk! Humor the old man!

[SEMIONOFF *on a bicycle, riding furiously, brings up near COLON.*]

*Colon* [*startled*]. God bless you, my dear sir! What are you about?

*Sem.* [*out of breath*]. Excuse me — is it over?

*Colon.* Over! What? Bless my heart!

*Sem.* Such a pity! My tire burst! I went to two rehearsals today.

*Colon.* What's that to me?

*Sem.* You don't take part? Excuse me! I thought you were made up.

*Colon* [to VARVARA]. What does he mean?

*Var.* [to SEMIONOFF]. Have you come to rehearse?

*Sem.* Yes, and —

*Var.* They haven't begun yet.

*Sem.* [elated]. Oh, I thank you — that's too bad — but I am always so punctual!

*Colon.* Why is it too bad?

*Sem.* [gallantly]. It would have been too bad, if I were late. I beg your pardon. [He goes aside, still bowing.]

*Colon.* What a monstrous insect. He almost crushed me. And I am supposed to enjoy it! Let's get away, or some other beetle will walk over us!

*Var.* [absent-mindedly]. Yes; come! I will get my shawl. Wait a minute. [She goes into the house. SEMIONOFF accosts COLON.]

*Sem.* Two more are coming presently. Two young ladies and a cadet. —

*Colon.* Are they? Very glad to hear it.

*Sem.* They'll be here soon — you know it's the cadet whose sister shot herself.

*Colon.* Indeed?

*Sem.* Wasn't it a sensational affair? A young lady shooting herself.

*Colon.* Yes. An accident?

*Sem.* I really thought you were made up. Your face and hair looked as though you were made up.

*Colon.* Thank you!

*Sem.* I am sure I don't flatter you.

*Colon.* I believe you, only I don't see wherein you could flatter me.

*Sem.* Why? When a man is made up he always looks better than he naturally does. Perhaps you are the decorator?

[SUSSLOFF emerges from the woods, the lady in yellow is also seen approaching with the young man in a plaid suit.]

*Colon.* No, I am simply this gentleman's uncle.

*The lady in yellow.* Mr. Sazonoff!

*Sem.* Someone is calling me. It's strange that though I have such a



simple name no one seems to remember it. Au revoir!

[*He goes towards the calling voice, profusely bowing to the lady.*]

*Sus.* [*approaching*]. Have you seen my wife? [*COLON shakes his head and draws a sigh of relief.*] Those artists are assembled in the house.

*Colon.* This burr stuck to me. A decorator he called me — spindle-legged Spinoza! Takes up a place on earth. There they are disputing again!

[*KALERIA, SHALIMOFF, RUMIN, and VARVARA come out of the house. COLON rises to meet them, attentively listening to the altercation. SUSSLOFF takes his seat and gloomily looks at the disputants.*]

*Shal.* [*wearily*]. No; I am willing to flee from her to the North Pole. She is a spit-fire!

*Rumin.* My whole nature rises up in wrath against her despotism. People of that type are criminally intolerant. Why do they suppose that every one must accept their belief?

*Var* [*looks at them fixedly*]. Point out something greater and nobler.

*Kal.* You call great and noble those cold dreams lacking all poetical fervor — those dreams of general *satiety*.

*Var.* [*excitedly*]. I don't know. I see nothing brighter. [*SHALIMOFF listens attentively to the words of VARVARA.*] I am not a talker, but I feel. Men ought to be awakened to the realization of the dignity which exists in all men alike. Then we won't insult each other. We don't know how to respect *man*, and that is what is so painful, so distressing.

*Kal.* Well, it certainly is not Marya Lvovna who can teach us that.

*Var.* You are all so opposed to her! Why?

*Rumin.* *She* is the one who is unfriendly. She exasperates us. When I hear how some men define life it seems to me as though some one rough and strong were holding me and seeking to mutilate me.

*Kal.* How hard it is to live in such an environment.

*Var.* And is it easier to live among those who complain, Kaleria? Let us be just. Is it easier to live among men who only groan or talk of themselves and fill their life with complaints and nothing else? What do we put into life — any of us? You or I?

*Rumin.* And what does Marya Lvovna put in? Enmity?

*Kal.* Forgotten words — forgotten and so much the better. Live men cannot live by dead precepts.

[*The amateurs are gathering about the stage. PUSTABAIKA places some chairs on the stage.*]

*Colon.* You shouldn't get excited, Varvara. Don't you think so? This conversation ought to stop. Let us go and take a walk—you promised.

*Var.* Yes, I'll go. I cannot express what I feel. I don't know how to do it. And I am sorry, so sorry to be mentally mute.

*Shal.* I can vouch that it isn't so. Will you allow me to accompany you?

*Var.* Certainly.

*Colon.* Let us walk to the river—to the pavilion. Why do you get excited, madam?

*Var.* Oh, I feel the depressingness of misunderstandings. [*They disappear on the forest road. SUSSLOFF looks after them and smiles.*]

*Rumin* [*also looking after them as they disappear*]. How she has waked up since Shalimoff came. How she talks! And what is he? She can't help seeing that he is used up, that he has lost ground under his feet, and when he speaks he lies to himself and deceives others.

*Kal.* She knows it. Last night after her conversation with him she cried like a disappointed child. Yes, he seemed strong and resolute to her from a distance; she expected that he would bring something new and interesting into her life.

[*ZAMYSLOFF and YULIA FILLIPOVNA appear round the corner of BASSOFF'S house. He whispers to her, she laughs. SUSSLOFF sees it.*]

*Rumin.* Let's go in. Play something. I should like to hear some music.

*Kal.* Very well. Yes, it's sad to see that all around us are so—

*Yulia.* See! Our artists have arrived. The rehearsal was to be at six. What time is it now?

*Zam.* It's half-past seven. Formerly you were the only one late. Now it's everybody. This is the result of your influence.

*Yulia.* Is this impertinence?

*Zam.* No, it's a compliment. I will go and see my chief a minute, with your permission.

*Yulia.* Come back soon.

[*ZAMYSLOFF goes to the BASSOFFS. YULIA FILLIPOVNA, humming,*

*goes towards the trees, where she sees her husband.]*

*Sus.* Ah, where have you been?

*Yulia.* Here and there. —

*[Near the stage are a lady in yellow, a young man, SEMIONOFF, a cadet, and two young ladies. PUSTOBAIKA is noisily placing a table on the stage. Laughter and exclamations:]* ‘Gentlemen!’ ‘Where is the stage manager?’ ‘Mr. Stepanoff!’ ‘He is here, I saw him.’ ‘We will be late.’ ‘In town.’ ‘I beg your pardon — Semionoff, not Stepanoff, if you please.’

*Sus.* You spent all that time with him! So openly! You think it’s smart! Every one laughs at me. You understand!

*Yulia.* Do they? — that’s too bad.

*Sus.* We must have an explanation. I cannot allow you —

*Yulia.* The part of the wife who is a laughing stock, does not suit me, either.

*Sus.* Beware, Yulia. I am capable of —

*Yulia.* Of being as rough as a cabman? I am aware of that. —

*Sus.* How dare you speak so! Harlot!

*Yulia* [*in an undertone*]. We will finish this scene at home. — You had better go. People are coming this way. Such a face! [*She shudders with disgust. SUSSLOFF takes a step forward, but retreats, and repeating his ejaculation through his teeth, disappears in the woods.*]

*Sus.* I’ll shoot you some time.

*Yulia* [*calls after him*]. Not today? No? [*She hums*] ‘The weary day’ [*her voice quavers*] ‘has sunk in the crimson waves.’ [*She looks before her with dilated eyes and slowly bows her head. MARYA, followed by DUDAKOFF and BASSOFF, who carry fishing rods, comes from BASSOFF’S house. MARYA is very much agitated.*]

*Bas.* [*twisting the reel*]. My highly esteemed lady, you should be kinder and more lenient. — We are all human! Devil take the man who tangled up my fishing-rods.

*Marya.* Allow me!

*Dud.* A man grows weary, don’t you know?

*Bas.* You shouldn’t say that, my highly esteemed lady. According to your theory if he is an author he must be a hero, — isn’t that what you mean? It isn’t a very comfortable position for every author to be placed in.

*Marya.* We must always raise our standards.

*Bas.* That may be.—I agree that we should raise them! But within the limits of the possible. Everything comes about gradually. Evolution! Evolution! That's the point to be emphasized.

*Marya.* I don't ask for the impossible. But we live in a country where the author alone can be a herald of truth, an equitable judge of the vices of his people and a defender of its interests. He alone can be that, and such a one the Russian author ought to be.

*Bas.* Of course, but—

*Marya* [*descends the terrace steps*]. I don't see this in your friend; no, I don't see this at all! What are his ideals? What are his aims? Where is his hatred, his love? Is he my friend or my enemy? I don't know.

[*She quickly disappears around the corner of the house.*]

*Bas.* [*untangling his fishing rods*]. I respect you, *Marya Lvovna*, for this enthusiasm.—Gone? Tell me, pray, why does she get so excited? Even a schoolboy now-a-days knows that a writer *must* be honest . . . that he *must* defend the people and all that, and that a soldier must be brave, — a lawyer clever — and yet this impetuous woman still harps on the old lessons. Come, dear doctor, let's catch some trout.—I wonder who tangled the fishing-rods? Devil take him!

*Dud.* Yes, she talks a great deal — and cleverly, too — But her life is simple, — she has a good practice, and her wants are few.

*Bas.* This *Yaska* \* is a smart rascal! You noticed how cleverly he slipped out when she got him in a tight place? [*Laughs.*] He is a good talker, but after the death of his first wife, whom he left, and with whom, by the way, he lived but six months and then deserted her —

*Dud.* You should say 'they separated.'

*Bas.* Well! separated, let it be then! And now that she is dead he wants to recover her estate. That's business!

*Dud.* That's shady business! And unnecessary!

*Bas.* He doesn't consider it unnecessary, my dear doctor. — Let's go to the river. —

*Dud.* Let me tell you. —

*Bas.* What?

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\* Meaning the author *Shalimoff*, abbreviation for *Jacob, Iakov*.



*Dud.* [*thoughtfully and deliberately*]. You don't consider it peculiar, — that is, you are not surprised that we are not disgusted with one another? What do you think?

*Bas.* [*stops*]. What? Are you in earnest?

*Dud.* Yes, quite so — We seem to be a very flippant sort of people, don't you think so?

*Bas.* [*walks on*]. No, I don't think so. — I am quite well — on the whole I am normal, — excuse me . . .

*Dud.* I am not joking.

*Bas.* Joking? Look here, my dear Doctor! . . . let me say this to you: Doctor, cure thyself! I will ask you, by the way: You won't push me off into the water?

*Dud.* [*seriously shrugging his shoulders*]. Why should I?

*Bas.* [*walks on*]. Well, I don't know, . . . you are in a strange mood. —

*Dud.* [*gloomily*]. It is difficult to talk to you seriously.

*Bas.* Don't, then! You have a queer idea about original conversation. — Let us not talk seriously.

[*BASSOFF and DUDAKOFF go out. SONYA and VLASS enter from the right. ZAMYSLOFF comes from BASSOFF's house and runs toward the stage. He is noisily met and surrounded by a group of people to whom he explains something.*]

*Sonya.* I don't believe in your poetry.

*Vlass.* I am sorry for you. — I have some very fine poems. For instance:

The peach and the pine-apple  
Have not been made for us;

Then don't make eyes at the peach and pine-apple.

*Sonya* [*laughs*]. Oh, worthy Vlass! Why do you fritter yourself away on trifles? Why not consider yourself in a more serious light?

*Vlass* [*softly and mysteriously*]. Wise Sophia! I have tried! I have even written a poem about such trials. — [*He softly hums through his nose to the tune of 'One evening in the dreary Fall'*]

'For business small — I am too great;

For business great — I am too small.'

*Sonya* [*seriously*]. Don't try to be funny! I can see how little you

feel like it. — Tell me, how would you like to live?

*Vlass* [*with warmth*]. Well! Very well! I would like to live very well!

*Sonya*. What then do you do to that end?

*Vlass* [*dolefully*]. Nothing, absolutely nothing!

*Marya* [*calling from the forest*]. Sonya!

*Sonya*. I am here. What is it?

*Marya*. Come home. You have company.

*Sonya*. I am coming. [*MARYA joins them.*] I put this clown in your care. He talks nonsense and needs to be lectured. [*She runs off.*]

*Vlass* [*mekely*]. Begin! Your daughter scolded me all the way from the station, but I am still living. —

*Marya* [*gently*]. My dear boy, why do you make a clown of yourself? Why value yourself so little? Who cares? —

*Vlass*. No one, you say. But I see no one laughing, and I want them to laugh. [*He begins to talk rapidly and earnestly.*] I am sick at heart, *Marya Lvovna*, — I am sick at heart! All these people I neither love nor respect! They are pitiful and as small as mosquitoes. — I cannot talk to them seriously — they excite in me a morbid desire to play the clown, only more openly than they do. — My head is full of nonsensical stuff. — I want to scold, to groan, to complain. — I believe I'll take to drink. Among them, I can only live as they do — and this distorts me. Their vulgarity poisons me! There they are — coming — can you hear them? Sometimes I look upon them with loathing. . . . Come! I want so much to talk with you.

*Marya* [*takes his arm*]. If you knew how pleased I am to see you like that!

*Vlass*. You won't believe when I say there are times when I want to say something harsh, wicked, offensive. . . . [*They go into the forest. SHALIMOFF, YULIA, and VARVARA enter from the right.*]

*Shal*. My! Serious conversation again! Spare me! I am too tired to be serious! I don't want philosophy, — I've had enough of it! Let me vegetate, strengthen my nerves. — I want to walk, to court the ladies. —

*Yulia*. Can you court ladies without disturbing your nerves? That's quite unique! Why don't you court me?

*Shal.* I will not fail to take advantage of your amiable permission.

*Yulia.* I didn't give you leave. I asked you why you didn't?

*Shal.* I shall still consider your question in the light of an amiable permission.

*Yulia.* We'll drop that subject. Reply truthfully to my question!

*Shal.* Very well. I admit the possibility of friendship with a woman, but I believe it to be unstable. — You can't deceive Nature!

*Yulia.* In other words, you admit friendship only as a prologue to love.

*Shal.* Love! I look upon love in a serious light. When I love a woman I wish to raise her above the earth. I wish to adorn her life with all the flowers of my thought and feelings.

*Zam.* Yulia Fillipovna, you are wanted.

*Yulia.* I am coming. Au revoir, Mr. Gardener! Put your hot-house in order.

[*She goes towards the stage.*]

*Shal.* Yes, at once. — Charming and so bright! — Why do you look at me so, Varvara Michailovna?

*Var.* Your mustache becomes you wonderfully.

*Shal.* [*smiling*]. Does it? I am very much obliged to you. You don't like my manner of speech? You are very severe! But, then, one can't talk to her differently!

*Var.* I believe I am losing the capacity for wonder.

*Shal.* I understand you are surprised to see me in this light? Yes? But one can't be so noisily sincere as the hysterical Mr. Rumin! I beg your pardon. — I believe he is your friend? —

*Var.* [*shakes her head negatively*]. I have no friends. —

*Shal.* I respect my inner life too much to disclose it to the curious. The Pythagoreans communicated their secrets to the elect only. —

*Var.* Now, your mustache is *de trop*.

*Shal.* Never mind the mustache. You know the proverb: 'When you live with wolves you must howl with the wolves.' This applies especially to those who drink the bitter cup of solitude — It seems you have not enjoyed it enough, and you can't understand a man who — but I dare not detain you any longer. [*He bows and goes towards the stage where the assembled public looks on.* ZAMYSLOFF, with book in hand, steals across

*the stage to show SEMIONOFF how to act. BASSOFF, with the fishing-rods, hastily comes from the house.]*

*Bas.* Such fishing! Perfectly wonderful! The doctor, with all his nonchalance, caught one at once. And such large trout! Uncle caught three. [*Looks about carefully.*] Just as I came this way, fancy! I saw, near the pavilion, by the pines, Vlass kneeling before Marya Lvovna, — kissing her hands! What do you think of that? Tell him, dearest, that he is but a boy! She is old enough to be his mother.

*Var.* [*almost whispering*]. Listen, Serguey! Please don't mention this to any one! You don't understand! You have misunderstood, — I am afraid you will tell this to everybody, — and it would be wrong. — See?

*Bas.* Why do you get so excited? If I am not to mention it, I won't, and that's the end of it. But if this isn't idiotic! And Marya Lvovna!

*Var.* Give me your word of honor that you will forget it. Will you?

*Bas.* Word of honor. — Well, all right. Devil take them! — But will you explain to me? —

*Var.* I can explain nothing. I only know that it isn't what you think; it isn't a love affair.

*Bas.* Is that so? Not a love affair! What is it, then? Well, well, don't get excited, Varya. — I am off to fish. — I haven't seen anything. Yes; by the way, let me tell you that Yashka, — the brute!

*Var.* What else, Serguey! What else!

*Bas.* What's the matter with you — How queerly you act? This is an entirely different matter.

*Var.* Wait, — I don't want to hear it, — understand me! I don't wish to, Serguey!

*Bas.* [*surprised*]. But it is nothing, you crank! What ails you? He simply means to sue his sister-in-law for the land that belonged to his deceased wife, from whom he was —

*Var.* Pray, say no more! Can't you understand? — Don't, Serguey!

*Bas.* [*offended*]. You must take care of your nerves, Varya. Excuse the remark, but you are behaving in a very strange way. And what's more, you offend me! [*He goes off.*]

[*VARVARA slowly goes towards the veranda. Loud laughter and bustle around the stage.*]

*Zam.* Watchman! Where is the lantern?



Yulia. Where is my part?

Sem. 'Senionoff,' if you please.

Yulia. Let me pass!

Zam. Attention, please, we are ready to begin!

### ACT III

*A meadow. Beyond, in the field, under the trees, around a rug, on which bottles and edibles are placed, sit BASSOFF, COLON, SHALIMOFF, SUSSLOFF, ZAMYSLOFF; to the right, a large samovar; by its side SASHA washes the cups; still further, PUSTOBAIKA smokes a pipe; opposite lie oars, baskets, and an iron tub; nearer the front, on the left, a haycock and a large overturned stump. KALERIA, VARVARA, and YULIA are sitting on the hay. BASSOFF is the center of a group of men to whom he is telling a story. On the right is heard SONYA'S voice. She is playing an accordion; some one else plays a guitar. Evening.*

Yulia. Your picnic is dull!

Kaleria. Like our life.

Varvara. Men are always jolly.

Yulia. They drank a great deal, and are now probably telling each other improper stories. [*A pause. SONYA: 'Not that way! Slower.' The sounds of a guitar. COLON laughs.*] I had a glass, too, but it does not cheer me! On the contrary, when I drink even a small glass — I grow more serious. Life seems less attractive, and I feel like doing something impossible!

Kal. [*pensively*]. Everything is tangled — blurred! It frightens me.

Var. What frightens you?

Kal. Men. They are not reliable. — I don't believe in anyone.

Var. Yes, they are unreliable — I understand you. [*BASSOFF is mimicking the Armenian accent. 'Why do you do that, my dear fellow? I feel finely.' An explosive burst of laughter from the men.*]

Kal. No, you don't understand me . . . and I don't understand you, — and no one understands anyone. — They don't wish to understand. Men wander like icebergs in the north — they collide. —

[*COLON rises and goes to the right. YULIA sings softly: 'The tired*

day has dipped into the red waters.' *When VARVARA begins to speak, YULIA stops, and looks at her fixedly.*]

*Var.* Life is a bazaar. All want to cheat, to give less and take more. [*YULIA resumes singing 'The deep blue arch of sky grows darker and a light shadow falls on the earth.'*]

*Kal.* What should people be, so that we shouldn't be tired of them?

*Var.* They should be more honest and more enterprising.

*Kal.* They must be daring, Varya. Anyway, they must be more positive in all respects.

*Yulia.* Stop talking! It isn't entertaining! Let's sing.

*Var.* What a fine duet \* you are singing, Yulia Phillipovna.

\* So in original.

*Yulia.* Yes, I think so. So poetical! I love everything pure. You don't believe me? But I love to see and hear everything that is pure. [*She laughs.*]

*Kal.* I am growing desperate. Despair like an autumn cloud grows in my soul. A dark cloud of despair oppresses me, Varya. I love no one! I don't wish to love. I shall die a bona fide old maid.

*Var.* Don't, dear. It's so depressing!

*Yulia.* To be married is also a doubtful pleasure. In your place I should marry Rumin. He is rather soured, but then. —

[*SONYA'S voice is heard.* Wait a minute. Now, begin. No, the mandolin begins first. *A duet between the mandolin and the guitar.*]

*Kal.* He is made of India rubber.

*Var.* A sad song haunts me. The washerwomen in my mother's establishment sang it. I was a very young schoolgirl, then. When I came home, the laundry was always full of a gray, suffocating steam in which half-clad women were rocking to and fro, and wearily singing:

'Pity me, my own mother,  
Pity me, the unfortunate one!  
Miserable am I among strangers;  
Pent up am I and my heart is withered.'

And I cried when I heard this song. —

[*BASSOFF'S voice is heard.* 'SASHA! Bring some beer and port wine.')

How happy I was then! Those women loved me. I remember that in the evening, after the work was done, we used to sit around and drink tea at a large, clean table. I sat with them as though I were one of them.

*Kal.* You are despondent, Varya, you moralize like Marya Lvovna.

*Yulia.* My dear friends, we are living wrong.

*Var.* [*thoughtfully*]. Yes, indeed; and we don't know how to live any better. My mother worked all her life. She was kind and cheery. Everyone loved her. She educated me. How she rejoiced when I graduated! At that time she had rheumatism and could no longer work. — Her death was peaceful. She said, 'Don't cry, Varya, — it's nothing. It's time for me to go. I have lived, and worked — and this is the end.' Her life had more meaning than mine, and I am ashamed to live as I do. It is as if I were in a strange circle — surrounded by strangers — and I don't understand their life. I don't understand the life of the cultured classes. It seems unstable, hastily made to last only a little while, as booths are built at fairs. — This life is like the ice over the living waves of a river. — It is strong and shining, but full of dirt, — full of much that is low and bad. — When I read good, earnest books, it seems to me as though the warm sun of truth were rising. — The ice thaws, exposing the mud that's in it, and the waves of the river wash it off; they break up the ice, and carry it off somewhere. —

*Kal.* [*disgusted*]. Why don't you leave your husband! He is vulgar and altogether unnecessary to you. — [*VARVARA looks at KALERIA in astonishment.*]

*Kal.* [*insisting*]. Leave him and go off somewhere. You ought to study — fall in love with someone — only you should go away!

*Var.* [*rising angrily*]. How coarse all this is!

*Kal.* You should! You have no aversion for anything that is low. You like washerwomen. You can live anyhow. —

*Yulia.* You talk very unfeelingly about your brother.

*Kal* [*quietly*]. Do you want me to tell you something about your husband?

*Yulia* [*smiling*]. Do! I want to be offended. I very often tell him things that anger him. He pays me back in the same coin. Quite recently he told me I was a harlot.

*Var.* And you! What did you do?

*Yulia.* I didn't reply. I don't know — I don't know what he meant. I am not curious. I only have a great curiosity about men. [*VARVARA rises and takes three steps aside.*] I am good-looking — that's my misfortune. Even when I was yet in the Sixth Grade at school my teachers looked at me so that I blushed — and that pleased them; they smiled like gourmands in a delicatessen shop.

*Kal.* Brr! How low!

*Yulia.* Yes; and my married friends educated me. But I owe most to my husband. He distorted my imagination. He inoculated me with a feeling of curiosity toward men. [*She laughs. SHALIMOFF slowly withdraws from the group of men, and comes toward the women.*] And I spoiled his life! The proverb says: 'Having taken the skin, give back the string.'

*Shal.* [*approaching*]. A fine proverb, and invented by a generous man. Varvara Michailovna, don't you want to take a walk to the river?

*Var.* Yes; if you like.

*Shal.* Allow me to give you my arm.

*Var.* No, thank you. I don't need it.

*Shal.* How sad you seem. You are not like your jolly brother. [*They go to the right.*]

*Kal.* There are so few among us who are satisfied with life. Now, you are always pleasant, and yet —

*Yulia.* How do you like this gentleman? To me there is something fiendish about him. He must be as cold as a frog. — Let's go to the river, too.

*Kal.* Yes, let's.

*Yulia.* I think he's somewhat in love with her. She really is a stranger to all of us, and she looks so inquisitively at everyone. What does she want to see? I don't like her. I'm afraid of her. She is severe and pure. [*They go. On the right are heard loud cries and laughter. Voices: 'A boat! Be quick! Where are the oars?' PUSTABAIKA rises slowly, and placing the oars over his shoulder, is about to go. SUSSLOFF and BASSOFF run out when they hear the voice. ZAMYSLOFF runs up to PUSTABAIKA and snatches an oar from him.*]

*Zam.* Hurry! The deuce take you! Do you hear? It's an accident, probably. You idiot! — [*He runs off.*]



*Pust.* [following him, grumbling]. If it were an accident, they'd scream louder. He wanted to be a hero. Just see him running!

[For several minutes the stage remains empty. Voices: 'Don't throw stones. Hold on! Take the oar.' Laughter. From the left comes MARYA LVOVNA with VLASS. Both are agitated.]

*Marya* [with suppressed animation]. Do you hear? I won't have it! Don't you dare to talk to me like that. What right have I given you?

*Vlass.* I will speak! I will!

*Marya* [putting out her hands as though to push VLASS away]. I demand respect.

*Vlass.* I love you! I love you—with all my soul! I love your heart, your mind, this severe lock of gray hair! Your eyes, your voice—

*Marya.* Silence! How dare you!

*Vlass.* I can't leave—I need you as I do air or fire.

*Marya.* Oh, my God! Can't you spare me that? Can't you?

*Vlass* [clutching his head]. You raised me in my own estimation. I wandered in the twilight without road or aim. You taught me to believe in my own power.—

*Marya.* Go away! Don't torment me, my dear boy. Don't torment me.

*Vlass* [falling on his knees]. You have given me much, but it is not enough. Be generous! I want to believe that I am worthy not only of your regard, but of your love. I beseech you, don't repel me!

*Marya.* No, it's I who beseech you. Go! I will answer you later—not now. Rise, rise, I pray!

*Vlass.* Believe me. Your love is necessary to me. I have soiled my heart among all these miserable people. I need a fire that will consume all the filth and rust of my soul.

*Marya.* Show some respect for me. I am an old woman. You see it. You must go away. Go!

*Vlass.* Very well. I will go. But you will always believe me?

*Marya.* Yes, yes. Always. Go.

[VLASS goes hurriedly towards the forest to the right. He collides with his sister.]

*Var.* Look out! What's the matter with you?

*Vlass.* Is that you? Forgive me!

*Marya* [*extending her hands, as she sees VARVARA*]. Come here, my dear, come!

*Var.* What's the matter with you? Has he offended you?

*Marya.* No. — I mean — yes — Did you say 'offended'? I'm sure I don't know!

*Var.* Sit down. . . . What has happened?

*Marya.* He told me — [*laughs, and looks absent-mindedly into VARVARA'S eyes*] — he told me that he loved me! Me! a gray-haired woman, with false teeth — three false teeth! I am an old woman, my dear! Can't he see it? My daughter is eighteen. It is impossible — It's useless.

*Var.* [*agitated*]. My dear one! My own dear one! Calm yourself. Tell me. — You say —

*Marya.* I am not. — I am just like the rest! I am a poor woman. Help me. — He should not come near me. — I can't do it. I *will* go away!

*Var.* I understand. You pity him — but you like him. Poor Vlasik!

*Marya.* Ah, I am lying to you! I don't pity *him*. I pity *myself*!

*Var.* [*quickly*]. No. — Then why —

[*SONYA issues from the wood, and remains several minutes behind the haycock. She has some flowers in her hands, and she was about to scatter them over her mother and VARVARA when she heard her mother speak. She makes a motion to go toward her, then, turning, she softly goes away.*]

*Marya.* I love him. You find that ridiculous? But I do. I have gray hair — still, I want to love. I am like a starved woman. I have not lived as yet. My marriage was a torture that lasted three years. I never loved anyone. Now, I am ashamed to confess I long to be caressed! I am longing for a strong and tender caress! I know it is too late — too late. I beg of you, dearest, to help me. Persuade him that he is mistaken, that he does not love me. I am very miserable! I have suffered so much.

*Var.* Dear one, I don't understand your fear! If you love him, and he loves you, it is all right. If you fear future suffering, perhaps it may yet be far distant.

*Marya.* You think it possible? And my daughter? My Sonya? And what about my age? My cursed age! And these gray hairs? — He is very young. In a year he will give me up. No! I don't want that humiliation!

*Var.* Why weigh all this! Why calculate? How we all fear to live! What does it mean, pray tell me, what does it mean? How we pity ourselves! — I don't know what I am saying. — Perhaps this is wrong and I should not speak thus — But I understand! I am struggling like a fly that beats against the glass. I long for liberty — and I suffer for you. I should be glad to see you happy. And I am sorry for my brother. You could be so good to him. He never had a mother. He, too, has suffered much humiliation and grief. You could be his mother.

*Marya* [*bowing her head*]. A mother! Yes — only a mother. I understand.

*Var.* [*hastily*]. No, you don't understand. I did not say —

[*RUMIN comes out of the wood from the right. He sees the women, stops, and coughs. They do not hear him. He comes nearer.*]

*Marya.* You don't want to say it — but it is said [*spontaneously and simply*]. I must be a mother to him, a friend. Oh, my dear, I would like to cry. I shall go. Look, yonder stands Rumin. I must look like a very foolish old woman! [*She rises and slowly goes into the woods.*]

*Var.* I shall go with you.

*Rumin* [*quickly*]. Varvara Michailovna, may I ask you to remain? I shall not detain you long.

*Var.* I will catch up with you, *Marya Lvovna*. Go toward the watchman's hut. What do you want, *Pavel Sergueyitch*?

*Rumin* [*looking back*]. I will tell you presently. [*He looks down, and is silent.*]

*Var.* Why are you looking about so mysteriously? What is it?

[*At the rear of the stage SUSSLOFF passes from right to left. He hums. BASSOFF's voice is heard, saying, 'Vlass, didn't you want to read the poetry? Where are you going?'*]

*Rumin.* I — I will tell you. You have known me for a long time. —

*Var.* Four years. But what is the matter with you?

*Rumin.* I am a little excited. I fear — I haven't the courage to say the words. I wish that you. —

*Var.* I don't understand. What am I to do?

*Rumin.* Yes — only yes!

*Var.* What? Speak plainer.

*Rumin* [*softly*]. That much I wished to tell you long ago. Now, I

understand. [*A pause. VARVARA, frowning, looks at RUMIN sternly, and slowly walks away.*]

*Var.* [*involuntarily*]. What a queer day!

*Rumin* [*in a suppressed voice*]. It seems to me that I have loved you all my life—I loved you before I knew or saw you. You were the woman of my dream. What a wonderful apparition, created and sought through life.—Sometimes it's never found. I met you, my dream.—

*Var.* [*calmly*]. Pavel Sergueyitch, you must not speak so. I don't love you.

*Rumin.* No, perhaps not. But let me say.—

*Var.* Why? What for?

*Rumin.* What shall I do! What shall I do! [*laughs softly*]. So all is at an end—and so simply—I have been deciding for such a long time to say this to you—I feared and longed for the hour when I might tell you that I love you, and now I have said it!

*Var.* But, Pavel Sergueyitch, what can I do?

*Rumin.* Yes, yes. Of course, I understand. Do you know that on you and your opinion of me I built all my hopes, and now they have fled, and life is ended, too.

*Var.* Don't say that! You must not grieve me. Is it my fault?

*Rumin.* How this hurts me! An unkept promise weighs on me and oppresses me. In my youth I swore to do the impossible—I swore to consecrate my life in a struggle for everything that seemed good and honest. Now, my best years are past, and I have done nothing! At first I prepared, waiting, attempting—and imperceptibly I have grown accustomed to live calmly and quietly. I prized this calmness, and I feared to disturb it. You see how sincerely I speak. Don't deprive me of the joy of being sincere. I am sorry to say it, but there is a sweetness in this sorrow—this confession.

*Var.* Well, what can I do for you?

*Rumin.* I don't ask for love. I ask for pity. Life frightens me by the insistence of its demands, and I avoid them so carefully.—I hide myself behind the screen of different theories. You understand this, I know.—I met you, and in my heart there suddenly bloomed a bright and beautiful hope that you would help me to redeem my promise, that you would give me strength, and the desire to work for the good of life.

*Var.* [*with annoyance, and sadly*]. I cannot understand it, I cannot. I am a beggar myself. I, too, stand before life in a maze—I am seeking



some sign from life, and don't find it. Is this life? Is it possible to live as we live? The soul demands a bright and beautiful life, while we are surrounded with beastly idleness. I am disgusted, I am ashamed to live thus any longer. We all fear something, we clutch each other and ask for help. We groan and shriek. —

*Rumin.* I, too, ask help. I am a weak and vacillating man, but if you only would! —

*Var.* [*passionately*]. It is a lie! I don't believe you. These are only pitiful appeals. I cannot put my heart into you, even if I am strong! I don't believe there is a force somewhere which exists outside of man and which can make him brave. It is either in him or it does not exist at all! I will say no more. — An enmity rises in my soul.

*Rumin.* Toward me? Why?

*Var.* Oh, not toward you — toward everybody. We live here strangers to all. — We don't know how to be necessary to men, and I believe that soon, perhaps tomorrow, other men will come, stronger and bolder, and will sweep us off from the face of the earth like dust. The enmity to deceit and lies rises in my soul.

*Rumin.* But I want to be deceived! Indeed I do, now that I know the truth — I have nothing to live for.

*Var.* [*with aversion*]. Don't bare your soul before me! I pity a beggar if he is a man that has been robbed, but if he has lost all he had, or was born a beggar, I don't pity him.

*Rumin* [*offended*]. Don't be so cruel. You are wounded, too, yourself.

*Var.* [*energetically, almost with disdain*]. Yes, a wounded man is not a sick man. It is only his body that has been bruised. Only he is ill who is poisoned.

*Rumin.* Spare me. Remember I am still a man.

*Var.* And I, am I not a human being, too? Am I only something you need, so that you could live better? Is that it? And isn't it cruel? I see. I know! You were not the only man who swore in his youth. There are thousands who have broken their oaths!

*Rumin* [*beside himself*]. Good-bye. I understand. I was too late. Yes, of course. Only remember, Shalimoff, too — look at him — look at him —

*Var.* [*coldly*]. Shalimoff? You have no right . . .

*Rumin.* Good-bye. I can't endure this any longer. Good-bye.

[*He goes quickly into the woods on the left. VARVARA starts as though to follow him, but shakes her head negatively, and seats herself on the stump. At the rear of the stage, by the carpet with the lunch, appears SUSSLOFF, who pours out some wine and drinks it. VARVARA rises and goes into the woods, to the left. RUMIN from the right enters quickly, looks about, and with a gesture of annoyance, sits down on the haycock. SUSSLOFF, who is somewhat tipsy, approaches, whistling.*]

*Sus.* Did you hear?

*Rumin.* What?

*Sus.* [*seating himself*]. The dispute.

*Rumin.* No. What dispute?

*Sus.* [*lighting a cigarette*]. The dispute of Vlass with the writer and Zamysloff.

*Rumin.* No.

*Sus.* I'm sorry.

*Rumin.* Don't set the hay on fire!

*Sus.* Devil take the hay!—Yes, they had a dispute, but it's only gymnastics. I was a philosopher myself once upon a time. I said all the fashionable words, and I know their value—'conservatism,' 'intellectuality,' 'democracy'—what else? All this is dead! It's all a lie! In the first place a man is a zoölogical type, that's a fact. You know that yourself. No matter how many gymnastic exercises you go through, you can't hide the fact that you want to eat and drink—and enjoy a woman.—This is all truth. . . . Yes, when Shalimoff talks, I understand: he is a writer; the game of words is his business. And when Vlass talks, I understand also: he is young and foolish.—But when Zamysloff talks, the rascal, the carnivorous animal! I should like to stop his throat with my fist. Do you hear? He has got Bassoff into a predicament! It's a dirty story. They'll get about 50,000,—Bassoff and this rascal! Yes. But afterwards no one will call them respectable! And that proud Varvara, who still hesitates to choose a lover.

*Rumin.* You talk basely. [*He hurries off.*]

*Sus.* Idiot! Jelly-fish! [*From the right appears PUSTABAIKA. He takes the pipe from his mouth, and looks at SUSSLOFF.*]

*Sus.* Well, what are you glaring at?

*Pust.* I'm off. [*He slowly departs.*]

*Sus.* 'All humanity on earth.'— [*He coughs.*] You are all latent rascals.— 'Men die for money.' That is all bosh— money is nothing— when you have it.— [*He dozes.*] The fear of one's neighbors' opinion is something.— If a man is sober— but I say, you are all rascals in your hearts.— [*He drops off to sleep.* DUDAKOFF and OLGA slowly walk in, arm in arm. *She leans on his shoulder, looking up.*]

*Dud.* Certainly, we are both right. We whirled, we bustled, and lost all regard for each other. And why should you respect me? What am I?

*Olga.* My dear Kyrill—you are the father of my children. I respect and love you.

*Dud.* I am weary, and I let myself go. I can't control my nerves—and you take everything so much to heart. In this way an impossible situation is created.

*Olga.* You are all I have in the world—you and our children. I have no one else.

*Dud.* Remember, Olga,—you and I once dreamed of a different life. [*YULIA and ZAMYSLOFF appear behind the trees on the left.*] Isn't that so?

*Olga.* But what can we do? What can we do? We have children. They demand our attention.

*Dud.* Yes. I understand—children. But one doubts, sometimes—

*Olga.* What shall we do, then, dear? [*They go into the woods.*]

*Yulia* [*coming out of the woods, laughing*]. So pompous! and so touching! What a lesson for me!

*Zam.* Is this the prologue to the fifth or sixth child? Well, my dear Yulia, I shall expect you.

*Yulia* [*with a sneer*]. I am not so sure of that— If we are so loving— shouldn't I, too, return to the path of virtue, duckie?

*Zam.* That will follow, Yulia.

*Yulia.* Yes, that will follow. I have decided to remain in the path of vice, and my summer romance will die a natural death.—What were you disputing about with Vlass and the author?

*Zam.* Vlass was like a lunatic today. We talked about religion. —

*Yulia.* And what do you believe?

*Zam.* I? I believe in myself, Yulia. I believe only in my right to live as I choose.

*Yulia.* I believe nothing.

*Zam.* My past is a starving childhood, — my youth likewise, — full of humiliations. I had a sad past, my dear Yulia. I have seen much that is bad and painful. I have suffered much. Now, I am master, and lord of my life. That's all there is to it. I am going now. Au revoir, my joy. We must still be quite careful and keep away from each other.

*Yulia* [*with pathos*]. Near or far, is it not all the same, O knight? Whom shall we fear when we love so passionately?

*Zam.* I despair, O thou, my luxury!

[*He goes into the woods. YULIA looks after him, then about the meadow, and gives a sigh of relief. She goes toward the haycock, singing: 'Be calm, thou soul tormented by sadness!' She sees her husband, pauses and for several moments stands motionless, looking at him. She wants to go, but returns, and, with a smile, seats herself beside him. She tickles his face with a wisp of grass. SUSSLOFF grunts.*]

*Yulia.* How musical!

*Sus.* What the devil is it! Oh, it's you?

*Yulia.* How you reek of wine! A whole haycock cannot drown it. You will fail through drinking expensive wine, my friend!

*Sus.* [*stretching out his hands*]. You so near? — I forget, Yulia, when all this happened.

*Yulia.* It is useless to remember the happy moment, my friend. — Listen. Do you want to please me?

*Sus.* What shall I do? I am ready. Believe me, Yulia, I am ready to do everything for you.

*Yulia.* That is just how a loving husband should be.

*Sus.* [*kissing her hand*]. Tell me, what do you wish?

*Yulia* [*taking out a small revolver from her pocket*]. Let's shoot each other, first you and then I.

*Sus.* This is a poor joke, Yulia! Throw away that horrible thing, I beg of you. Throw it away!

*Yulia.* Wait a moment. Take your hand away. My proposition



does not please you? But didn't you once mean to shoot me? I would shoot myself first but that I fear you will deceive me and live — and I don't care to be deceived by you another time, nor to part from you. I will live a long, long time. Are you glad?

*Sus.* [*dejectedly*]. Listen, Yulia, we can't go on like this.

*Yulia.* Yes, we can. Don't you see? Now, do you wish me to shoot you?

*Sus.* [*covering his face with his hands*]. Don't look at me like that. Devil take it! I will go away! I can't stand this.

*Yulia* [*merrily*]. Go! — I will shoot you in the back. No, I can't, for here come Marya Lvovna. She is a good woman! Why don't you fall in love with her, Piotr? She has beautiful hair!

*Sus.* [*in a suppressed voice*]. You drive me crazy! What have I done? Why do you hate me?

*Yulia* [*with disdain*]. I can't hate you.

*Sus.* [*breathlessly*]. You torture me. Why? Say! [*MARYA LVOVNA walks by, wrapt in thought, stooping, and with her head bowed. SUSSLOFF stands in front of his wife without removing his eyes from the revolver in her hand.*]

*Yulia.* Come here, Marya Lvovna. Piotr, you have made me a vile woman. Go! Go! Marya Lvovna, how soon are we going home?

*Marya.* I don't know. They have all gone somewhere. Haven't you seen Varvara Michailovna?

*Yulia.* She is probably with someone else. I believe you wanted to go to the river. — Go, I shan't miss you. [*SUSSLOFF leaves silently.*]

*Marya* [*absent-mindedly*]. How stern you are!

*Yulia.* A good thing. A philosopher, I am told, gives this advice: When you approach a woman, take a whip along.

*Marya.* That's Nietsche?

*Yulia.* Yes, I believe he was a little off. I don't know any philosophers that are entirely sane. But if I were a philosopher, I should say to a woman, 'When you approach a man, my dear, take a heavy stick.' [*From the left at the end of the field come OLGA and KALERIA. They sit down near the carpet with the refreshments.*] I was told that one of the savage tribes has the following charming custom: A man, before he plucks the flowers of pleasure, strikes the woman on her head with a stick. We civi-

lized people do this after marriage. Has no one struck you on the head?

*Marya.* Yes.

*Yulia [with a smile].* Savages are more honest. Don't you think so? Why do you look so gloomy?

*Marya.* Don't ask. Is not life hard to you? [*COLON appears without a hat, holding a fishing-rod.*]

*Yulia [laughing].* Who has ever heard me groan? I am always jolly—There comes uncle—Do you like him? I do, very much.

*Marya.* Yes, he is an excellent man.

*Colon [approaching].* My hat swam away. The young people started to save it, and drowned it definitely. Hasn't anybody a spare handkerchief for my head? because the mosquitoes bite my bald spot.

*Yulia [rising].* Wait a moment, I will get you one. [*She goes to the rear of the stage.*]

*Colon.* Mr. Chernoff has been amusing the folks— He is a good boy.

*Marya.* Is he jolly?

*Colon.* Very. He simply sparkles. He read us his poetry. A lady asked him to write some verses in her album. He wrote at once. Says he, 'You looked into my eyes with a smile, but your glance missed and fell into my heart.' Says he, it is two weeks since I hoped, madam.—You understand—and then—

*Marya [hastily].* Don't, Semion Semionitch. Don't say any more. I know those verses. Tell me, are you going to stay here for some time?

*Colon.* Well, I thought I could live with my nephew until the end of my days, but I don't see any wish on his part to strengthen me in this intention. I have no other place to go. I have no one. I have money and nothing else.

*Marya [looking at him absent-mindedly].* You are rich, then?

*Solon.* Yes, I am worth nearly a million. [*Sighs.*] Nearly a million. When I die, Piotr will have it all, but evidently that does not make any impression on him. He doesn't seem to care for me. He seems to be a man that does not wish for anything. He wants nothing. I understand him. I suppose he knows the money will be his anyway. Why should he borrow trouble? [*Sighs again.*]

*Marya [with more interest].* You poor man! You should use it for

some public charity. That would be more sensible.

*Colon.* Yes, that is what a fellow advised me once, but I didn't like him. He was a red-haired rascal. To tell the truth, I am sorry to leave the money to Piotr. What will he do with it? As it is, he is quite self-sufficient. [*MARYA laughs. COLON looks at her attentively.*] Why do you laugh? Do I seem silly? I am no fool . . . only I am unaccustomed to living alone. Dear, dear! I sigh and groan, thinking about one thing, and when I go on thinking I am sorry for everybody. You are a good woman. Let me tell you! [*He laughs.*]

*Marya.* Thank you.

*Colon.* You are welcome. I thank you. You called me a poor man. I never heard that before. Everybody calls me rich. I thought I *was* rich, and now it seems I am poor.

*Yulia* [*walking toward them with a handkerchief in her hand*]. Are you making a declaration of love, uncle?

*Colon.* No, I am too old for that. I can only express my regards now. — Tie the handkerchief as well as you can. Now I'll eat something before I go.

*Yulia.* There, that is very becoming to you!

*Colon.* Now you are telling a whopper. I have a manly face. Let's go and take a bite. I wanted to ask you. — You don't love your husband, do you?

*Yulia.* Do you think I can love him?

*Colon.* Then, why did you marry him?

*Yulia.* He pretended to be interesting!

*Colon* [*laughing*]. Oh, get out! [*They go to the rear of the stage. Great commotion and laughter are heard. From the left appear BASSOFF, somewhat under the influence of liquor, SHALIMOFF, DUDAKOFF, and VLASS. VLASS goes to the rear while the other three seat themselves on the hay.*]

*Zam.* [*calling in the woods*]. Folks, it's time to go home!

*Bas.* It's very beautiful about here, Yasha! We had a fine walk, didn't we?

*Shal.* You sat still all the time like an owl. You sat and drank, and now you are not fit for much. [*In the rear of the stage SONYA is tying the handkerchief on COLON's head. Laughter. ZAMYSLOFF comes from the*



woods, and goes towards the rug where the refreshments are, takes a bottle of wine and a tumbler, and approaches BASSOFF. He is followed by COLON, who waves SONYA away.]

*Bas.* [throwing himself on the hay]. I'll sit down. . . . One must be seated to admire nature — nature, the woods, the trees, the hay — I love nature. [Then in a sad tone.] I love men, too — I love my poor, immense, absurd country — my Russia! — I love everything and everybody — My heart is as tender as a peach — Yakov, you may use that expression. It is a good comparison . . . My heart is as tender as a peach!

*Shal.* All right, I'll use it.

*Sonya.* Now, Semion Semionitch, allow me!

*Colon.* What are you going to do? You have had enough fun with the old man. Now I am offended. [He sighs.]

*Bas.* Ah, will some one pour me out some wine? It's good wine! This is jolly, my dear fellows! Life is a glorious occupation for him who looks at it in a friendly and simple way — confidently, with simple, child-like eyes. Then all is well. [COLON stands opposite the stump and laughs, listening to BASSOFF's chatter.] Oh, Lord! Let us look with bright, child-like eyes into one another's hearts. Then all will be well. — Uncle is laughing. He caught a lovely young trout, and I took it and put it back into its native element, because I am a pantheist — that's a fact — and I love trout, too! But uncle's hat is drowned — There you are!

*Shal.* You talk too much, Serguey.

*Bas.* Judge not that ye be not judged. I don't talk any worse than you do. You are eloquent — I am eloquent, too. Hark, I hear the voice of Marya Lvovna. She is an excellent woman, worthy of the deepest regard.

*Shal.* No, I don't like that mitrailleuse. . . . I am generally an admirer of women who are not worthy of regard.

*Bas.* Nothing truer! The women who are unworthy of regard are better than the worthy ones. They are better, that's a fact!

*Colon.* No doubt about it! You who have married a queen, so to speak —

*Bas.* You mean my wife, Varya? Oh, she is a puritan — a wonderful woman — a saint — but it's dull music. She reads a great deal, and always speaks as though she were quoting an apostle. Let's drink her health.



*Shal.* Your conclusion is quite unexpected. Still, Marya Lvovna is —

*Bas.* [*interrupting*]. You know she had quite a romantic episode with my assistant? That's a fact! I saw him declaring his love to her!

*Colon.* Hm! Perhaps that had better not be spoken of. [*He goes off.*]

*Bas.* Oh, by the way, that is a secret!

*Kal.* [*approaching*]. Serguey, have you seen Varya?

*Bas.* Ah, here is my sister, the poetess. Yakov, has she read her poetry to you? You should hear it. It is quite charming. Everything so lofty — clouds, mountains, stars.

*Kal.* I think you have had too much to drink.

*Bas.* Only one glass.

*Zam.* From this bottle?

*Shal.* Your poetical essays appeal to me very much.

*Kal.* If I were to take you at your word, I should bring you four very thick note-books.

*Shal.* Don't frighten me. I am timid!

*Kal.* That remains to be seen.

*Yulia* [*singing in the woods*]. It is time to go home, time to go!

*Kal.* Yes, we are all tired. [*KALERIA goes to the right, and meets SONYA. ZAMYSLOFF goes to the side, where he hears the voice of YULIA. BASSOFF winks at him, and bending toward SHALIMOFF, he whispers in his ear. SHALIMOFF listens and laughs.*]

*Kal.* When I go out I always carry with me a vague hope, but when I return, I return alone. — Does that ever happen to you?

*Sonya.* No.

*Kal.* It will.

*Sonya* [*laughing*]. I believe you like to say sad things.

*Kal.* You think so? I should like to veil your eyes with the tremulous shadow of thought. I often see uncouth men beside you, and I am surprised at your temerity in facing the filth of life. Aren't you disgusted with them?

*Sonya* [*laughing*]. The filth is only superficial. It is easily washed off with soap. [*They go to the rear, talking.*]

*Shal.* [*rising*]. You have a sharp tongue, Serguey. — Look, there is the husband himself!

*Bas.* Who? I?

*Shal.* Nature is beautiful, but why do mosquitoes exist? I left my plaid somewhere about here. [*He goes to the right. BASSOFF stretches himself out and hums. In the rear SASHA, SONYA, and PUSTOBAIKA are covering up things. On the left, near the haycock, VARVARA stands with a bunch of flowers.*]

*Vlass* [*from the woods*]. Who is going in the boat?

*Bas.* Varya, are you taking a walk? I am here alone. They have all gone off.

*Var.* You've had too much, Serguey.

*Bas.* Do you —

*Var.* Cognac is bad for you. You will complain of your heart, next.

*Bas.* No, I drank port wine mostly — Don't find fault with me, Varya. You always talk so harshly, so severely to me, and I — I am a kind-hearted fellow. I love everybody with the love of a child. Sit down beside me, my darling — Let us open our hearts to each other — We must.

*Var.* Don't. They are all getting ready to go home. Get up and go to the boat. Come, Serguey.

*Bas.* All right — Where shall I go? — I am coming. [*He tries to walk steadily. VARVARA looks at him with a set face. Looking to the right she sees SHALIMOFF, who approaches her with a smile.*]

*Shal.* You look tired. Your eyes are sad. Are you tired?

*Var.* Yes, a little.

*Shal.* I am very tired, too. I am tired of looking at these people, and it grieves me to see you among them. Forgive me!

*Var.* For what?

*Shal.* I look at you as you walk silently in this noisy crowd, while your eyes mutely question — and to me your silence is more eloquent than words. I, too, have felt the cold and weight of loneliness.

*Sonya* [*calling*]. Mamma, are you in the boat?

*Marya* [*from the woods*]. No, I am going to walk.

*Var.* [*handing a flower to SHALIMOFF*]. Do you want it?

*Shal.* [*with a bow and a smile*]. I thank you. I save flowers religiously when they are given to me in such a simple and friendly manner. [*Vlass, in the woods on the right: 'Holloa, watchman, where is the second pair of oars?'*] Your flower shall be placed in one of my books.

Some time I will take it up, see the flower, and think of you. Is that ridiculous, or sentimental?

*Var.* [*in an undertone, looking down*]. Go on.

*Shal.* [*looking questioningly into her face*]. You must feel sad among all these men who unfortunately do not know how to live.

*Var.* Teach them to live better.

*Shal.* I lack the confidence of a teacher. I am a stranger, a lonely observer of life. I don't know how to talk eloquently, and my words will not inspire courage in these people. What are you thinking about?

*Var.* I have similar thoughts. They keep me from people. They should be stifled at their birth.

*Shal.* Then your soul will be a cemetery. No, one ought to fear to withdraw into one's self. Believe me, away from them the air is purer and clearer. Everything seems more distinct.

*Var.* I understand you—and am pained as though some dear one were dying. [*A noise on the right.*]

*Shal.* [*without listening*]. If you but knew how sincerely I spoke just now. You may not believe me, perhaps, but still I will say to you, I long to be sincerer, better, and wiser.

*Var.* I thank you.

*Shal.* [*kissing her hand with agitation*]. I think when I stand beside you that I am standing on the threshold of an unknown happiness as deep as the sea, that you possess a magic power which you could transmit to another as a magnet attracts iron,—and a bold, foolish thought rises in my mind—I think that if you— [*He interrupts himself, looking around.*]  
VARVARA follows his motion.]

*Var.* What if I—I—

*Shal.* Varvara Michailovna, you won't laugh at me? Do you want me to say it?

*Var.* No. I understand. You are not a clever tempter.

*Shal.* [*confused*]. No, you misunderstand me—you—

*Var.* [*simply, gently, and sadly*]. How I loved you when I read your books! How I awaited you! You seemed to me so bright, so intuitive. Such you appeared to me when you read one evening. I was only seventeen then, and since that time your image has lived in my memory like a bright star.

*Shal.* [*looking down, in a whisper*]. Don't, don't. I apologize.

*Var.* I was suffocated with commonplace. — I imagined you to be — and I felt happier — I had some hope.

*Shal.* You ought to be zealous. You should understand.

*Var.* You came, and you are like the rest — like the rest. This is so sad. Tell me, what happened to you? Is it impossible to keep your soul intact?

*Shal.* [*excitedly*]. But why should you apply to me standards different from those you apply to others? You all live as you please. Why should I, an author, live as you wish me to live?

*Var.* No, no, don't say that! Don't. Throw away the flower I gave you. I gave it to you as I knew you formerly, one of whom I thought better things, one more ideal. Throw away my flower. [*She hurries away.*]

*Shal.* [*looking after her*]. Devil take it! [*Crushes the flower.*]  
Serpent! [*He nervously wipes his lips with his handkerchief and follows*

VARVARA. DUDAKOFF and OLGA come out of the woods on the left.]

*Zam.* [*singing in the woods*]. 'O night, cover' —

*Yulia* [*echoes him*]. 'With thy transparent veil.'

*Vlass* [*in the woods*]. Do sit down.

*Dud.* Here we are. Just on time.

*Olga.* I am so tired. — My dear Kyrill, you must not forget this day.

*Dud.* And you — Your promise — You should be more self-contained.

*Olga.* I am so glad, my friend, that now our life will be brighter. [*They pass on. PUSTOBAIKA, with a basket, appears on the right, searching on the ground.*]

*Pust.* They made a mess of it here! left nothing but dirt! All they do is to clutter up. [*He goes to the left.*]

*Yulia* [*in the woods*]. Who is still missing?

*Sonya.* Halloa, Mamma!

*Bas.* Halloa, motherkin.

*Marya* [*appearing from the left, tired and distracted*]. I am here, Sonya.

*Sonya* [*running out from the woods*]. Come, Mamma, come . . . What's the matter with you?

*Marya.* Nothing. I am going to walk. Go on, tell them not to



wait for me.

*Sonya* [*runs to one side, and making a trumpet with her hands, calls*].  
Go along. Don't wait for us. We are going to walk — What did you say? Good-bye.

*Colon* [*from the woods*]. It will tire you.

*Sonya*. Good-bye.

*Marya*. Why didn't you go with them?

*Sonya*. Because I stayed with you.

*Marya*. Well, come along.

*Sonya*. No, let's sit down a minute. — You are grieved, Mamma. Darling mother, sit down — so — Now let me put my arms around you — That's it — Now, tell me, what's the matter with you? [*The sounds of laughter and loud exclamations come from the woods.*]

*Yulia* [*from the woods*]. Don't rock the boat.

*Zam*. No, don't sing — better pray.

*Bas*. [*from the same direction*]. Go on, music. [*A guitar and mandolin are tuned.*]

*Vlass* [*from the woods*]. They have pushed off.

*Marya*. *Sonya*, my little daughter, if you but knew!

*Sonya*. I do know.

*Marya*. No, you don't.

*Sonya*. Dear mother, remember when I was small and could not understand my lessons and cried like a little fool, how you came to me, put my head on your bosom and rocked me — so. [*She sings.*] 'By-low-by, by-low,' my dear mother. I think it is you now who do not understand the lesson. — If you love him — [*COLON laughs.*]

*Marya*. *Sonya*, keep still! How do you know that? [*Sounds of the guitar and mandolin in the distance.*]

*Sonya*. Sh! Don't move! By-low, baby, by-low, my mother! My mother is wise. She taught me to think clearly. He is a fine lad. Don't repel him. In your hands he will be better. You have already educated one. I am not a bad person, am I, Mamma? Now you will bring up another.

*Marya*. That is impossible, my own darling.

*Sonya*. Sh! He will be a brother to me. He is rough. You will make him gentler. You are so kind. You will teach him to work with

pleasure . . . as you work yourself . . . as you taught me. He will be a good companion to me, and we will live happily. At first there will be only three of us, and after a while we shall be four, because, my darling, I am going to marry this funny Maxim. I love him, Mamma. He is so nice.

*Marya.* Sonya, my little girl, you will be happy indeed!

*Sonya.* Keep still and listen. We shall complete our studies. Then we shall live cosily, and happily, and pleasantly. There will be four of us, Mamma — four energetic, honest people.

*Marya.* O my joy! my happiness! No, there will be only three of us — you, your husband, and I. And *he*, if he should be with us, will be only as your brother or my son.

*Sonya.* And we shall have such a pleasant life. That's what we shall do. Meanwhile, rest, Mamma. Don't cry. By-low, my mother. [*Tears are in SONYA'S voice. The music of mandolins and guitars in the distance.*]

#### ACT IV

*Same scene as that of the second act. Evening. The sun has set. BASSOFF and SUSSLOFF are playing chess under the pines. SASHA is setting the table for supper on the veranda. From the right the sounds of a gramophone come from the forest. Within KALERIA plays some sad music.*

*Bas.* Most of all, our country needs well-meaning men. A man who means well is an evolutionist; he is not hasty.

*Sus.* I take the knight.

*Bas.* Take him! A well-meaning man changes the forms of life slowly, imperceptibly, — but his is the only work that lasts.

[*DUDAKOFF hastily comes round the corner of the house.*]

*Dud.* Halloa! Is my wife here?

*Bas.* Your wife? No. Sit down, doctor.

*Dud.* I can't, I am in a hurry . . . I must write my school report.

*Bas.* I believe this is the second year that you have been writing it?

*Dud.* Good reason why. No one works but myself. There are men galore, but no workers. — Why? [*He goes off.*]

*Bas.* This Doctor is a funny man.

*Sus.* Your move. —

*Bas.* Yes. — There she goes. — I said — we should be well-meaning. — Misanthropy, my friend, is an unnecessary luxury. — I came here eleven years ago, — and all I possessed was a portfolio and a carpet. The portfolio was empty and the carpet poor. I, too, was poor.

*Sus.* Check to the queen.

*Bas.* The deuce! How did I miss your move with the knight?

*Sus.* If a man philosophizes he loses.

*Bas.* 'Fact,' 'fact,' say the ducks.

[*He becomes absorbed in the game. VLASS and MARYA are coming from the forest. They cannot see the players.*]

*Marya* [*in an undertone*]. My dear good youth! Believe me, you will soon get over this — you will, and then you will thank me.

*Vlass* [*audibly*]. It grieves me, it grieves me very much. [*BASSOFF listens and makes a sign to SUSSLOFF to keep still.*]

*Marya.* Go, go as soon as you can, my dear boy. I promise to write you — Work, seek to make a place in life — Dare, don't give in to the influence of the details of life. You are good and I love you. Yes, yes, I love you. [*BASSOFF stares, while SUSSLOFF winks.*] But you don't need my love, and it does me no good. I am not ashamed to confess it. — But I am sorry. You will quickly get over your infatuation, while I — I should love you more and more as time went on. And it would only be ridiculous and perhaps commonplace, at all events it would be sad for me. . . .

*Vlass.* No, I swear to you. —

*Marya.* There is no need of swearing.

*Vlass.* When love passes — respect remains.

*Marya.* That is not enough for a woman who loves. — And please remember this, my dear boy: I am ashamed to live a selfish life. It may be absurd, queer, but at present it is hard to live a selfish life. Go, my friend, go. And be sure that when you need a friend, — come to me, and I will meet you as a son, a dearly beloved son — Good-bye!

*Vlass.* Give me your hand. I should like to kneel before you! How devotedly I love you. — I could weep. — Good-bye!

*Marya.* Good-bye, my dearest, my loved one — Remember my advice — Don't give in — never, never, never —

*Vlass.* I am going — my love! My pure first love! I thank you. [MARYA quickly takes the road that leads into the woods on the right. VLASS is about to go into BASSOFF's house when he sees BASSOFF and SUSSLOFF and understands that they have heard all. BASSOFF rises, bows and is about to speak.] Silence, not a word! Silence! [VLASS goes in.]

*Bas.* [confused]. There's discipline for you.

*Sus.* Aha! You are frightened!

*Bas.* No; but did you ever see anything like it? I suspected as much, but such generosity! They acted well! [He laughs. YULIA and ZAMY-SLOFF are seen coming from SUSSLOFF's house. YULIA walks towards her husband. ZAMYSLOFF also goes into the house.]

*Sus.* That's all premeditated so as to hold the lad better.

*Bas.* Yes, that's so! It's too funny for anything!

*Sus.* [frowning]. She is a crafty woman. She has played me a trick, too. You know, uncle followed her advice and gave all his money to —

*Yulia.* Piotr, there's some one here to see you. —

*Bas.* [interrupting]. No; let me tell you what happened.

*Sus.* Who is it?

*Yulia* [to her husband]. A contractor; he says it's urgent business. Something has tumbled. —

*Sus.* Bosh! [leaving hurriedly].

*Bas.* Fancy, my dear. While we sat here, suddenly comes Marya Lvovna. — It seems there is a love affair between them — [laughs].

*Yulia.* Between whom? My husband and Marya? [Laughs.]

*Bas.* No! VLASS! Between this clown and this —

*Yulia.* Indeed! But thanks to your tongue every one knows it already.

*Bas.* But here are the details! [COLON appears round the corner with packages, followed by RUMIN.]

*Colon.* Peace be unto you! Is Varvara Michailovna at home? See whom I have brought with me.

*Bas.* Halloa! Have you returned from distant lands? How are you? You have improved wonderfully and how tanned you are! you have lost flesh, though! Where do you come from?

*Rumin.* From the south. I saw the sea for the first time. How do you do, Yulia Phillipovna?



*Yulia.* You have really improved, Pavel Serguevitch, — if that's the result, I had better go south myself.

*Colon.* I am going in. [*He goes in.*] I brought you some sweets, niece.

*Bas.* 'I saw the sea. . . .  
I measured it with rapturous eyes  
And tested the power of my spirit  
In its presence.'

Is that right? Go in; my wife will be very glad to see you.

*Rumin.* It's grand! Music alone is capable of expressing its beauty and greatness. Man feels so insignificant in its presence — an atom confronting eternity.

[*VARVARA appears around the corner.*]

*Bas.* I will put away the chess. Varya, do you know that Pavel Sergueyevitch has returned?

*Var.* Is he here?

*Bas.* [*going up to her*]. Yes; and I believe he has added to his vocabulary of graphic words. — Varucha! If you but knew! as I was playing a game with Sussloff, Marya Lvovna and Vlass came up, unexpectedly. I told you it was a love affair! [*He laughs.*] You said it wasn't, you know. But it is, it is. That's a fact.

*Var.* Don't, Serguey, I fear you may utter some vulgarity.

*Bas.* But I haven't yet.

*Var.* I asked you not to mention their relations, and you tell it to everybody. Can't you understand that you are doing wrong?

*Bas.* There you go! It's absolutely impossible to talk to you. —

*Colon* [*seating himself on the step of the veranda*]. I brought sweets to all the ladies — so that they should remember me pleasantly, you know. Will you give me your photograph?

*Var.* Yes, I'll get it for you. [*She goes in.*]

*Colon.* Well, uncle Vlass, it's about time for us to be going.

*Vlass.* Yes, I wish the hours would pass quickly.

*Colon.* We have less than twenty-four hours now. I wish we could get your sister to come with us.

*Vlass.* They are all loafers here.

*Colon.* I am glad you are going with me. I live in a pretty little

town. There's a river and the woods are near. I have a large house of ten rooms. When you cough in one room the echo answers in the others; in the winter when it storms outside, the echo is very noticeable. That's how it is. [*SONYA approaches quickly from the right.*] Of course, when one is young, solitude is good for man, but in old age, you understand, it's better to have a companion. [*He sighs audibly.*] Ah! here comes the tom-boy! [*Addressing her.*] Good-bye, I am going away tomorrow, and after tomorrow you'll forget the old man, as though he had never lived.

*Sonya.* No, I won't. You have such a funny name.

*Colon.* Is that the reason why you'll remember me?

*Sonya.* No, dear uncle, I really won't forget you! You are such a good, dear man, so simple! I like people who are natural. Have you seen mamma?

*Colon.* No, I haven't had that pleasure.

*Vlass.* She isn't here. Let us go and look for her. — She may be in the pavilion by the river.

*Kal.* Are you willing I should go with you?

*Sonya.* Come along. [*They disappear in the woods. COLON looks after them, sighs and hums. VARVARA, followed by RUMIN, comes out of the house with a photograph in her hands.*]

*Var.* Here's my photograph. When do you go?

*Colon.* Tomorrow. Thank you! Ah, my dear lady, I have become quite attached to you.

*Var.* Why should you care for me?

*Colon.* How do I know? Do people care for some reason? It's generally without any reason. True affection, you know, like the sun in the sky, is not to be explained.

*Var.* I don't know.

*Colon.* Yes; I see you don't. You'd better come and stay with me. Your brother is going. You could find yourself an occupation.

*Var.* What could I do? I don't know how to do anything.

*Colon.* You haven't been taught, that's why. You can learn! Vlass and I are going to build schools, — a boys' school and girls' school.

*Rumin* [*absent-mindedly*]. One should have something to do, that life may have a meaning — some important thing — something that would leave a trace hereafter — One should build temples —

*Colon.* Yes, but that's too *highfalutin* for me. Even the schools were suggested to me by a kind person, — I didn't think of them myself, — that's how it was!

*Rumin.* Yes; even the higher schools give only contradictory theories and suggestions concerning the mysteries of life.

*Var.* [*annoyed*]. Heavens, what an old story!

*Rumin* [*looks at them all quizzically and laughs gently*]. Yes, I know they are idle words, dead, like autumn leaves. — I say them only because it's an old habit. — I cannot tell why, — perhaps because it's autumn now. — Since I saw the sea the ceaseless noise of the green waves echoes in my heart and their music drowns all the words of men, like rain drops in the sea.

*Var.* You are a queer fellow. What is the matter with you? [*KALERIA and VLASS are coming from the forest on the right.*]

*Rumin* [*laughing*]. Nothing, I assure you.

*Kal.* To stand firmly means to stand knee-deep in mud.

*Vlass.* And you wish to stand firmly in the air? You are more concerned about the spotlessness of your train than the purity of your soul? But who cares for you, cold and pure though you may be?

*Kal.* Myself!

*Vlass.* An error! You are useless even to yourself.

*Kal.* I don't wish to talk with you — you are rude. [*She goes into the house.*]

*Colon.* Well, uncle Vlass! You have provoked the lady, so now are you satisfied?

*Vlass* [*seating himself on the lowest step at his sister's feet*]. I am tired of her. [*Mimicking her.*] 'I am dying of longing!' I told her she must *live* with people and *die* alone.

*Rumin* [*speaks quickly*]. Ah! That's cruel, but you are right!

[*BASSOFF and YULIA come out on the veranda.*]

*Var.* [*aside*]. Life passes us by without touching our hearts, — it only acts on our brains.

*Bas.* I told Sasha to serve supper here. [*SUSSLOFF is seen briskly walking from his house.*] Semion Semionitch, we will have a farewell feast in your honor, and some champagne. It's a legitimate excuse!

*Colon.* I am highly honored.

*Sus.* Yulia, I want to see you a moment.

*Yulia.* What's the matter? [*SUSSLOFF takes his wife apart and*

*whispers something in her ear. She moves away from him. He compels her to take his arm and leads her to the right, where they remain conversing for a few moments, then they return to the veranda as BASSOFF is about to leave.]*

*Bas.* I'll treat you with sausage, most delicious sausage, — one of my clients sent it from the Ukraïne. But where is my assistant? [*In an undertone.*] He is also the assistant of Yulia Fillipovna's husband!

*Var.* [*indignant, in a low voice*]. That's horrible, Serguey!

*Bas.* [*boldly*]. But every one knows it! And why should you speak so bluntly, Varya? [*He goes into the house.*]

*Yulia.* Uncle! A wall crumbled in one of Piotr's prisons and crushed two women!

*Sus.* [*smiling*]. And you rejoice!

*Var.* [*frightened*]. You don't mean it! Where did it happen?

*Sus.* In a district prison.

*Colon.* Accept my felicitations! Had you inspected the work?

*Sus.* I did. — It's the fault of that rascally contractor!

*Yulia.* He lies! — He had no time to inspect it!

*Colon.* You ought to be whipped! Calling yourself men! Loafers!

*Sus.* [*smiling viciously*]. I'll shoot myself; that will be fine acting. —

*Rumin* [*shakes his head*]. No, you won't shoot yourself.

*Sus.* But if I should?

*Var.* Tell us about it, Piotr. Did those who were crushed die?

*Sus.* [*with a scowl*]. I don't know. I'll go there tomorrow.

*Vlass* [*scolds aloud*]. Such rascality!

*Sus.* [*with a snarl*]. Look out, young man, be careful.

*Olga* [*approaching*]. Good evening. How funny you look — like birds in the fall — I have seen you today before now — Ah, Pavel Sergueyvitch! When did you return? [*SUSSLOFF goes aside with his wife and tells her something. His face has a vicious expression. YULIA makes a mock bow and returns to the veranda. SUSSLOFF, whistling, goes towards his house. COLON, after glancing at YULIA, follows him.*]

*Rumin.* Today.

*Olga.* And here already? You are a faithful friend. My! How hot it is! But Fall will be here presently — We shall move back into town, and then within our stone walls we shall become strangers to each



other.

*Vlass* [*growling*]. The whining begins!

*Bas.* [*in the doorway*]. Please, Pavel Sergueyvitch, I wish to see you a moment. [*RUMIN enters the house. He is met by KALERIA and SHALIMOFF. VLASS, without replying to OLGA, rises from the steps and goes towards the pines.*]

*Olga* [*to VLASS*]. Isn't that so?

*Shal.* [*indifferently and slowly*]. Democracy is expected to give new life. But pray tell me, what kind of a beast a democrat is?

*Kal.* [*agitated*]. Yes, you are right, — a thousand times right. It is still a beast. It has but one conscious wish — not to be hungry.

*Shal.* And to wear squeaking boots.

*Kal.* What does he believe? What does he profess?

*Vlass* [*with irritation*]. And you! What do you believe? What do you profess?

*Kal.* [*not replying to VLASS*]. Life is renewed by the Faithful — by the aristocracy of the spirit —

*Vlass.* Who is this aristocracy? Where is it?

*Kal.* I don't wish to speak to you, *Vlass*. Let us go off, *Iakov Petrovitch* — there. — [*They descend the steps of the veranda and seating themselves, continue their conversation. KALERIA is agitated, SHALIMOFF calm, indifferent, and appears weary.*]

*Var.* [*approaching*]. *Vlass*! You seem very nervous today!

*Vlass.* I am distressed.

*Yulia.* Let's go to the river, *Vlass*.

*Vlass.* No, excuse me, I don't care to.

*Yulia.* Please come! I want to tell you something.

*Vlass* [*reluctantly*]. So be it, then. Well, what is it? [*YULIA takes his arm and speaks to him inaudibly as they walk to the rear of the stage. VARVARA goes up the steps of the veranda.*]

*Olga* [*catching VARVARA'S hand*]. *Varya*! Are you still angry with me?

*Var.* [*pensively*]. Angry? No.

*Vlass* [*speaks loudly in the rear of the stage*]. Vulgar man! If he hadn't been my sister's husband —

*Yulia.* Sh! — sh! — [*She draws him into the woods.*]

*Var.* [*frightened*]. Heavens! What now?

*Olga.* Probably the engineer's wife is telling tales. — Varya, I see you are still angry. It was but a word that escaped me in a moment of excitement.

*Var.* [*pensively*]. Don't say any more — please! I don't like anything patched — like patched friendship. . . .

*Olga* [*rises*]. How unforgiving you are!

*Var.* [*firmly and coldly*]. We forgive too much. — It's a weakness, which kills esteem. There is one man whom I forgave too much — now I am of no consequence in his estimation.

*Olga.* You mean Serguey Vassilievitch? [*VARVARA makes no reply, she nods and rocks to and fro, gazing vacantly beyond.*] How quickly people change. I remember him as a student. What a fine fellow he was then. Poor and light-hearted. 'Happy-go-lucky' his friends called him. . . . You have changed but little . . . you are the same dreamy, earnest, and serious woman. When it was known that you had become engaged, I remember Kyrill said to me, Bassoff will prosper with such a wife. He is thoughtless and inclined to vulgarity — but she —

*Var.* [*simply*]. Why do you say this, Olga? To prove that I don't amount to much?

*Olga.* Varya! How can you think such a thing? . . . It simply came into my head. . . .

*Var.* [*without raising her voice, distinctly and like a verdict to herself.*] Yes, I am also a helpless, pitiable creature. Is it what you wished to say? I know it; I knew it long ago.

*Sasha* [*from the veranda*]. Madam, your husband wishes to see you. [*VARVARA rises and silently goes into the house.*]

*Olga* [*following her*]. Wait a moment, Varya; you have misunderstood me!

*Kal.* [*in an undertone*]. The man who thinks that the truth is discovered — is dead to me. [*A pause. SHALIMOFF smokes.*] Tell me, does life make you sad?

*Shal.* Yes; now and then, quite sad.

*Kal.* Often?

*Shal.* One is never happy. I have already seen too much to be merry. And then, I say this without hesitation, it is not a time when one can be

merry. —

*Kal.* The life of every thinking person is a sad drama.

*Shal.* Tell me. —

*Kal.* What?

*Shal.* [*rising*]. Tell me frankly, do you like my stories?

*Kal.* [*with animation*]. Exceedingly! Particularly the last one. — They are less realistic, they are less brutal. They have that tender, warm sadness which envelops the soul like a cloud that covers the sun at sunset. But few can appreciate them; those few love you.

*Shal.* [*with a smile*]. I thank you. You spoke of your new verses. Will you read them?

*Kal.* Some time. [*A pause. SHALIMOFF silently bows his head, acquiescing. VLASS and YULIA are slowly coming to the pines from the forest on the right. YULIA goes into the house.*] Do you wish to hear it now?

*Shal.* What — now?

*Kal.* [*with a smile*]. You forgot so quickly?

*Shal.* [*frowning*]. I beg your pardon, but —

*Kal.* [*rising*]. You asked me to read my verses — Would you like to hear them now?

*Shal.* [*hurriedly*]. Yes! It's such a fine evening. It will be delightful. But you were mistaken. I did not forget. I was simply absent-minded. I misunderstood your question.

*Kal.* [*goes in*]. Very well, I will read them, although you really don't care —

*Shal.* [*following her*]. I assure you it isn't so. [*KALERIA quickly runs up the steps of the veranda. SHALIMOFF shrugs his shoulders and makes a grimace. Turning round he sees VLASS. COLON and SUSSLOFF are coming from SUSSLOFF's house. Both are silent and out of sorts.*]

*Shal.* [*to VLASS*]. You are dreaming?

*Vlass* [*pleasantly*]. I am whistling.

[*OLGA enters the veranda. She seats herself in a rocking-chair beside the railing. RUMIN, who followed her, places himself beside her. She talks to him. BASSOFF comes next; he pauses by the table and examines the hors d'oeuvre. VARVARA remains standing, leaning on the columns. ZAMYSLOFF stands before her.*]

*Bas.* All here? But where are Vlass and Marya Lvovna?

*Vlass.* I am here. [*YULIA comes from the house humming and seats herself on one of the steps. COLON remains standing, listening to ZAMYSLOFF. SUSLOFF, glancing at the orator, passes on to the pines, where SHALIMOFF and VLASS sit in silence.*]

*Zam.* We are all complex people, Varvara Michailovna.

*Bas.* [*bending over the railing*]. You here, Iakov! That's good.

*Zam.* It is this complexity of our psychology that causes us—the best people of the land—to be called the 'Intellectuals,' and you.—[*MARYA and SONYA are seen approaching.*]

*Var.* [*nervously*]. We are not 'the Intellectuals'—we—are the summer-folk of our country—transients. We bustle and seek the best places in life. We do nothing and talk altogether too much.

*Bas.* [*with a sneer*]. You, above all, prove the truth of your own words.

[*KALERIA comes with a copybook in hand, pauses by the table, and listens.*]

*Var.* [*excitedly*]. And there is so much mendacity in our conversations! To conceal from each other our spiritual poverty we adopt graphic sentences and cheap tags of book lore. We speak of the tragedy of our life, without knowing it, we like to groan, whine, and complain.

*DUDAKOFF approaches the veranda and places himself so as not to be seen by his wife.*]

*Rumin* [*nervously*]. You must be just. A man's complaint is picturesque. It is cruel, Varvara, to doubt the sincerity of a man's complaints.

*Var.* We have complained enough. We must have the courage to be silent. We know how to be silent when we are happy? Each one swallows his dose of happiness by himself, but his sorrow, perhaps an insignificant scratch of the heart, we proclaim in public, we show it, shouting and calling the world's attention to our trouble. We throw the remnants of food from our houses and poison the air of the town. In the same way we discard from our souls all their filth and burden and cast them under the feet of our neighbors. I am sure that hundreds and thousands of healthy men perish poisoned and stunned by our groans and complaints. Who granted the baneful right to poison men with the intolerable aspect of our individual wounds?



*Vlass* [softly]. Bravo, Varya!

*Colon*. Clever girl! Well said. [*MARYA* silently strokes the hand of *VARVARA*. *VLASS* and *SONYA* are also beside her. *RUMIN* nods nervously.]

*Rumin*. I ask leave to speak — allow me to make my last speech!

*Kal*. You must 'have the courage to be silent.'

*Olga* [to *BASSOFF*]. How sharply she has learned to talk.

*Bas*. Yes, Balaam's — [*He claps his hand over his mouth, and does not finish the sentence*. *VARVARA*, in her excitement, did not notice her husband's remark, but many heard and understood it. *SHALIMOFF* smiles and shakes his head approvingly. *VLASS* and *SONYA* look at *BASSOFF* with contempt. Others pretend not to have heard. The fragmentary remarks which followed the words of *VARVARA* are succeeded by an awkward silence. *SUSSLOFF* coughs and smiles. *VARVARA*, perceiving something unusual, uneasily looks around.]

*Var*. I believe I must have said something rude. Why do you all look at me so?

*Vlass*. It's not you who were rude.

*Olga* [with an innocent air]. What is the trouble?

*Marya* [persuasively and softly]. Don't *Vlass*! Please don't! [*She tries to remove the impression of what VLASS said, gradually becomes excited and speaks with fervor*. *SHALIMOFF*, *SUSSLOFF*, and *ZAMYSLOFF* pretend not to listen. *DUDAKOFF* nods his head approvingly. *BASSOFF* looks at her with gratitude and by gestures invites people to listen.] We must all be different. We, who are children of washerwomen, cooks, and healthy workmen, should be different! Our country never had educated men united to the people by ties of kinship. Our blood relationship should inspire us with a strong wish to broaden, reconstruct, and enlighten the lives of our kin, who spend their time in work, darkness, and filth! We should endeavor to broaden life not through pity or charity, — we should do it for our own sake, to escape this cursed estrangement, and hide the chasm between us — on the heights, — and our kin below, in the depths, — whence they look up at us as though we were their enemies, who live by their toil! They have sent us on to find the way to a better life, and we left them behind, and have wandered ourselves. We have made our own solitude and filled it with restless confusion and inward dualism. Such is our drama: we have created

it ourselves and it is to be our punishment. Yes, Varya, we have no right to groan — [*She is overcome by her feelings and seats herself opposite VARVARA. Silence.*]

*Dud.* Yes; it's all true!

*Olga* [*quickly*]. Do you hear? Come here!

*Shal.* [*raises his hat*]. Have you finished, Madam?

*Marya.* Yes.

*Olga* [*leads her husband aside to the end of the veranda*]. You have heard and understood? What a fool that Bassoff is!

*Dud.* [*in a low voice*]. What has Bassoff to do with all this? [*A general commotion on the veranda. VARVARA looks around. There is still an uncertainty whether BASSOFF'S 'break' is forgotten or overlooked.*]

*Olga.* Sh! Varvara was saying such wicked things that he called her Balaam's Ass.

*Dud.* Well, he is a ruffian. You know you are needed at home, Olga! —

*Olga.* Wait a minute. Kaleria is going to read us some poetry. . . . But it's all right, all right! Varvara has become so overbearing. [*RUMIN, dejected, descends the steps and promenades up and down.*]

*Shal.* Ladies and gentlemen, Kaleria Vassiliovna has most kindly consented to read us her poetry.

*Bas.* Do hurry, my dear!

*Kal.* [*excited*]. Very well, I will read. —

*Shal.* Here is a chair for you.

*Kal.* I don't need it. Varvara, what is the matter? This interest in my poetry surprises me.

*Var.* I can't tell. Evidently, some one has made some tactless remark and they all wish to hide it.

*Kal.* I'll begin. I fear the same fate will overtake my poetry as your sermons, Varya. Everything is swallowed in the bottomless pit of life.

Driven by the breath of Autumn  
The picturesque snowflakes slowly fall  
Like small dead flowers  
From the cold heights.

They whirl above the earth,  
The tired, ailing, dirty earth,

Tenderly covering its filth  
With their pure and caressing shroud.

Black, gloomy birds. —  
Dead trees and shrubs. —  
White mute snowflakes  
Are falling from the cold heights.

[*A pause. Everybody looks at KALERIA as though expecting more.*]

*Shal.* Charming!

*Rumin* [*thoughtfully*]. The picturesque 'snowflakes fall like cold, dead flowers.'

*Vlass* [*excitedly*]. I can make poetry, too. I will read you my verses.

*Colon* [*laughing*]. Go on!

*Shal.* An interesting contest!

*Var.* Vlass, is this necessary?

*Zam.* If it is funny, it is.

*Marya.* My dear fellow, let me remind you once more to be true to yourself! [*All look at the excited face of VLASS. There is a hush.*]

*Vlass.* I want to show you how easy and simple it is to put such rubbish into your neighbors' heads. Listen! [*He reads clearly and distinctly, and with sarcasm in his voice.*]

Small, useless men  
Who tread the soil of my country. —  
They go about and dolefully seek a place  
Where they can hide from life.

They wish cheap happiness,  
Repletion, comforts, and rest.  
They go about complaining and groaning,  
These commonplace liars and cowards.

Narrow, stolen thoughts,  
Fashionable, telling words. —  
Men creep timidly on the outskirts of life  
Like ghostly shadows.

[*He remains motionless, looking in turn at SHALIMOFF, RUMIN, and SUSSLOFF. All feel uneasy. KALERIA shrugs her shoulders. SHALIMOFF*

*slowly lights a cigarette. SUSSLOFF becomes excited. MARYA and VARVARA go up to VLASS as though they were apprehensive.]*

*Dud. [softly and distinctly].* Yes, this is very telling — remarkably true.

*Yulia.* Bravo! I like it, too.

*Colon.* You said it. You honest soul!

*Kal.* It's impudent and wicked! Why did you say all this?

*Zam.* Yes, it's not cheerful.

*Shal.* What do you think of it, Serguey?

*Bas.* Well, you see, of course the rhymes are poor, but as a joke —

*Zam.* It is too serious to be a joke.

*Yulia [to SHALIMOFF].* How cleverly you dissemble!

*Sus. [spitefully].* Allow me, an ignorant man, to reply to this. Excuse me, I am at a loss what to call this kind of authorship. I will not reply to you, Vlass Michailovitch! I will address myself directly to the source of your inspiration, to you, Marya Lvovna.

*Vlass.* What's that? Beware!

*Marya [haughtily].* Me? Why? However, I am listening!

*Sus.* I do so, because I know that you are the muse who inspired this poet.

*Vlass.* No vulgarity, if you please.

*Yulia [gently].* He can't do without it.

*Sus.* Pray don't interrupt me. When I have finished, I will be responsible for everything I have said. Yes, Marya Lvovna, you are, so to speak, a person of ideas. Somewhere you are accomplishing something mysterious, perhaps something great, historical. But that doesn't concern me. Evidently you believe that your activity gives you the right to treat people haughtily.

*Marya [calmly].* That isn't true.

*Sus.* You undertake to influence and teach everyone. You have taught this young man to denounce everyone.

*Vlass.* What nonsense you are talking!

*Sus. [vehemently].* Hold on, young man! Until now I bore your impudence patiently. . . . I must tell you that if we do not live as you wish us to, esteemed Marya Lvovna, we have our reasons. We endured and suffered in our youth. It is but natural that having arrived at years of



maturity we should want to enjoy good living and peace — in a word, to reward ourselves abundantly for the anxious and hungry years of our youth.

*Shal.* [*dryly*]. Whom do you mean by 'we,' if you please?

*Sus.* [*getting more excited*]. We! I, you, he, all of us. Yes, we are all children of mechanics and of the poor. We lived through days of anxiety in our youth. Now, in our mature years, we wish to lead an easy and restful life. That's our psychology. You don't like it, Marya Lvovna? But it's quite natural, and could not be otherwise. Primarily, my most esteemed Marya Lvovna, you must consider the man, and all the other absurd details follow. Therefore, pray don't disturb us. Even if you abuse us, or incite others to abuse us, or call us liars and cowards, not one of us will undertake a life of public service — no, not one.

*Dud.* What a cynic! You would better stop!

*Sus.* [*becoming more excited*]. I will speak for myself. I am no longer a youth. It is useless to teach me, Marya Lvovna. I am a man of mature years, a commonplace Russian, a Russian resident, and nothing else. This is my plan of life. I prefer to remain a resident. I shall live as I choose, and I defy all your sermons, appeals, and ideas! [*He claps his hat upon his head and quickly disappears in the direction of the house. ZAMY-SLOFF, BASSOFF, and SHALIMOFF go aside and converse in low, animated tones. VARVARA and MARYA make another group. YULIA, COLON, and DUDAKOFF, with his wife, form another group. General excitement. KALERIA, crest-fallen, stands alone under the pine tree. RUMIN walks up and down excitedly.*]

*Vlass* [*going aside and clasping his head in his hands*]. Devil take it all! [*Sonya follows him and talks to him.*]

*Marya.* But this is hysterics! Only the man who is laboring under a mental stress can make a show of himself in this way!

*Rumin* [*to MARYA*]. You see how distressing the truth is!

*Var.* Yes. It's very sad.

*Colon* [*to YULIA*]. I understand nothing — absolutely nothing.

*Yulia* [*to MARYA*]. Tell me, my dear, has he offended you?

*Marya.* Oh, no. He wronged himself.

*Colon.* These are strange doings!

*Dud.* [*to his wife*]. Wait a moment. [*To COLON.*] This is like an abscess, — an abscess of the soul, — such as may occur to any of us.

[*He waves his hands, greatly agitated, and cannot speak.*]

*Yulia.* I say, Nicolas Petrovitch —

*Zam.* [*approaching her*]. All this has unnerved you. —

*Yulia.* Not at all. But I can't remain here any longer. Please accompany me.

*Zam.* It is all so absurd. And the host prepared such a 'palatable' surprise. It's too bad!

*Yulia.* We have had enough surprises. [*They go out.*]

*Shal.* [*approaching KALERIA*]. Well, what's your opinion?

*Kal.* It's dreadful! It's like slime from the bottom of the sea, and it strangles me. [*BASSOFF goes to VLASS and slightly pulls his coat sleeve.*]

*Vlass.* Well, what is it?

*Bassoff* [*taking him aside*]. I want to speak to you.

*Rumin* [*to VARVARA, greatly excited*]. This avalanche of spiteful vulgarity has crushed my soul! I am completely upset. Good-bye, I am going. I came to take leave of you. I had hoped to spend such a pleasant evening — my last one. — Now I am going away forever. Good-bye.

*Var.* [*without heeding him*]. Do you know what I thought? I thought that Sussloff was more sincere than any of us. He certainly was. He expressed brutally the bare truth which the others did not dare to express.

*Rumin* [*retreating*]. Is that all you have to say? Is that your farewell! Heavens! [*He retreats to the rear of the stage.*]

*Bas.* [*to VLASS*]. Well, my dear fellow, you distinguished yourself! What's to be done now? You have offended your sister, Yakov, who, you know, is a writer and respected by all and myself; also Sussloff and Rumin. You should apologize.

*Vlass.* Apologize! To them!

*Bas.* Well, what of that? You can say 'I was only joking. I wanted to make you laugh, and overstepped the limits.' — They will excuse you. They are all used to your eccentricities; they know that you are practically a clown!

*Vlass* [*shouting*]. Go to the devil! You are a clown yourself!

*Sonya.* Gentlemen, spare us!

*Var.* What's the matter with you, Vlass?

*Marya.* This is a wave of lunacy!

*Colon.* Vlass, you had better go.

*Bas.* I am offended, too.

*Var.* Serguey! Vlass! I beg of you!

*Bas.* No, I am not a clown!

*Var.* Vlass, don't you dare!

*Vlass.* Only my regard for my sister prevents me from telling you. —

[*KALERIA approaches them.*]

*Sasha* [*to VARVARA*]. Shall I serve?

*Var.* Go away.

*Sasha* [*aside to COLON*]. It would be much better to serve! When the master sees the food and the table he will be pacified.

*Colon* [*to SASHA*]. Clear out!

*Bas.* [*to VLASS*]. No. Come, come. [*Suddenly turns ferociously to VLASS and shouts:*] You are nothing but a kid!

*Kal.* Serguey, this is absurd!

*Bas.* Yes, a kid — that's a fact!

*Shal.* [*taking BASSOFF by the arm and leading him off into the house. SASHA follows them*]. I don't —

*Marya.* Oh, Vlass, you are to blame!

*Vlass.* So you blame *me*?

*Sasha* [*to BASSOFF*]. Shall I serve?

*Bas.* Get out! I am nothing here! I am not master in my own house! [*They all go in.*]

*Marya* [*to SONYA*]. Take him to our house. [*To VLASS.*] Go with her.

*Vlass.* Forgive me. And you, sister, forgive me, too. I *am* to blame. My poor little sisterkin, do go!

*Var.* [*in an undertone*]. Where, where, shall I go?

*Colon.* To my house. That would be so nice! [*Nobody hears him. He sighs and slowly goes towards SUSSLOFF'S house.*]

*Marya.* You had better come to my house, Varya.

*Var.* I am coming by and by, Vlass. [*VARVARA goes into the house, while MARYA, followed by VLASS and SONYA, goes toward the forest. KALERIA, completely overcome and tottering, also goes into the house.*]

*Olga.* This is scandalous, and so unexpected. Did you understand what it all meant, Kyrill?

*Dud.* Yes, I understood. Sooner or later we were all bound to get

disgusted with one another, and now it has come to pass. Vlass hit the mark. But you should go home, Olga!

*Olga.* Wait a moment. This is so exciting! Perhaps something else will happen!

*Dud.* Don't, Olga. That isn't right; we must go home! The children are screaming and crying! Volka has abused the nurse. She is angry, and he says she pulled his ear. In general, there is a catastrophe there. I told you long ago that you ought to go home.

*Olga.* You didn't.

*Dud.* I did! We stood here, and you were speaking about Bassoff when I told you.

*Olga.* You told me nothing.

*Dud.* I don't know why you dispute? I remember it distinctly. I said, 'Go home!'

*Olga.* You couldn't have said, 'Go home!' Only children and servants are addressed in that way!

*Dud.* You are a quarrelsome woman!

*Olga.* Aren't you ashamed of yourself! And you promised to control yourself!

*Dud.* [*walking away*]. Don't. This is idiotic! Just like a woman!

*Olga* [*following him*]. Idiotic! And I am nothing but a woman. [*With tears in her eyes.*] Thank you! [*They disappear in the forest. The stage remains empty for a few moments. It grows dark. BASSOFF and SHALIMOFF re-enter the veranda.*]

*Shal.* [*to BASSOFF*]. You should be something of a philosopher, my dear fellow. It's absurd to get excited over such trifles!

*Bas.* It's very annoying. 'Nothing but a kid!' I hope *you* are no longer angry?

*Shal.* Such eccentricities as those of this unsuccessful rhymster are common in daily papers! But whom do they harm? [*They descend the steps and go toward the open.*]

*Sus.* [*approaching with a hurried step*]. I have returned. [*To BASSOFF.*] I am to apologize to you. [*To SHALIMOFF.*] I beg *your* pardon, too! I lost my self-control! But she has exasperated me for a long time, — she, and people like her! They are simply antagonistic to me! I detest her face and manner!



*Bas.* I know, my friend, I know! One should be gentle and considerate.

*Shal.* [*dryly*]. But you overstepped the limits by your denunciation!

*Bas.* [*hastily*]. That will do. I agree to everything he said. By Jove, to be frank, I should like this lady to understand that —

*Sus.* All women are actresses. Russian women are dramatic actresses par excellence. They often play the heroine.

*Bas.* Yes, it's very hard to live with women. [VARVARA and MARYA appear on the terrace.]

*Shal.* We make all those difficulties ourselves! We should understand that women are still an inferior race.

*Bas.* [*as though quoting*]. Certainly, a woman is much nearer to the animal plane. To subject a woman to our will it is necessary to subject her to a strong and picturesque despotism. [*In the forest, on the right, a shot is heard. No one heeds it.*]

*Sus.* A woman should become a mother. Then, fortunately, she is in our hands.

*Var.* [*in an undertone, and emphatically*]. Horrible!

*Marya.* Heavens! This is dissolution! It is like the stench of corpses. Let's go, Varya. [SUSSLOFF hems and haws as he slowly withdraws.]

*Bas.* [*hastily running to his wife*]. Piotr has overstepped the limit!

*Var.* [*to SHALIMOFF*]. It's you! You!

*Shal.* [*taking off his hat and shrugging his shoulders*]. What did I do?

*Marya.* Let's go, Varya. Come! [*She leads VARVARA away.*]

*Bas.* [*looking after them inquiringly*]. Devil take it! They heard what we said.

*Shal.* [*with a smile*]. You are not a good ally!

*Bas.* [*troubled*]. I wish I hadn't said anything. Such an irritable monster! Why say such things heedlessly?

*Shal.* [*dryly*]. I am going tomorrow. It's getting too cold and damp here. I am going in now.

*Bas.* [*dolefully*]. And my sister is bawling! That's a fact! [*They go. Silence. PUSTOBAIKA and KROPILKIN come around the corner of BASSOFF's house. They are warmly clad, and carry watchmen's rattles and whistles. Sounds of the piano come from SUSSLOFF's house. The voices*

of YULIA and ZAMYSLOFF mingle in a duet — 'The weary day!']

*Pust.* You can patrol this district, while I patrol the other, — we must be heard — and then we'll meet in Stépanida's kitchen and have some tea.

*Kro.* We started too early. They are all awake yet.

*Pust.* We must let them know that we are about, for effect. Go along. —

*Kro.* [*going to the left*]. Oh, Lord! All right!

*Pust.* Look at this rubbish! Heathens! Just like drunks, these summer-folks! Wherever they go they clutter up; but it is for the likes of us to pick up after them. [*He rattles and whistles energetically.* KROPILKIN replies in the same way. PUSTOBAIKA goes. KALERIA appears and sits down under the pines, sad and wrapt in thought. She listens to the singing, nods, keeping time to the music, and softly sings. To the right, in the forest, the voice of PUSTOBAIKA is heard.]

*Pust.* [*excited and speaking low*]. Bless my heart! Who are you? How did this happen?

[KALERIA listens alarmed.]

*Pust.* [*appears, supporting RUMIN*]. Shall I take you to Bassoff's house?

*Kal.* Serguey! Serguey!

*Rumin.* Please send for the doctor!

*Kal.* What happened, Pavel Sergueyevitch? [*To PUSTOBAIKA.*] What is the matter with him?

*Pust.* I was patrolling, and saw him crawling towards me, — he says he is wounded.

*Kal.* Are you wounded? [*Calls.*] Serguey! Send for Marya Lvovna, quick! A doctor, quick!

*Bas.* [*comes running from the house*]. What's the matter with you? What does all this mean?

*Rumin.* Forgive me.

*Kal.* Who wounded you?

*Pust.* [*grumbling*]. Who could attack him here? He must have done it himself. No doubt about it! And here is the pistol! [*He takes a pistol from his coat and carefully and leisurely examines it.*]

*Bas.* Is that you? I thought it was Zamysloff, — I thought that

Piotr had. — [*He runs away and shouts:*] Marya Lvovna!

*Shal.* [*wrapped in a plaid*]. What is it? What happened?

*Kal.* Are you very much hurt?

*Rumin.* I am ashamed, — ashamed.

*Shal.* Perhaps it is not a dangerous wound?

*Rumin.* Take me away from here — I do not wish her to see me. Do take me elsewhere!

*Kal.* [*to SHALIMOFF*]. Go on. — Call some one. . [*SHALIMOFF goes towards SUSSLOFF's house. People are running about. A general commotion. MARYA, VARVARA, SONYA, and VLASS appear.*]

*Marya.* Is that you? What a pity! Come, Sonya, help me. Take off the coat. Don't get excited, — carefully!

*Var.* Pavel Sergueyevitch!

*Rumin.* Forgive me. I should have done it thoroughly, — but when a man's heart is small and palpitates, it is hard to hit it. —

*Var.* Why did you do it?

*Kal.* [*to RUMIN, shouting hysterically*]. It's cruel. [*Bethinks herself.*] What am I saying? Forgive me!

*Vlass* [*to KALERIA*]. Go away, go away, my dear, you shouldn't be here!

[*He goes towards the pines. Men are running about. SUSSLOFF, COLON, without hat or coat, and with an overcoat thrown over his shoulders, then ZAMYSLOFF and YULIA. DUDAKOFF, disheveled and angry. OLGA timid and uneasy.*]

*Marya.* Ah, there it is! Well, that isn't serious!

*Rumin.* People are coming this way. Give me your hand, Varvara Michailovna.

*Var.* Why did you do it?

*Rumin.* I love you — I can't live without you!

*Vlass* [*speaks with his teeth shut*]. The deuce take you with your love!

*Kal.* [*screams*]. Don't you dare! You should not treat dying men like that!

*Marya* [*to VARVARA*]. You'd better go! And you, sir, please be calm. It's a trifling wound. Ah, here's the doctor!

*Dud.* Is he wounded? In the shoulder? And what an idea to aim at the shoulder? You should have aimed at the left side or the head — if

you meant to do it. —

*Marya.* What do you mean, Kyrill Akimovitch!

*Dud.* That's so! I beg your pardon. I see you have bandaged it already. Well, they can carry him now.

*Bas.* Take him to our house, — don't you think so, Varya?

*Rumin.* There is no need of carrying me. I can walk.

*Dud.* You can? So much the better.

*Rumin* [*he sways to and fro as he walks. BASSOFF and SUSSLOFF support him*]. There it is! I had no luck in living and none in dying. I am a miserable creature! [*He is led into the house.*]

*Yulia.* He is right.

*Zam.* [*dolefully*]. What a sad comedy!

*Pust.* [*to COLON*]. I found him.

*Colon.* All right.

*Pust.* I ought to get something for a drink!

*Colon* [*reprovingly*]. You should be more disinterested. [*He gives him a coin.*]

*Pust.* Thank you, sir.

*Kal.* [*to VARVARA*]. Is he dying? I should have been the one to do it. Don't you think so, Varya?

*Var.* Don't talk! [*Hysterically.*] How disgusting we all are! And why?

*Shal.* [*to MARYA*]. Is his wound dangerous?

*Marya.* No.

*Shal.* Hm! Not a pleasant accident! Allow me, Varvara Mikhailovna!

*Var.* [*shuddering*]. What is it?

*Shal.* A few minutes ago you heard the words—

[*BASSOFF, SUSSLOFF, and DUDAKOFF come out of the house.*]

*Bas.* We laid him down—

*Var.* Say no more. — I don't wish to hear any explanation. I hate you all! You are miserable people! Miserable wretches!

*Vlass.* One moment, sister. Let me explain: You are all masques! As long as I live I shall try to tear off the tatters that cover your lies — your vulgarity, — the niggardliness of your feelings and the prostitution of your thoughts. [*SHALIMOFF, shrugging his shoulders, walks off.*]



*Marya.* Don't! It's useless!

*Var.* No; let them listen! I have dearly paid for my right to speak frankly. They have distorted my soul, poisoned my life. Was I like this formerly? I have lost my faith. — I believe nothing. — I have no energy — nothing to live for! Was I like this before?

*Yulia.* I can say the same. Indeed I can.

*Olga [to her husband].* Look at Varvara! She is beside herself — she looks positively wicked! [*DUDAKOFF waives his wife away.*]

*Bas.* Don't, Varya, don't! Can't you say all this in a different way? Is it worth while to excite yourself for this Rumin? What if he is an idiot, is it worth while for his sake?

*Var.* Go away, Serguey!

*Bas.* My dear friend!

*Var.* I never was your friend, or you mine! Never! We were only man and wife! Now, we are strangers! I will leave you now!

*Bas.* Where will you go? Aren't you ashamed of yourself, Varya? Saying such things before people, on the street?

[*SUSSLOFF stands still in the rear, at the stage.*]

*Var.* There are no people here.

*Marya.* Come, Varya.

*Yulia.* Don't interfere! Let her say all she wants to.

*Colon [sadly].* How sad this all is!

*Kal. [to MARYA].* What does it all mean?

*Marya.* Calm yourself. Help me to get her away.

*Var.* Yes, I will go, far away from here where all is rotting around me. Away from the idlers! I want to live! I will live and be busy, I will do something to harm you. I will oppose you! [*She looks at them and shouts desperately:*] I curse you all! I curse you!

*Vlass.* That will do, sister! [*He takes her hand and leads her away.*]

*Bas. [to SHALIMOFF].* Why don't you help me to put a stop to this?

*Shal. [smiling calmly].* Give her a glass of cold water — What else can you do?

*Yulia [approaches VARVARA].* How glad I should be to go away also!

*Bas.* Varya! Where are you going? You are doing wrong, *Marya.*

You are a doctor and should quiet her.

*Marya.* Leave me alone.

*Colon* [*to BASSOFF*]. All I can say, is that you are an innocent rascal. [*He follows VARVARA and VLASS into the woods, on the right.*]

*Kal.* [*sobs*]. And what is to become of me? Where am I to go?

*Sonya* [*going up to her*]. Come to us, — come!

[*She takes KALERIA's arm and leads her away.*]

*Yulia.* Well, Piotr Ivanovitch, let's go home and continue our life.

*Bas.* How's that? You are all insane today. This fool of a Rumin! It's all owing to his stupid nerves! Yakov, why don't you say something? Why do you laugh? You believe they are not in earnest? So unexpected and all of a sudden! Bang! And everything gone to the devil! What is to be done, now?

*Shal.* Calm yourself, my friend. This is only rhetoric on history's soil, — believe me! [*He takes BASSOFF's arm and leads him toward the house. DUDAKOFF, with his arms behind his back, comes out of the house and paces slowly towards the right.*]

*Bas.* Deuce take it all!

*Shal.* [*with a smirk*]. Calm yourself. You see the Sussloffs went off to continue their life. — Let us, also, calmly continue ours.

*Olga.* Will he die, Kyrill?

*Dud.* [*gloomily*]. No. — Come on. — No one will die.

*Shal.* Ah! my dear friend, all this — the people and all that happens to them is so meaningless! So insignificant! Pour me out some wine! [*The faint whistling of the watchman is heard in the distance.*]

# DAS TRUNKNE LIED.

BY FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

*Translated from the German by William Benjamin Smith*

**O** MAN! Give ear!  
What saith the Midnight deep and drear?  
'From sleep, from sleep  
I woke and from a dream profound:—  
The world is deep,  
And deeper than the day can sound.  
Deep is its woe,—  
Joy—deeper still than heart's distress;  
Woe saith, Forgo!  
But Joy wills Everlastingness,  
—Wills deep, deep Everlastingness!'

Nietzsche wrote:

O Mensch! Gieb Acht!  
Was spricht die tiefe Mitternacht?  
"Ich schlief, ich schlief—,  
"Aus tiefem Traum bin ich erwacht:—  
"Die Welt ist tief,  
"Und tiefer als der Tag gedacht.  
"Tief ist ihr Weh—,  
"Lust—tiefer noch als Herzeleid:  
"Weh spricht: Vergeh!  
"Doch alle Lust will Ewigkeit—,  
"—will tiefe, tiefe Ewigkeit!"

Tille translates:

O man! Lose not sight!  
What saith the deep midnight?  
"I lay in sleep, in sleep;  
From deep dream I woke to light.  
The world is deep,  
And deeper than ever day thought it  
might.  
Deep is its woe,—  
And deeper still than woe—delight.  
Saith woe: 'Pass, go!  
Eternity's sought by all delight,—  
Eternity deep—by all delight!'"

The original may be drunk, Nietzsche called it 'Das trunkne Lied,' but Tille's translation is not only 'drunk,' it is also 'disorderly.' As it cannot be locked up from the public, here is a corrective, a rendering that does not gratuitously smutch the brightest gem in the coronet of Nietzsche's fame.

# THE NOVELS OF A. PALACIO VALDES

BY S. GRISWOLD MORLEY

**A** MADRID bookseller remarked not long ago that the novels of Valdés were the only books for which he found a market in the United States. If one were to infer from that sweeping statement that the name of Valdés is widely known in our country, he would be in error. Notwithstanding the kindly efforts of Mr. Sylvester Baxter and Mr. Howells, and the fact that all but three of his fifteen novels have been translated into English, Valdés seems to be still a stranger to the general reading public here. His name is absent from the pages of literary reviews in which Zola and d'Annunzio are mentioned half a dozen times a month. So another attempt to render it more familiar can hardly be out of place. Moreover, his latest novel is prefaced by the wish, 'May this my last song be the sweetest of all;' and that expression, even if not taken literally, lends a certain color of timeliness to a review of his work at this moment.

It is seldom easy for a Spanish author to establish a popular cult outside his own land, Cervantes being the great exception. In general, works coming from the Iberian peninsula are dipped too thoroughly in the extreme nationalism which Ferdinand and Isabella established there and which has been the basis for Spain's strength and weakness ever since. The Spaniard's point of outlook over the social and moral world is seldom ours, and often the very events which he describes are so strange to us that we can hardly credit their possibility. Hence perhaps we have grown wary of Spanish local reputations, and hesitate before letting ourselves be persuaded to take them seriously.

Such reluctance has no place in dealing with the writings of Valdés. If he was born with any provinciality it has disappeared before the wider knowledge of the traveler and philosopher. He is not a blind eulogist of the habits of his countrymen; neither on the other hand does he use his breadth of view to propagate at home the cause of liberty and education. He enters no controversy about affairs of church or state, he has been the mover in no political revolutions; he is content merely to describe the lives of men and women, moving in a frame of such native customs as possess



charm and interest without being exotic. On account of his very moderation he has never been really popular at home. He is the least known to his compatriots of all the living Spanish novelists of the front rank. Valera, the half-mystic philosopher and statesman, Pereda, the pessimistic ultramontane, are members of the Spanish Academy; Pérez Galdós, the radical, has in addition the more significant honor of naming a street in Madrid; but Valdés remains without external reward.

The fact is that he never can be a truly popular author in any country. In his own words, 'Those who like myself hate all excess will never find favor with the public.' From the nature of his work the lovers of it must always be restricted to a small circle of those who are willing to think as they read, — and not only to think, but to ponder, to search for delicate beauties in the middle of long paragraphs, to read with appreciation caressing descriptions where every word has its effect. Valdés sprinkles the dramatic element with a sparing hand. That is due partly to his system of composition, as we shall see, and partly to the fact that inward crises interest him more than outward ones.

His novels cannot well be lumped together for discussion. Each one has its peculiar savor, and the diverse themes include life among laborers, high society, philosophy, religion, and pure emotion. For this reason, and in order to point out the gradual changes in method which Valdés has adopted, it is almost a necessity to outline the books in their chronological order. The method is 'academic,' I know; so are President Eliot's speeches and Beethoven's second symphony.

The first novel, *El Señorito Octavio*, is a romantic tale of illicit love between an ill-treated countess and her majordomo, complicated by the emotional spasms of a 'virtuoso of sensibility.' No doubt the author had this book especially in mind when he wrote in later days, with characteristic self-scrutiny, 'I deplore the use of certain theatrical effects in some of my works. When I wrote them I did not give ear to the advice of the muses, but catered to the depraved taste of the shallow and ignorant public.' And yet, although *El Señorito Octavio* betrays the youth of its author and is of small significance compared to his later work, it shows fully developed at the very outset his fascinating style and his unerring grasp of characters and their relations to each other. This inborn power to create character enables him to make delightful reading out of many a flimsy plot.

*Marta y María* (Martha and Mary), the second novel, is as well

known as any in America. More modest than the first in scope and more congenial in atmosphere, it is wrought out with a perfection of detail and sympathy in which Valdés peculiarly excels, and which may be called the aërial perspective of literature. It is a simple story of a few honest souls in an Asturian coast-town, without more excitement than a dance, a picnic, and a Carlist uprising nipped in the bud. Ricardo, the young marquis of Peñalta, is betrothed to María; but her terrestrial affections quickly fade before a growing mystic love for Christ and his church. Her sister Marta meanwhile, 'cumbered about much serving,' cherishes a silent love for Ricardo, whereby she wins him at last, as María wins her way to a convent. Merely a picture of sincere hearts drawn their several ways, the whole set in relief by a sweet sensuousness which never falls to sensuality; but Valdés has not written anything since which makes a closer appeal to whole-hearted readers.

It matters less perhaps that he points to a reversal of the Scriptural judgment concerning the superiority of the contemplative to the active life. Though Mary of the New Testament chose the better part in sitting at Jesus' feet, Valdés indicates plainly enough that he considers household labors of more service in this particular instance. María, an enraptured mystic, intent only upon worship, saddens her lover, breaks her father's heart, kills her mother, with serene confidence in the rectitude of her aims. Marta goes about binding up the wounds dealt by her sister, without ever pausing to ask herself if her energies are being directed toward the greatest development of her spiritual nature. Never was the imposing selfishness of religiosity contrasted more sharply with the sublime religion of a useful life. There is, of course, another side to the shield, and that was displayed afterwards in *La Fé*.

Valdés has been called the leader of the French naturalistic school in Spain, but such a label is unjust to him. Rightly or wrongly, French naturalism stands to us for the representation of man in his brute nature alone, and Valdés always prefers to emphasize the spiritual values. He is a naturalist only so far as that means that he does not willingly put any scene upon his canvas which Nature could disown. It is true that he has been led at times into a Gallicism foreign to his nature. *El Idilio de un Enfermo* (An Invalid's Idyll) is the book which exhibits the tendency most clearly. An anemic young man plunges into the country in search of health, and

whiles away his enforced vacation by beguiling a farmer's daughter. The story is marvelously well told, and is a beautiful tribute to the glories of nature among the Asturian hills, but it exhales an unhealthy odor, which I am sure must later have become unpleasant to its author's nostrils. Valdés never at any time in his career hesitates to describe the working of man's lower instincts when it lies in his path, and he does it with a healthy frankness which contrasts sharply with the morbid gloating of d'Annunzio and his like; but his favorite province is on a higher level. Far from being a disciple of the French school, he expresses disgust for it in plain language. In the essay on novel-writing prefixed to *Los Majos de Cádiz* he writes: 'It is enough to glance impartially at certain recent well-known French novels, which describe life in the country and in mining communities, to be convinced that their author has not honestly described what he has witnessed, but has with transparent artifice raked together into one community all the crime, obscenity, and horrors that he has read of in the newspapers for several years, which happened in the various departments of France. On the other hand, in certain German, English, and Spanish novels dealing with rural life there is found nothing but honesty, purity, and happiness. This is even more false. . . . With all respect to both parties, I believe that . . . to depict life as it really is we must expel anger from our hearts, rid ourselves of all restless yearning, and observe it without prejudice.' Absolute sincerity, then, is the goal at which Valdés aims, and he almost always reaches it.

*José*, the fourth novel, is an unpretentious story of life in a fishing village, which has already been translated into six languages. Its popularity is due to its simple charm and wide appeal. As *Marta y María* dealt with middle-class scenes, *José* depicts with close fidelity the humbler sorrows and aspirations of those whose daily bread is won by toil. Work is the keynote of the book; work to catch fish, and then to sell them at a fair price, work to wrest life from wind and water; José must struggle to win a livelihood from nature, and to win his sweetheart from her niggardly mother. Yet the whole is not depressing, for one feels a glory in labor in the open, with opportunity to see, and fight, and accomplish. The simple pleasures earned are all the sweeter. Mr. Howells has rightly criticised certain exaggerations in the book, which mar its perfection somewhat, but not enough to prevent it from ranking well in a modest class.



At this point in the novelist's career a change in his method begins to be apparent. Thus far his stories have been somewhat restricted in scope; they deal with few characters and the scenes are all laid in Asturias, the northern province where Valdés was born. Henceforth the circle covered is enlarged; the ground includes the whole of Spain, from Madrid to Valencia, from Cádiz to Dijón. From unraveling the secrets of a few obscure hearts he branches out with set purpose to offer something like a comprehensive view of the life and manners of all Spain. It is not by chance that a bull-fight is described in one book, a tobacco-factory in another, a *romería* in a third. Most Spanish novelists like to style themselves 'painters of customs'; some of them are nothing else; and Valdés, too, lays on the local color with a full brush at times.

He states his literary creed as follows: 'The novel partakes of the nature of the drama and of the epic, but is, in my opinion, more like the second. Accordingly, it is not requisite that in it the action should progress rapidly to a close, as in the drama, without ever turning aside; on the contrary it may proceed slowly, stopping frequently to relate episodes or describe places and customs, like an epic poem.' There is no reason to discuss the value of this theory of the novel, which doubtless is as good as another; yet when I have heard a reader of Valdés exclaim, 'Ah, but his plots are no good!' I have sometimes wondered whether he was not unconsciously translating the above-quoted prescription into plain English. At any rate, as Valdés applies it in this second period of his development, it means that plots are, rather than worthless, non-existent. Such books as *Riverita*, *Maximina*, and *La Espuma*, with all their qualities of charm and depth, are nothing but collections of mild adventures hung on a thread of one or two lives. One can hardly detect in them anything like the statement of a problem and its solution; instead there are descriptions of characters, more descriptions of characters, and then a relation of some of their actions in their several spheres.

For the average reader there is nothing more tedious than to wade through the solid pages which are intended to acquaint him thoroughly with the physical appearance, mental and moral characteristics, and past history of the personages who come upon the scene. He skips those pages or compasses them according as he considers the author's thoughts more or less worth getting at. Take as a random example of description, neither the



best nor worst, the following from *La Espuma*:

'In spite of his striking and somewhat weatherbeaten face and his martial bearing, General Patiño was a counterfeit veteran. His promotions had been won without a drop of bloodshed. First instructor in military science to a person of royal blood; then a member of several scientific commissions, and lastly employed in the War Office, cultivating the friendship of all the politicians; representative several times; senator at last and member of the highest military court; he had never been on a battle-field except once when pursuing a rebel general, and that with the firm intention never to catch him. . . . He subscribed to two or three scientific reviews; he quoted German names in public when his profession was alluded to; but the truth is that the reviews always remained unopened on his dressing-table, and the German names, though well pronounced, were only empty sounds upon his lips.'

This is graphic, humorous, well done in short; but it continues through four pages, and the person in question is one of the least important in the book. What shall the reader do, then, when a full quarter of a novel is taken up by such presentation of its characters, many of whom drop subsequently out of sight? Valdés is led to such excesses primarily by his great power of grasping and isolating a character. Like Dickens and Balzac, he finds it hard to choose from the abundance of figures which press about his brain; and when he discovered his strength he did not for a time control it. Then, too, he enters with such affectionate insight into the lives of his creations that he cannot bear to have his readers misconceive them; and so he is lured along indefinitely from one illuminating touch to another. There is only one better way to present character, — by action.

We must hasten to modify such harsh strictures by pointing out that these same novels are full of the greatest beauties. What they lack in sweep they make up in intimate revelation of the heart. *Riverita* and its sequel *Maximina* are a perfect mine of interesting observations. It is the fashion to read only *Maximina*, for the sake of the beautiful character of the heroine, but it is a great mistake. The two are not separate stories, but merely halves of the same one, and they should never be disjoined. Together they form a real epic of a man's life. We witness with involuntary sympathy the growth from childhood of this native of Madrid, Miguel Rivera, so frank, so clear-sighted, and so human. We meet his companions good and bad,

his teachers wise and foolish; we see the adverse conditions which affect his growth, and behold as with our own eyes his slips back and his leaps toward an ideal, his small heart-burnings and his absorbing passions. And when Riverita has run his thorny course to the end, after a brief space of happiness with his noble wife, out of so many rude shocks 'he learned, never to forget it, the sublime truth which to all eternity will soar above human knowledge and sum up all truths, *self-denial*.' I wish I could quote all of those fine closing pages of *Maximina*, for they show better than any others how admirably Valdés has given expression to the broadest aspirations of the human race.

He has too keen an eye for foibles to fall into sentimentality, even in this most intimate of all his writings, but we do not need his statement that *Maximina* is a portrait of his wife, for we feel instinctively that Rivera is Valdés himself. No other character in all his work is drawn with such sympathy, and no other so embodies that spirit of subtle satire against human futilities combined with deep reverence for the sacred things of life, which is the spirit of Valdés himself.

To this middle manner, in which the sluggish flow of the story is broken up by a set purpose to describe local customs, belong a number of novels of more or less importance. *El Cuarto Poder* (The Fourth Estate, The Power of the Press) might be divided into two separate books, having no necessary connection with each other. On one side stands the story of an unreasoning, all-powerful love, which brings sorrow and destruction to those who are by chance bound to it. It is a brilliant piece of work in every way; the three chief characters are vividly real; Cecilia in particular, the type of the true woman, loving and suffering in silence, is a figure which deserves to stand out long in literature. On the other side is a satirical description, in strokes broad even to caricature, of a Spanish provincial town and its ludicrous efforts to keep abreast of the times. Each half is excellent in its way, but there is a lack of connection between the two which seems quite unnecessary. One could almost go through the volume picking out every other chapter, and hold in one hand a complete love-story, and in the other a society satire! As in the Italian epics, the author spins one thread up to a certain point, and leaves it hanging while he departs to perform a like office for another strand of his multiple cord.

If this be a defect, — and the subsequent change in his method indicates

that he considered it such later on, — it is not the result of haste or carelessness, but of the theory which he held at that time. It was much later that he praised the 'Daphnis and Chloe' of Longus above all other novels, and said, 'I aspire to no other fame in my art than to be called a humble follower of that immortal work.' The 'Daphnis and Chloe' represents above all absolute unity and continuity. It does not contain a paragraph which does not deal directly with the fortunes of the hero and heroine, although many charming glimpses of pastoral life are introduced through them. So that Valdés could hardly have called himself a disciple of Longus at the time when he wrote *El Cuarto Poder*.

Beside his lengthy descriptions, however, he has a gift which is really independent of mere local color; that is, the inestimable ability to throw about each of his stories its own atmosphere, into which the reader enters at the first page, and from which he never emerges till the last is reached. He has 'the power to create a mood,' as Symonds said of the painter Luini. That mood, not to be confounded with the personality of the writer, varies at will with admirable subtlety. Thus, *I Puritani*, the gem of the collection of short stories called *Agua fuertes* (Etchings), is redolent of dead rose-leaves, of that delicate regret for lost youth expressed so perfectly in some of the poems of Ronsard. In the little northern fishing village of Rodillero, where the scene of *José* is laid, incessant labor against odds is the keynote; the scant enjoyment of life is closely bound up with daily toil. In *La Hermana San Sulpicio* (Sister Saint Sulpice), a story of sunny Seville, where roses bloom the whole year round, merry leisure gives room for the development of pure emotion.

The steadfast loves of the bewitching Sister and the Galician poet are but a pretext to present an unequalled picture of southern Spain, — the Spain of romance, of the guitar and olive tree, which enjoys fame out of all proportion to its geographical extent. This enchanted air seems itself to supply means of subsistence without forethought on the part of man, and the gay out-of-door existence seems to admit no misfortunes; we can hardly be persuaded to take seriously the shadowy catastrophes which threaten the lovers now and then. Not that the book suffers from the nauseating sweetness of *L'Abbé Constantin*, for example; it is too lively a representation of an actual city for that; but one feels from the outset the demand of luxuriant nature herself that this true-hearted Galician, slow yet astute, shall win his



charming Gloria, — and incidentally her fortune, for Sanjurjo, like every good *gallego*, reserves for business a corner of his brain which even love cannot fill.

From such a field of light-hearted enjoyment among common folk Valdés turned, as if to emphasize his versatility, to another sphere and more doubtful pleasures. *La Espuma* (Froth) is professedly a picture of life in the Madrid aristocracy, — that assemblage of noble degenerates and rich parvenus which has so little connection with the real vitality of Spain. Valdés has been accused of treating in this book a society in which he never moved and which therefore he could not but misrepresent. That is a matter which I cannot pass upon; my closest approach to the upper circles of Spain is an acquaintance with a Provençal gentleman whose cousin was the French ambassador to the court of Portugal. What is fairly clear, however, is that the society as painted, whether it be faithful to the life or imaginary, is rotten through and through, and furthermore that the novel is unsatisfactory. As regards the first point, there is hardly a decent character in this gallery of high society luminaries, not to say an honest or a noble one. For the second, the book is scarcely more than a loose collection of anecdotes or a description of scandalous habits. There is small trace of anything resembling a story; a protracted exposition crowded with descriptions leads to a hurried end which is rather a cessation, leaving many threads unknotted. One chapter offers a glimpse at the life of workers in a quicksilver mine, by way of demonstrating somewhat baldly the disparity between labor and reward in this base world. The characters are drawn with our author's accustomed skill, and the banker Salabert makes a strong central figure for the throng of money-worshippers, yet the defects of the work overshadow its excellences. It is, in fact, the only novel of Valdés which bears distinct marks of haste.

From such an unsatisfactory treatment of an ignoble subject we pass to something powerful and lofty. *La Fé* (Faith), though it has some of the defects which I have pointed out in other works of this middle stage, is the most significant of any for the study of its author's attitude toward life, and the one which most clearly disproves the inconceivably misleading statement of an English critic, that Valdés has surrendered his nationality to French naturalism. The book is nothing else than a confession of faith, told through the soul-experiences of Father Gil.



This young priest, fresh from the theological seminary, is satisfied at first with his charities and with the beliefs which have been taught him. Then he meets a hardened skeptic, a man of fine character and learning far superior to his own, who awakens in him doubts never before dreamt of. Once put upon the track of investigation, Father Gil is sufficiently honest with himself to pursue it as far as it can lead him. He studies science, and its answer seems to him unbearable; philosophy, and its reasonings are inadequate and contradictory; he turns in despair to his superiors in the church, and meets the old familiar sophistries, now appearing childish. During this psychological development the position of Father Gil in the town has changed. His colleagues disliked him from the first, instinctively envying his intelligence and disinterestedness; now their enmity finds its opportunity. Seizing upon a fatal indiscretion of the priest and the false accusation of a slighted woman, they bring Father Gil to court upon a terrible charge; he is found guilty and condemned to a long imprisonment. But this overwhelming misfortune, greater than those which had permanently embittered his friend the materialist, leaves Father Gil serene and glad, for at the very moment of his accusation he has found that point of support in life which he had so long sought in vain. He has found it in Faith; not Faith in any creed or book or theory, but Faith based upon the inborn impulse of man's heart, which says of one thing, This is sublime, and of another, That is base. This Faith triumphs over trials and over reason. 'The judge was far from suspecting that, as he entered the prison, the vicar of Peñascosa had just been released from the dungeons of skepticism. . . . Behind this apparent life which surrounds us he saw the real life, the infinite life, and he entered upon it with a heart brimming over with joy. . . . This is the life of the spirit. The world cannot change it nor time destroy it, for it is the very essence of time and the world.'

This novel has given offense to some of the theologians. Evidently, it is not narrowly orthodox, but it seems as if one must be strangely creed-bound who can fail to find it a source of inspiration. It is an indication of the stylistic power of Valdés that he can write a novel full of philosophy and mysticism and yet carry the reader with him in ever-tightening grip, so that the psychical crisis has an absorbing interest wholly apart from the course of material events.

Valdés is not such a shallow writer that we have a right to regard the

opinions of any of his personages as his own, however much sympathy he reveals for them. Like every true artist, he reserves the right to emphasize now one side of his personality, now another. So if the refined idealism of Father Gil seem to us practical Americans a bit purposeless, we must remember that it is only the proper pendant to the exaltation of Works which was given expression in *Marta y María*. The sovereign quality of *La Fé* may be defined in words used by a great Spanish critic in another connection: it is that 'kind of ethical beauty which does not always coincide with artistic beauty, but which at times reaches that imperceptible point at which moral emotion becomes a source of æsthetic emotion.'

Up to this point extends what I have called Valdés' middle style, — that in which description of characters and customs almost smothered plot. In the same class, though chronologically later, belongs *El Origen del Pensamiento* (The Origin of Thought), which first appeared in abbreviated form as a serial in *The Cosmopolitan*. The book is bipartite, like *El Cuarto Poder*; it unites a love-story of no special interest and a satire on pedantic science. The lesson which the author intends to convey is expressed in too particular terms to have a very universal application, and a few eloquent pages at the close hardly suffice to raise the general level of merit above that which Valdés' character-drawing always reaches. Add to its native faults the alien sin of expurgation, and it is evident that Valdés was introduced to the American magazine-reading public in the least favorable way.

With *El Maestrante* ('The Grandee') Valdés begins to gain real mastery of the vast material which his ability to conceive distinct characters places at his disposal, and which so far had tended to swamp his writings. He digests better his matter, and substitutes action for description to a certain extent. Moreover, in *El Maestrante* he has had the luck to hit upon a theme of genuine power. 'So thoroughly do I believe in the importance of the theme chosen for a work,' writes Valdés, 'that a fine and worthy subject is the greatest piece of good fortune which an artist can come upon in his life; it is a real gift of the gods.' No doubt he speaks from his own experience, since it is as story-teller that he is weakest; but for once the gods were gracious to him. He has found a subject both strong and unhackneyed, taken apparently from the annals of some society for the prevention of cruelty to children.

*El Maestrante* differs much from such a philosophical study as *La Fé*,

or such a rambling description of society as *La Espuma*. It is a swift, straightforward tragedy of pure human passion, drawn against the clear but not obtrusive background of a provincial city. Illicit love brings with it unbridled jealousy, and that sweeps inexorably on to punishment, awful in that it falls heaviest upon one innocent. This novel gives an impression of power lacking in all the rest. It has not the symmetry and serene perfection of *La Alegría del Capitán Ribot*, but it possesses a certain jagged, irregular beauty of its own.

In *Los Majos de Cádiz* (the title is untranslatable, but it has been called *The Gallants of Cádiz*) we have a novel not conspicuous in any way, except that in it Valdés continues his new-found ability to reproduce manners without overloaded description. Here the art is the more striking since the book is avowedly a picture of a certain class of Andalusian society, — a layer which might be classified somewhere between the *petite bourgeoisie* and the day laborers. A simple story with few actors suffices to present a better image of it than some previous ill-digested volumes succeeded in conveying by pages of description and a multiplicity of personages.

*La Alegría del Capitán Ribot* (The Joy of Captain Ribot) is of far different importance. It would be superfluous to lavish praises upon this charming novel, when Mr. Howells has already done it with such authority and skill. It is the fine flower of the achievement of Valdés; it exhibits all his best qualities with none of his defects. The plot is not novel, perhaps, but the actors are so human, the interest awakened so lively and intimate, the action is so concentrated, the atmosphere of Valencia, 'land of flowers,' so well conveyed, that it is hard to judge the book from the standpoint of an outsider; one feels himself drawn into the circle as if a witness of real life.

The story of Captain Ribot might well serve as a model of character-growth in literature. In the first chapter his ruling passion seems to be a fondness for tripe, as cooked by Señora Ramona. This appetite pales before the attractions of a married woman, Cristina Martí, and occasional over-indulgence in cognac leads him to express his passion in a manner not at all ideal. But circumstances bring out the real nobility of his character as his acquaintance with the Martí family becomes more intimate. His affection for Cristina rises to a higher plane, and at the end we see him rejoicing in the pure love of her child. Thus the joy of Captain Ribot passes in a rising scale from the lowest physical desire to the most unselfish



love known to man, that for a child. If anyone imagines that the moral lies vulgarly patent upon the surface of the book, let him read it, and in reading find the story so absorbing that he will need to think twice before he perceives its real significance. So far removed is the ethical teaching of Valdés from the 'east wind' type of sermonizing.

It is not easy, even if we should wish it, to cast a coldly critical glance at a work in which the author frankly throws himself at our mercy. Such is *La Aldea perdida* (The Ruined Village), published in 1903, latest and perhaps last product of Valdés' pen. He entitles it a 'novel-poem,' and in truth it is a heroic epic in prose, cast within the limits of a country village. It is a reconstruction of the author's youthful memories, as we are told in an impassioned preface, and the heroes and villains, unvarying in their might, loom up through the mist of past years in a kind of mock-Homeric grandeur. They are to be enjoyed, not criticised, these accounts of epic battles between the youths of Entralgo and the youths of Rivota, in which knotty cudgels descend on unprotected heads with surprisingly mild results. Such scenes of primitive freedom and others more peaceful are the outward manifestations of pastoral bliss in the spot where Valdés was born, and to which he looks back longingly.

'Yes, I, too, was born and lived in Arcadia! I, too, knew what it was to walk in holy innocence of heart through shady groves, to bathe in limpid brooks, to tread under foot a carpet ever green. . . . The cow-bells tinkled; the cattle lowed; we boys and girls walked behind the herd singing in chorus some old ballad. Upon earth all was peace; in the air all love. . . . Dear little spot, so well hidden! And yet, men thirsty for wealth saw thee. Armed with picks they fell upon thee, and tore thy virgin bosom and profaned thy spotless beauty.' Rich deposits of coal brought upon Entralgo a railroad, miners, blasphemy, and crime,—the improvements of civilization. Civilization! At the fatal end an old nobleman, a lover of Greek culture, exclaims, 'You say that civilization is beginning. I tell you that savagery is beginning!'

It would be unfair to do more than point out how unconvincing is this pessimism, so rare in Valdés. How far is this *laudator temporis acti*, rapt in memories, from the keen satirist of the old order in *La Espuma* and *El*



*Cuarto Poder!* The melodramatic plot, the personages, Demetria, Flora, Pluto, half allegorical in essence as in name, what havoc the scalpel of Valdés the literary critic would make with them if it were applied! I leave to others the ungrateful task. It is pleasanter to enter whole-heartedly into Arcadia with the novelist-poet, and listen to his lyrical admiration of nature. Far, far back in the depths of his artistic consciousness, behind his theories and his training, Valdés is a subjective and emotional writer; and when he chooses, fully conscious of his act, to loose the rein with which he is wont to hold himself within the bounds of restrained art, we may trust him to express his own excuse and deliver judgment upon himself.

‘O valley of Laviana! O pure streams! O green fields and thick chestnut-groves! How I loved you! Let your perfumed breath caress my brow an instant, let the mysterious echo of your voices still ring in my ears, let me again see before my eyes the radiant forms of those beings who shared the pleasures of my childhood. I am about to give you the parting kiss and cast you into the whirlpool of the world. My breast is oppressed, my hand trembles. A secret voice tells me that you ought never to leave the recesses of my heart.’

Valdés, in casting a glance back over his own work, blamed himself for various literary errors. A sentence which I have already quoted confessed those occasional lapses into effectism which, in fact, became less and less frequent in his later work; and that is not his only self-accusation. ‘I repent having begun to write novels when too young. . . . I regret having written more than I should. Far from being proud of the number of my works I am ashamed when I think of the great writers who in their long and laborious lives have not produced so much. It is a fault of the times which I have not been able to escape.’ Imagine Balzac making such an admission, which is truer of Balzac than of Valdés! The latter, like Flaubert, is his own keenest critic, and so we may be allowed, in reviewing his work, to lay more stress upon its beauties, which he leaves unmentioned.

It is one of the signs of his greatness that the astonishing variety in his work makes generalization concerning it dangerous. Do we pronounce him an optimist? some one will remind us of one or two novels of most depressing tone. A realist? read *La Aldea perdida*. A moralist? how is *El Idilio de un Enfermo* to be classified upon that basis? Such multiformity of creation simply means that Valdés is a many-sided man, and that he takes

pleasure in giving expression now to one mood, now to another. He is not a writer to be labeled in a few sentences, but some general lines may be drawn with all reserve and caution.

The novel of Valdés is primarily a novel of character, secondarily of manners; it deals only occasionally with class problems, and least of all with events. The author is interested above all in his men and women, who are in general average in virtue and talents, — the kind of people we meet every day. The inner development of these single characters is his study, not such broad questions as political clashes of the past or present, racial antagonism, or the strife between socialism and clericalism. He has neither the wish nor the power to handle large masses after Zola's fashion. Be it noted in passing that these mass-problems, which occupy very much some novelists of the present, usually result from passing or local conditions, which interest the present generation deeply, but will become obsolete within a measurable time. Valdés, by his very modesty of aim, attains a high degree of universality. He depicts the everlasting struggles going on in the human heart between the good angel and the demon; the weak selfishness of one, the self-denial of another, the unreasoning passion of a third. His power to conceive character and put it in action with unerring consistency as well as growth is his first and greatest strength. His personages impress the reader as inevitable, like the best of Balzac's; only very seldom does one find a person, like Paca of *Los Majos de Cádiz*, who smacks of arbitrary traits insecurely dovetailed together. The great majority seem to have stepped into the book out of life; and the best of them, such as Marta and her father of *Marta y María*; Maximina; Cecilia, Ventura, and Gonzalo of *El Cuarto Poder*; Cristina and Captain Ribot, will bear comparison with any characters in fiction for reality and interest. The abnormal development of a master-passion, Balzac's favorite theme, is not often touched by Valdés. On the other hand, he is strong where Balzac was occasionally weak, in combining truth with poetry in the lives of ordinary folk.

In directing the movements of his actors Valdés is guided by a horror of the morally impossible. Aiming only at perfect sincerity, he is not governed by sensationalism any more than by a superficial idea of the inevitable. He will not falsify reality to satisfy 'poetic justice,' nor is he led astray by the theory, more seductive nowadays, which assigns success always to the well-equipped. And so the villain in *Maximina* gets off scot-free; and An-

drés of *El Idilio de un Enfermo* accomplishes the ruin of a girl physically and mentally his superior, as the result of a peculiar sequence of events. Few acts or states bring inevitable consequences in this world; incompetence and crime are not always punished, nor ability and virtue rewarded. Conversely, a given act may be the result of an entanglement of motives very hard to unravel. 'They are very few who can explain the secret origins, the fundamental roots of human actions: some because they pay no attention to psychology, which they deem useless; others endowed with keen and subtle minds, because they use them solely to search for a selfish motive; hardly anyone lifts the lid of that magic chest of feelings, and longings, and hopes, and contradictions, which we call the human heart.' In the narrow path of the intimate psychology of human actions Valdés follows his own delicate instinct with almost invariable success.

Movement in his stories is generally very leisurely, as I have indicated. This fault he overcame to some extent in his later work. His novels charm, but do not compel; not more than two or three out of all could ever induce an excitable reader to pass over his usual bed-time by half an hour. Not that a greater number of theatrical incidents would be desirable; Valdés deserves the highest praise for the firm stand he has taken in favor of the purely sincere and natural, and when he does aim at an unexpected effect he often blunders. But, to quote his own words, 'the novelist is under an imperative obligation never to bore his reader, to keep his interest alert, his mind fettered by invisible bonds, which will carry him through the imaginary world without his feeling the fatigues of the journey.' It is not necessary to draw upon police records in order to hold a reader's interest, witness 'Eugénie Grandet.' Inasmuch as he is reading fiction, not observing life, however, the reader has a right to expect *progress* toward some goal; and that is what Valdés has frequently failed to provide. The most obvious exceptions are *El Idilio de un Enfermo*, *El Maestrante*, and *La Alegría del Capitán Ribot*.

His style, however, is so attractive that it counterbalances in large measure any deficiencies of structure. It possesses wonderful power and flexibility, passing easily and naturally from satirical description to earnest and sympathetic eloquence. It is always personal, bearing a constant undercurrent of the author's quiet humor. In this respect it is like the style of Anatole France, without the taint; and the comparison between the two



writers might be carried further. Each conducts his stories at the same sauntering gait, and the archæological lore which France turns to such literary account is represented in the Spaniard by a really profound acquaintance with modern science. Valdés' language is never ordinary, and one rightly fears to skip a page of description, lest one miss some well-turned phrase or humorously acute observation. His pages glow with an inner light which gives a poetic radiance to the commonest occurrences of life. This light is nothing else than deep sympathy with nature in all her manifestations, in the acts of men as well as in the forests and rivers; a sensuous delight in existence for its own sake.

As an example let me quote a bit from a short story called *Solo!* (Alone!).

Fresnedo, a hard-working merchant of Madrid, is enjoying a vacation in the country with his little son.

He was sound asleep, taking his usual siesta. A well-known voice awoke him.

'Papa, papa!'

He opened his eyes and saw his son a yard away, with his pinafore of gray drilling, his little white shoes, and his tangled black hair falling in ringlets over his forehead.

'Papa . . . Tata said you didn't want . . . you didn't want . . . you didn't want . . . to buy me a cart . . . and she said . . . the ram wasn't mine . . . that it was Carmita's (his sister), and she doesn't let me catch it by the horns and she pricked my hand.'

The child, in pronouncing this speech in his pretty broken fashion, stopping at each phrase, showed in his deep black eyes lively indignation and great thirst for justice. For a moment it seemed that he was going to burst into tears; but his sturdy temperament came to the fore, and after a pause he closed his peroration with a teamster's ejaculation. His father had been listening to him rapt in delight, urging him by gestures to continue, as if heavenly music were enchanting his ears. At hearing the exclamation he broke out in loud and merry laughter. The child looked at him in astonishment, unable to understand how what made him so angry could amuse his papa. The latter could have listened to him for hours and hours without moving an eyelash. And that notwithstanding the fact that, as his mother-in-law used to tell her visitors, when she wished to give her son-in-law the



*coup de grâce*, and ruin him completely in the public eye, he had gone to sleep while Gayarre was singing *La Favorita!!!*

‘So, my cherub? Doesn’t Tata let you take the ram by the horns? Wait till I get up, and you’ll see if I settle Tata!’

Fresnedo drew his son to him and planted two tremendous kisses on his cheeks, at the same time caressing his little head with his hands.

Fragmentary as this passage is when removed from its context, I think that a careful reader cannot help feeling its charm at once. How simple a matter, and yet how exactly each touch is given which sets before one the situation, the attitudes, the shades of thought of each actor! Will not every father see himself in Fresnedo? Yet the fascination does not lie in the photographic accuracy of the scene so much as in an indescribable spirit added to it, a spirit of sympathetic wholesomeness which pervades most of Valdés’ work. To the frankness which we expect in a Latin writer he adds great delicacy of feeling, so that although he paints sordid and even brutal instincts at times, he dwells upon them only enough to produce the effect of reality which he desires.

Because Valdés is a subjective writer, we can pick out of his novels some indications of his personal beliefs, however carefully he may refrain from preaching, or from identifying himself with any of his creations. It is apparent, for example, that he has a poor opinion of the existing representatives of the Spanish nobility. Some of the *Aguas fuertes* show him in line with so many other merely literary men as an opponent of capital punishment. Clearly, too, he is not a believer in any church creed, and despises bigotry — or would, if he were not too wise to despise anything, — as much as he does pedantic science. Many of the novels, especially the later ones, point a moral, which does not always lie near the surface. That moral, as far as it can be generalized at all, is the old-fashioned one, ‘Right living is necessary to true happiness.’ Thus he states himself that *La Alegría del Capitán Ribot* is ‘a protest from the depths against the eternal adultery of the French novel.’ Through almost every page there runs, implied rather than expressed, a vein of optimism, which he somewhere attributes to indulgence while a child in certain very hard and sweet lozenges, peculiar to the town of Gijón. It is not a devotee’s blind faith that things will come out right in the end; it is something nobler and deeper, a belief in the reality of

man's higher aspirations.

Such as this work is, it will compare well with that of any novelist alive today. We may be permitted to hope, too, that *La Aldea perdida* will not prove Valdés' 'last song'; for he is only fifty-one, and the novelist can with difficulty remain silent for whom every bit of surrounding life is worthy matter for a story. In any one of his novels the student of character will find a hundred points of interest; and in a few, *Marta y María*, *El Maestrante*, *La Alegría del Capitán Ribot*, there is that union of perfected form and absorbing interest of theme which constitutes enduring superiority. Yet those who love Spanish literature do not seek in it chiseled form or a golden flow of words, such as the Italianates admire; they look for spontaneity, sincerity, and flashes of insight. After all Valdés is a Spaniard in his artistic expression, in spite of his emancipation from peninsularity of view.

(*A complete story by Valdés will be published in the Winter Number of POET LORE*)

## AN ITALIAN LANDSCAPE

BY GABRIELE D'ANNUNZIO

*Translated from the Italian by Clarence Stratton*

WE, mute, still ride our weary courses  
 Thro' this old fathering earth where Peace expands  
 Her flowers among the works of human hands, —  
 We hear the slow, sonorous pace of the horses.  
 Then in the sanctity of the night just born,  
 There rises suddenly from the low lying brink  
 Of the sea, a sweet long chant. The sun may sink,  
 But this sunset to us appears a morn.  
 I remember. Thro' the infinitude  
 Above the silence of all things ascended  
 Unapprehended still, a sense divine  
 Of peace, forgetfulness. A multitude  
 Of hills stood round, — afar in slope descended  
 To meet the plain, Mont Carno, god supine.

# THE BOOK

*Written in a copy of 'The Flame of Life' by Gabriele D'Annunzio*

BY FLORENCE BROOKS

**T**HOU readst the book,  
Word upon word unfurls,  
Flower upon flower,  
Rhythm and riches, unborn power of rhyme,  
The drip of color caught in a clear cup,  
The wine of souls in tears, prismatic, white,  
Gloweth, groweth.

One sweet phrase  
Molten of divers jewels  
Shineth piercing, and the flash  
From the dark translucence  
Of thine eyes, unmined riches,  
The shadow of thy soul  
Darkens and lightens.

And thus the book  
Thy thought did linger over  
Bending as a lover,  
Hath drunk thy beauty,  
Thrills with thy nobility,  
Throbs with thy passion,  
Gives thee to me!

O the mystic birth  
Shows in the pangs  
Powerfully, thy superb being.  
As a strong bush  
Of dark roses in shadow  
I see thy abundance before me  
Splendid, compelling.

# THE SYMBOLISM OF THE FLAME OF LIFE

BY FLORENCE BROOKS

**I**T would be a mean world if ardor had not its chance, a wanton world if passion had not its use. Health is as beholden to the ecstasies as to the lethargies in nature's alternation. No specific creation would renew art or life without the abandonment to law, not rule. In virtue of creative power a man steps away from the crowd of the passive. They follow him.

In the mind of D'Annunzio's poet, Stelio Effrena, surging with Latin ardors, is an anomaly. This poet, who is D'Annunzio himself, gathers to him the Gothic mystery. His effort to bare mystery, to grasp it, makes the book unique. The burning flame flares into the mist of spirit which is the impalpable of art. He does not lose himself, he gains others.

Gabriel D'Annunzio is a symbolist. His mastery of his own forms of symbolism is prefigured in other work, but is more perfect in 'The Flame of Life.' In the development of time the greatest works reach symbolism. Filled with images, instilling power with ever fresher and more wonderful symbols, this book elucidates the psychology of creation. It is a message of a poet to poets, of a creator to creators. It is the solitary utterance of the consciousness of creative processes.

In this study of creative force shown in the spiritual realm the characters of the poet-lover and the actress are symbols. It is no mere personal exposition. The author displays the man and the woman, translated to spirituality through sensuality, in their eternal and supreme use, fused for the work that is to come. The flesh falls away and leaves the live soul.

For his little hour, Stelio Effrena becomes one of the creators. He proceeds with joy, for he is a man. Mystery, the unfolding of wonder, is symbolized in La Boscarine, whom he names Perdita. The man is strong and bright, but she is poignant with tragic fate. She is the vision, he the seer; she substance, he the maker. She is the fuel, he the flame.

To enhance the perpetual energy of man D'Annunzio uses the melancholy limitation of woman. This deep-souled, dumb woman 'gave him the idea of a deep shut-up house, where violent hands suddenly opened all the doors and windows, causing them to turn on their corroded hinges.' And



'to her it was given to prolong such a state of intensity by a supreme effort . . . he moved in it as easily as if it were his natural mode of being, ceaselessly enjoying the miraculous world of his own that he renewed by an act of continual creation.'

And when the poet had drawn on this woman, his *Perdita*, to live in 'a higher zone of life' to suffer 'the transfigurations that it should please the Life Giver to work in her for the satisfaction of his own constant desire of poetry and beauty' . . . he brought, in her as he had in himself, 'the intimate marriage of art with life, and he thus found in his own substance a spring of perennial harmonies.'

He becomes *multanime*, says (in an earlier work) D'Annunzio, to whom the idea is not new. The souls thus created are germinated from 'the ideas caused to blossom on the permanent basis of his being. . . .' And either gradually or all at once they become 'new souls. . . .' The creator's 'center of gravity is displaced, his personality becomes another personality. . . . He becomes *multanime*.'

The creator does not lose himself, he gains others.

Intellectually he recognizes 'in the woman's mystery the surviving power of the primitive myth . . . the renewed initiation of the deity that has fused all energies in one single ferment. . . .'

From its pages 'The Flame of Life' pours the whole earthly material which *Stelio Effreno* found and garnered for joyous creation.

'To create with joy' is the text of his splendid speech at the poet's festival, flushed with Venetian color. An 'unknown power converged in him, abolishing the limits of his own person and conferring a fulness of his solitary voice.' The significances of sense penetrate 'the greater depths until they come upon the great mystery and shudder.' Their 'vision prolongs itself upon the veil upon which life has painted the voluptuous images that give pleasure.'

The speaker describes the beautiful city of art, his Venice, as a woman 'palpitating under a thousand girdles of green and the weight of her great jewels,' and her lover was the god of the young autumn. For, he says, 'the soul of Venice, the soul fashioned for the city beautiful by its great artists, is autumnal.'

The images of the *fêted* poet, which he pours over the multitude of Venetian women and nobles, gathered to do him honor, glorifies for them

his psychology of creative power. He personifies it thus: 'Venice teaches us the possibility of transforming pain into . . . stimulating energies; she teaches that joy is the most certain means of knowledge offered us by Nature, and that he who has suffered much is less wise than he who has enjoyed.' In his final 'visions,' his intensified sight had 'cleared away the mists of inert sadness from more than one spirit, and in more than one had killed cowardice and vain tears, and in more than one had instilled forever a scorn of complaining sorrows and weak compassions.'

And he brings at the end with velocity a flood of images, his teaching. 'And they who had withdrawn into a hermit's cell to adore a sad phantom that only lived in the blurred mirror of their own eyes; and they who had made themselves kings of a windowless palace, from the immemorial awaiting a visitation there; and they who had hoped to dig up the image of beauty from under some ruin and had only found a worn Sphinx that only tormented them with its endless enigmas; and they who sat down evening after evening, pale, to await the arrival of a mysterious stranger bringing endless gifts under his mantle . . . all those who are sterilized by a resigned mourning or devoured by a desperate pride . . . he would bid them all come and recognize their disease under the splendour of that ancient yet ever resurgent soul, . . . to create with joy!'

The poet discovers, possesses, and thereof shapes life of what was but matter. His material may be human, it may be found under the earth, in mines, wells, oceans, gardens, even kitchens; it may be the needs and moods of men which the master will form into armies or unions or forces, it may be ideas, emotions, yearnings. The poet surveys the whole earth, he takes what he will. He finds his bread and wine at every board. To him women yield refreshment and he is like the wandering priest to those who revere him, who feed him, who deem him sacred.

The call of the great law of creation leads him. He rises over obstacles which he does not even see in his creative impulses. The myth, that collection of related images, that image which is a symbol, the spirituality of sensuality, the visibility of beauty, the intricate and forever interweaving flesh and spirit, these are his wisdom.

The cult of symbolism is exotic to American life. We have no time for the caress of the dream. We are heaping together treasures from our earth, it is the time of accumulation, not of construction of material. We

are bringing wood for the fire whose flame has not yet been struck. The flame is invisible, almost unimaginable as yet.

Emerson and Poe were symbolists, and in phases Henry James is a symbolist. The symbolism of Ibsen, Maeterlinck, Meredith, D'Annunzio, Mallarmé, and of many less blazoned living men is a sign of their development in spite of a materialistic age, of their translation into the realm where the process of creation is carried on.

## LINES SENT WITH A COPY OF THE RUBAIYAT

BY GEORGE GERMOND

**T**HE Persian, wandering through his garden place,  
 Insatiable, questing, searching space,  
     Dreamt of the road whereby the earthly grove  
 Should broaden to those fields immortals pace. —

Old Omar, piercing immortality,  
 Set his free spirit groping for the key  
     Whereby the Wherefore, Where, and the Beyond  
 Should open to your sight, Humanity, —

And many a fairy vista laid he bare,  
 Where his delights our vision still may share, —  
     His sorrows and his laughter cling to us,  
 While o'er the way we slowly onward fare.

But thou and I, where through life's maze we move,  
 The Key have found life's mystery to prove  
     Of Here, and Now, Hereafter, and Ourselves, —  
 Mysterious, simple, — and men call it Love.

# RECENT GERMAN CRITICISM

*Hermann Sudermann*

BY WARREN WASHBURN FLOREN

WHEN one considers the development of the German novel since Goethe's 'Wilhelm Meister,' and especially the development since 1848, or the more recent one since the founding of the German Empire, it seems almost incredible that contemporary German literature, so rich in modern productive forces, is practically unknown in this country where German influence is so strong. And where known, a perverted conception of it usually exists. The recent activity in German literature has renewed the interest in the writings of Hermann Sudermann, the great dramatist and novelist. Sudermann is known in this country more as a dramatist than as a novelist, and mostly through an English interpretation of 'Heimat.' No German writer who has attained a literary reputation is, therefore, more misunderstood than Sudermann. This is due mainly to the fact that we are wont to accept dogmatic statements of the critics as infallible decisions.

It is indisputably true that the majority of critics read into a work their own ideas rather than read out of it the fundamental ideas underlying the author's words. The critics may, however, in order to substantiate their point of view, cite only passages, or parts of passages, or even words, which ostensibly lend support to their contention. Or they may judge a writer by a single book which is but a part of a larger plan, and, at the best, can give one but a limited insight into the man's life work. This is dangerous, not to say unscientific, — dangerous, because the reader may accept the criticism as final; unscientific, because the deductions drawn from such insufficient premises are necessarily lacking in logical conclusiveness.

Again, it is very difficult for a critic, who has been brought up in certain lines of thought, to free himself entirely from the deep-rooted prejudices of early associations, and especially so when he ventures to express a judgment on the literary productions of an author so complex and so subtle in



experience and character as Sudermann. Some critics, there are, who intend to dedicate their work to 'Seiner Majestät,' or freely translated, to the 'powers that be.' But the most dangerous critics of all for the American student outside of the classroom are those who write 'copy.' Such criticisms are usually based on the interpretation of the actors, and these interpretations are as widely different as the characters of the actors. The 'Magda' of Duse would not recognize the 'Magda' of Mrs. Patrick Campbell.

From the above it will be seen that if one follows the critics one will obtain but a confused conglomeration of ideas, or will accept the criticism that appeals to his own subjective tastes. One feels almost tempted to follow Goethe, put aside the critical reviews and books and go to the sources, that is, to the author's writings. Even these, we must bear in mind, are but the incomplete and imperfect expression of the inner thoughts of the author. The modernists are mostly serious men and women, writing for serious men and women, not necessarily, however, conservative.

Before one can read Sudermann with appreciation one must have attained a certain development, for each individual will only learn that which he can learn. One is at once limited by his own Seele-life-experience. One must free himself before he can appreciate a man who is already freed. That is, one must first attain a largeness of spirit, a comprehensiveness of vision which enables one to see a man or a man's work with eyes from which the scales of prejudice have fallen, it matters not whether these prejudices are rooted in extreme conservatism or extreme radicalism. Furthermore, one must consider that the range of an author is as broad as human nature itself in its deepest significance. One must look a little deeper into the depths of human nature, since that which one is wont to call 'good or bad in a powerful man,' or in a powerful book, 'is only in the shallow surface. Under the surface resting in dynamic power is the natural,' and the natural is essentially true, and truth should be the ultimate aim of man. Even thus equipped it is necessary to know as much as possible the man, his experience, his personality and purpose in writing in order to understand the works of the man.

When Sudermann gave 'Frau Sorge' to the press he was thirty years of age, so inexperience can not be charged against him. We have not, unfortunately, the real direct autobiography of the boy, the youth, and the

young man, although to understand a man thoroughly one must know him in his earlier years. Fortunately, however, Sudermann leads us to the portals from which we can, to a certain extent, view his inner development, namely, his novels, and especially in 'Frau Sorge,' into which, as Goethe did in 'Werthers Leiden,' he poured his very life blood. And, if, after one has recovered from the 'surprise and astonishment' of the first reading, one begins to read his works with 'observation and investigation,' he need not be classed among those who seeing see and do not perceive.

Sudermann has given a key, as it were, to himself and to his 'Frau Sorge' in the dedicatory poem to his parents.

From it one may deduct several important facts. Sudermann has known Frau Sorge throughout his entire life. Notwithstanding this he has never lost the courage and strength to struggle with care and adversity. He knows by experience where the *true flowers of fortune grow*. By his own endeavors he has outgrown the sorrows of the past and now looks upon life in a healthy optimistic spirit. In this poem is contained the theme of his entire work.

In order to appreciate Sudermann it is necessary to study his character, lest we may fall into the mistakes Richard M. Meyer makes in his 'German Literature of the Nineteenth Century.' Meyer has apparently caught but a fleeting glimpse of Sudermann, as he disappeared hurriedly in the orange groves of Bellagio.

What a different conception of Sudermann may one obtain from his own words and actions:

'We boys are young — we have strength,  
Our courage has not as yet lost its savor —'

Or later in 1902 in answer to inquiries which Crottewitz sent throughout Germany in order to obtain the opinions of various artists concerning the future of German literature, Sudermann replied: 'Create artists! talk not.'

Again, Sudermann's speech which was forced by the movement culminated in what is known as the 'Lex Heinze' before the 'Goethebund' at Munich, April, 1900, is of interest. A word concerning the 'Goethebund' may be in place before proceeding. The 'Goethebund' is a sort of defensive and offensive alliance of the artists (in the broad meaning of the word) of Germany against the powerful movement inspired by the 'Cen-

trum' and the 'ultra scholastic conservatives' to clip the artist's wings and to impose upon him limitations according to their conception of what good and evil is. This movement culminated, as stated, in the 'Lex Heinze.' According to this bill, works of art were to be submitted to a jury consisting of extremely conservative and safe men. They were to stamp the works of art as good or bad according to their finding. No more fitting acknowledgment of Goethe's broad conception of art could be rendered than by calling the alliance of modern artists the 'Goethebund,' and by the selection of Goethe as its 'Schutzpatron.'

'Our Schutzpatron, in whose name we are here gathered, once said: "In every artist there must be concealed a germ of audacity, without which no talent is conceivable." So spake Goethe. Rob the artist of this privilege to be audacious and to endeavor to seek his own path through the underbrush, meaning in plain words, rather to trot along decorously and comfortably upon the macadamized roads behind the retinue of the prince, and you will soon see how soon German art will be at an end. But that shall never happen. And in order that it shall never happen stands our Goethebund on guard, and will take good heed that no force shall be applied to German making and creating, that no force shall be applied to German thinking and investigation, it matters not whether it may come.'

Such is the caliber of Sudermann the man.

The next question is—what are his aims? The aims of a writer often give rise to many unphilosophical discussions. Sudermann, however, in 'Heimat,' defined his aim in a short concise sentence, 'The purpose of art is to elevate the moral sense of the people. Knowing his aim, what is his method? In order to elevate the moral sense of the people, one must awaken the moral sense. What is his process? Exposure. What is to be exposed? The conditions which tend to dull the moral sense. What are these conditions? The family, the school, the church, the society, the government, in so far as they retard a healthful development of individuality.

One may thus have an idea what will be treated in his writings and especially in his novels. And knowing the nature of the poet, one may see that he will not handle things with gloves. By experience Sudermann first learned what was right and then went ahead. He blazed his own path through the underbrush of society, and at the age of thirty he had so freed himself that, like his creation Paul Meyhöfer, he could stand up with an



erect head and tell the truth before the tribunals of the world, regardless of consequence. And as one knows, to quote literally from Luther: 'The entire world hates the truth, if it hits,' or 'truth is the most unbearable thing on the earth.' Sudermann is one of the few who have recognized the heart and contemplation of man, because he has looked a little deeper into the 'Seele' of a human being and has been courageous enough to reveal his feeling, his contemplation. One may thus see that his writings are a veritable mine for the honest reader.

The object of this short article is not to treat the development, or to give an æsthetic discussion of the author's books. The reader may find these in Kawerau's 'Hermann Sudermann,' in the histories of Modern German Literature, in various articles and criticisms. A simple statement will be made in regard to Sudermann's literary position in the light of the most recent contemporary literature. Sudermann has been severely criticised by men who, to a large extent, 'have pastured their youth on the literature of a hundred years ago' as being a 'Tendenz' writer. But that has been the lot of nearly all men who have dared to treat the social conditions of the age in which they have lived. 'People have a habit of trying to drive artists out of the world; this is, perhaps, not due to the evilness of mankind, but is rather the divine will of the Creator, for if one does not strike the tuning fork it will not resound.'

Before noticing Gustav Frenssen's 'Jörn Uhl,' an observation on the influence of Sudermann's writings in another direction deserves to be made. In his dramas, 'Die Ehre,' 'Heimat,' and 'Es Lebe das Leben,' and in the powerful short play, 'Fritzchen,' which is a model of its kind, Sudermann has attacked the subtle parasitic forces which are undermining the governing society of Germany. These works have helped to pave the way for those novels which are today revealing the conditions which exist in the army life. The strongest book is Baron Schlicht's (Wolf Graf von Baudissin) 'Men of the First Class.' This demonstrates, even if Sudermann be a 'Tendenz' writer, that he has caught the tendencies of the times, perhaps, however, not in every respect. He has seen to a great extent, 'das Gewirre der Leidenschaften, Familien und Reiche sich zwecklos bewegendie unauflöselichen Rätsel der Missverständnisse, denen oft ein einsilbiges Wort zur Entwicklung fehlt, unsäglich verderbliche Verwirrungen verursachen.' And perhaps he has fulfilled, more than one at the present can



divine, the words of the poet of Hemme: 'Ich glaube, es liegt daran . . . daran, dass ich nicht mit beiden Beinen im Trubel der Menschheit stehe. Ich muss mich mit meinen beiden festen Beinen breitspurig hinstellen und muss die Augen offen haben. So wie es wirklich ist, das Leben, rund um mich her, das muss ich sehen. Man muss den Dingen, so wie sie sind, auf den Grund gehen. Das Leben muss man ansehen und dann seine Quellen suchen. Das Leben sprudelt rings umher; aber wer sieht die Quellen, die Wassergänge unter der Erde? Sie stehen und staunen: Bunt ist das Leben, ein Wirbel! Nein. Es hat Quelle und Lauf. Es ist ein Strom. Woher kommt er? Wohin geht er? Wer das weiss, der kann mehr als andere Leute!'

This fact explains to a great extent the similarity of 'Frau Sorge' and 'Jörn Uhl.' Both poets seem to have observed the current of the life of the nation. Whence it comes, and whither it is going. Whether Frenssen was under the influence of 'Frau Sorge,' or not, the fact remains that Sudermann first made 'Sorge' as the basis of a 'Roman,' and that his 'Frau Sorge' and other writings, especially 'Katzensteg,' 'Es War,' and the above-mentioned dramas, helped to prepare the way for the unprecedented reception of Frenssen's writings. The fact that Frenssen does not mention Sudermann has given rise to much speculation, but it does not prove anything. In reality it is the most natural thing to do. That Sudermann, as a young man almost a generation ago, in this age when the development has been so rapid and so powerful, saw the hidden springs and the secreted burns which have fed the current of the new century, and that he has sung, in his particular way, melodies which have not been sung before, is sufficient to establish for him a permanent place in the history of German literature.

Again, both poets agree that each man must have an independent 'Weltanschauung;' that the development of a 'Weltanschauung' is slow; that this development begins in the earliest childhood, and that it means: 'Auf, entdecke dir selbst Land, Wasser, Geräte und Nahrung!' It is thus perfectly natural that the poets who know whence the current of life comes, and whither it goes, should have to a certain extent a similar 'Weltanschauung.' It is also perfectly natural that the poets who have lived in different localities, who have been brought up in a different atmosphere, who have enjoyed a different education, who have pursued a different vocation, and who have ripened in a different decade, should have a different 'Weltansch-

auung.' Thus, in the 'Weltanschauung' is where they are alike, and also where they are different, although they have the same ultimate aim — the development of an independent personality within its environments. The environments, or impelling forces, will be similar in some respects and different in others. Both come from what one may call modern Germany — the North — but Sudermann's 'Heimat' is Lithuania, and Frenssen's 'Heimat' is Schleswig-Holstein. Frenssen lives in the old 'Heimat.' Sudermann has a new 'Heimat'-Berlin, but he still keeps alive the old. Both have the history, philosophy, and literature of the past, from which they profit in their own way. Both live under the influence of the same general 'Zeitgeist.' However, what one calls 'Zeitgeist' in literature, is 'Im Grund der Herren eigener Geist, in dem die Zeiten sich bespiegeln.' Therefore, one cannot compare the two poets with the same glass, nor gauge them with the same measure.

As stated before, both poets have 'Sorge' as the fundamental basis of their work. However, it is a different 'Sorge,' and therefore requires a different treatment. A word in regard to the 'Frau Sorge' which hovered over Paul Meyhöfer's life, may be in place. An observant reader will notice that the theme of Paul's mother's life, as seen in her actions and poems, is repentance. In Paul's early childhood, repentance checked his development. Under the influence of the confirmation hour he felt repentance. And when the organ was pealing out, 'Lobe den Herrn, den mächtigen König der Ehren,' Paul noticed at the altar the picture of Magdalene, and whispered 'Frau Sorge.' One sees the influence of repentance throughout the book. Finally Paul recognizes what has been retarding his development. In his confession before the court he said: 'Mir fehlte die Würde und das Selbstbewusstsein, — ich vergab mir zu viel gegenüber den Menschen und mir selber.' Repentance is his real 'Frau Sorge.' But the poet must not allow Paul to despair. Along with the influence of repentance one sees the development of Paul's individuality with the growth of his 'Weltanschauung.' Different phases of mastery are shown throughout. The desire 'das ich zu betätigen,' is aroused more and more. Slowly, but surely, Paul is prepared for the decisive moment when his inner self must assert its supremacy. He recognizes that no one can live for him, and that he must free himself before he can begin to live an independent life. When he recognizes this fact his 'Frau Sorge' loses its magic and powerful con-

trol. He has gained his individuality, he has conquered through his own experiences and exertions. From now on 'Würde' and 'Selbstbewusstsein' are no longer lacking in his life. And that certainly is a solution of the problem which the artist undertook to solve.

Frenssen, although he treats different 'Sorgen,' recognizes 'selbstbewusstsein' in the development of manhood. However, in accordance with his experiences and vocation, he adds one important element. He recommends the Christian 'Weltanschauung.' His 'Jörn Uhl' illustrates the development of a man within the newer, or perhaps, better, within the conception of Christianity, as Frenssen sees it. Sudermann, however, has not overlooked the strong, invisible, blessing forces which are to be found in the New Testament. We see these forces in 'Frau Sorge,' not as visible as in 'Jörn Uhl,' but powerfully present. With Sudermann it is more the religion of the layman than that of the pastor, but none the less religion.

The broad-minded reader, quoting indirectly from Stern, will observe that the fundamental idea is that sorrow has blighted the youth of many excellent and capable young men, and that only the strength of the opportune moment of victorious decision can rescue, remains true for thousands. He will see that it is the object of the poets to treat the inner life, the poetical side of an oppressed nature, and to search for the divine spark in the harshness of stern duty. He will find both Sudermann and Frenssen outspoken opponents of those poets who need a beautiful, externally gentle man in order to find human life worthy of representation. They have thus recognized that a 'simple, deep life is worth relating.' That alone is sufficient to assure a lasting influence on German literature. Sudermann accomplished this in 'Frau Sorge' in 1887.

## *The Motivation of Wagner's Parsival*

By PAUL H. GRUMMANN

WHATEVER the final estimate of Wagner as a poet may be, it can not be denied that he is without a peer in the reconstruction of older themes. His skill in this respect has led Prof. Wolfgang Golther to the statement that Wagner in his 'Der Ring des Nibelungen' has successfully reconstructed the whole body of myths of which only a



paltry fragment is preserved in the Eddas. While this statement contains a compliment which the author deserves in a manner, it involves a serious error. Wagner was so steeped in his philosophy that he was quite unable to reconstruct an old system of myths objectively, nor did he care to do so. Consciously and unconsciously he interpreted into his material the world conception which he had come to accept. Consequently 'Der Ring des Nibelungen' embodies the pessimism of Schopenhauer and not the rugged view of life held by the old Icelandic bards. This does not detract from the merits of the modern author, for it is essential for the great poet that he make his poetry reflect his convictions.

A comparison of Wagner's Parsifal with the main source of the drama will likewise show the marked pessimism of the poet. It is hardly surprising that Nietzsche broke all bonds with Wagner when this play appeared, for its philosophy is the very antipode of Nietzsche's positive, joyous, and optimistic system of thought. What is indicated in the gloomy figure of Wotan in the 'Ring' is but carried to its logical conclusion in Parsifal. Nowhere is the pessimistic doctrine of renunciation preached in a more merciless manner, hence Nietzsche saw nothing short of treason to human nature in the play.

Naturally the epic breadth of the medieval poet disappears in the libretto of Wagner. With extraordinary skill the essential features are abstracted from the fourteen thousand lines of the older poet and reconstructed in accordance with the author's conception. Long as the musical dramas may appear, we can but marvel at Wagner's genius for condensation. The medieval poem is crowded with incidents, while the newer version is stripped of all minor adventures. Complex situations are simplified. Wolfram, for instance, presents Titurel as the father of Frimuntel, whose children are Amphortas, Trevrezent, and Schoiziana. This is reduced by making Amphortas the son of Titurel and eliminating the other characters. Similarly Parsifal's father is merely referred to, and his half-brother, who plays an important part in the older poem, is dropped entirely.

Wolfram presents Gawain as a pseudo-Parsifal. He is zealous in behalf of Amphortas, rides out and champions the cause of the grail in a large number of adventures, appears at the service of the grail and asks all necessary questions, indeed conforms with all formalities essential to the recovery of the sufferer, but fails; while Parsifal without thinking of the



formalities succeeds on account of his inherent goodness. Wagner simply has Gawain seek for a remedy for Amphortas and lets him depart from the castle in despair when he fails to find it. It is apparent at once that Wagner in this instance has not merely condensed but suppressed elements that did not serve his purpose. The medieval poet tried to show the importance of a faith not dominated by formality, a fruitful task, but not in accordance with Wagner's conception of the theme and hence the changes already noted.

The early adventures of Parsifal are suppressed entirely because they would make him appear too worldly. He does not join Arthur's knights of the Round Table, for in spite of their ultimate virtues they were surrounded by worldly glamour. Wagner's Parsifal is associated only with the knights of the grail, who must be pure in heart and also renounce all thoughts of worldly glory. The medieval Parsifal is married to Kondwiramur, and has two sons, one of whom is Lohengrin. Since Wagner considered the relation of marriage incompatible with the real service of the grail, it was impossible for him to retain this feature. In spite of his marriage vows Wolfram's Parsifal is tempted by Guinevere, whom he serves in a large number of adventures. Absolute chastity then was regarded essential to the Parsifal of Wagner.

Nowhere in the drama, however, is there a more complete change than in the conception of Kundry. In Wolfram's poem she is an insignificant witch, who serves merely as a messenger of the grail. Wagner eliminates all of the other female characters of his source and presents a composite figure in Kundry. Not only this, but she becomes by far the most important character of the drama in accordance with the larger purposes of the plot. She becomes the cause of the wound of Amphortas, she is to blame for the loss of the sacred spear, she is the source of the mysterious power which threatens the grail at the hands of Klingsor. Although she brings comfort to the wounded Amphortas, it must be remembered that the remedy is only palliative; in a measure she deceives him into a temporary belief that he is relieved. She, to Wagner, is the source of all evil, burdened as she is with the curse of tempting men, and hence the chaste Parsifal must withstand her wiles in order to carry out his mission.

In his portrayal of Kundry, Wagner has utilized certain characteristics of 'die rauhe Else' described most minutely in the legend of *Wolfdietrich*. Else, according to the medieval legend, is a princess who, under a powerful

charm, has been converted into a faun-like creature. Wolfdietrich in the course of his adventures finds and liberates her from her charm by kissing her three times, although at each kiss she is converted into a more hideous creature. Since Wolfdietrich's courage does not fail, he is rewarded by the hand of the liberated princess. Kundry in Wagner's drama similarly is burdened with an awful curse from which some one must liberate her. Instead of changing forms, she assumes three distinct personalities, probably the most effective feature of the drama. At first she tries to win Parsifal by reminding him of his dead mother whose place she tries to take in his affections. Then she appeals to his sense of pity. Finally she makes it appear that her salvation depends upon his love. She is liberated, however, by the abstinence and not the love of the hero. While Else marries her hero, Kundry henceforth lives a life of renunciation, devotes herself to menial service and meekly anoints the feet of Parsifal.

In Wolfram's poem Guinevere laughs at the approach of the clownish Parsifal, who serves her in a large number of rather questionable adventures. Wagner makes this laughter the token of the potency of Kundry's terrible curse,

‘Und wiederkehrt mir das verfluchte Lachen’  
[Again the accursed laughter comes upon me]

The change is not only in harmony with the poet's general plan, but adds a dramatic intensity to the character of Kundry that is of supreme importance.

Parsifal's resistance to Kundry's wiles demonstrates that he can not be tempted and breaks the power of Klingsor, who at Wagner's hands has also undergone a complete transformation. In the source he is merely a magician, a heathen, and therefore a foe of the grail. The fact that medieval legends report that the grail and spear were put into the hands of the angels who had remained neutral in the rebellion of Lucifer, probably suggested to Wagner the conception of Klingsor as the prince of evil, the sworn foe of God. This is indicated most clearly by the fact that Klingsor has belonged to the knights of the grail and has lost his place among them on account of his wickedness. Klingsor represents the force of evil and the most powerful weapon in the hands of this evil one is Kundry, the beautiful woman. Just as Siegfried in the ‘Ring’ learns to fear in consequence of his love and ac-

completes his own ruin, Parsifal succeeds in his exalted mission because he does not succumb to it.

It is this attitude to woman which most conclusively classifies Wagner as a pessimist. In the negation of natural instincts, the pessimist reasons that woman's temptation is the natural source of evil, since this temptation prolongs what he calls 'the fever of existence.' Whatever exists is doomed to decay and acquiescence is the only wise course. This is the dominant note in the later dramas of Wagner, and the motivation of the 'Ring' and especially Parsifal proves conclusively that he was conscious of the world conception to which he gave expression. He not only turned to a period which was famous for its acts of self-abnegation, but recast these characters with a philosophical rigidity entirely foreign to Wolfram. Even if we were ignorant of the fact that the poet took more than a passive interest in the philosophical discussions of his day, a comparison of his drama with Wolfram's epic would convince us that his chief interest in his swan song was its philosophy.

## *Modern German Literature\**

BY JOHN SCHOLTE NOLLER

**A**NY book that will broaden or deepen the acquaintance of the American public with current German literature is to be heartily welcomed. Professor Heller's 'Studies in Modern German Literature' is such a book, intended frankly and plainly for the public, not for the specialist, written in a popular, breezy style, giving what the public wants first of all — a mixture of descriptive and judicial criticism.

The book is hardly what its title may suggest at first sight. It is in no sense a history of modern German literature, or of the German literature of the nineteenth century; it is not even a comprehensive study of contemporary German literature; and the reader who seeks in this book for a disquisition on 'influences' and 'movements' will be disappointed. It consists of two elaborate essays on Sudermann and Hauptmann, each covering

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\**Studies in Modern German Literature*, by Otto Heller, Ph.D.; Ginn & Co., Boston, 1905; pp. viii, 301.



over one hundred pages, followed by a sort of appendix of sixty-five pages, in which the names and principal works of some forty women authors of the last century and the present day are passed in rapid review. The book thus has no logical plan, no organic unity; still, if there are plenty of logical books, but few that are both instructive and entertaining, the author need make no apology for the apparently lawless structure of his work.

The method of study in the essays on Sudermann and Hauptmann is direct and simple. The plays and novels are analyzed in chronological order — save for occasional grouping on another basis — and with the telling of the ‘story’ the author gives his view of the structure, characterization, and ethical significance of the works reviewed. The author has the gift that is essential to the success of the method used; he knows how to make an ‘outline of the action’ interesting and intelligible to the general reader, and he steers clear of the dryness and lifelessness usually found in such outlines. In fact, the literature studied is ‘seen through a temperament,’ and the temperament is vivacious and original enough to make the result pleasant as well as informing to the reader. For this very reason criticism of the work is made difficult, since it resolves itself almost inevitably into a dispute *de gustibus*. The present generation is still far from occupying the ‘view point of eternity’ with reference to such authors as Sudermann and Hauptmann, and hence it would be folly to attempt a dogmatic denial of any of Professor Heller’s judgments, which must simply be taken with the proper allowance for the personal equation, as is always the case with impressionistic criticism. It is enough to say that these judgments represent the opinion of a keen and independent observer, and as such are worthy of a respectful hearing.

In one respect, the author of the ‘Studies’ seems somewhat partisan, or rather, seems to be affected by an unconscious reaction against the tendency of recent German criticism. It has been so customary in Germany, during the last few years, to overrate Hauptmann and to make light of Sudermann, that a corrective of this injustice was quite in order; but Professor Heller makes such an effort to stand straight against this German current that he leans backward. The result is that the essay on Sudermann might also be headed ‘For the defense,’ and that on Hauptmann ‘For the prosecution;’ and as the American public, for which the book is intended, knows little or nothing of the reason for this distribution of emphasis, the



reader is apt to be somewhat misled by it. Not that there is any real partisanship in the author's attitude; for while the first essay is sympathetic in tone, it does not cover up Sudermann's insufficiencies; and though the criticism of Hauptmann is severe, it recognizes what is fine and great in the feminine genius of the poet of the "Sunken Bell."

One other general criticism, or caution, seems in order. Professor Heller makes the impression of approaching his critical task with rather too fixed and rigid a theory of the drama — a theory that could be used, *mutatis mutandis*, to discredit many of the world's greatest dramas, and that leads the author, for example, to impugn the dramatic significance of Goethe's 'Faust.' Especially in these days, when the old standards and laws of literary form are so generally disregarded, is it peculiarly unjust to the genius of a great poet to measure his work by his observance of such standards or laws. Hauptmann suffers from such a test, as Maeterlinck would, and as Sudermann does not; the handicap is hardly a fair one.

As already intimated, the chapter on the Women Writers of the Nineteenth Century has no organic connection with the rest of the book. It is interesting and valuable in itself, however, as a brief review of the contribution of the other sex to German literature during the last hundred years; and the slight acquaintance of the average American with this important field of literary endeavor justifies the attention here given to it.

# LINUS: A LAMENT AT THE GATHERING OF THE VINTAGE

BY EDITH M. THOMAS

**N**OW the golden tire of Phœbus  
Turns, to trace its shortest arc;  
Now, no more sings Philomela  
From the leafy turret dark —  
Nightingale and swallow flitting,  
Voiceless, to the Libyan shore;  
Now, upon Demeter's daughter  
Shuts the sunken iron door —  
And now, young Linus is no more.

He was with us at the pruning  
Ere the leaf shot forth the vine;  
He was with us in the Maytime  
When the buds were red as wine, —  
With us, when the summer dewfall  
Made the meadows silvery hoar,  
Shared our nooning in the shadow,  
Shared the toiler's homely store —  
But Linus shares with us no more.

He is fled, — the well-beloved  
With the lighted eyes of dawn,  
With the tresses of sea-amber,  
And the footstep of the fawn !  
If the red-eyed pack of Sirius  
His fair-fashioned body tore,  
There was found no stain of crimson  
On the path his footstep wore;  
Yet Linus — Linus comes no more.

He is strangely parted from us,  
None received his passing-sigh!  
Now, the evening-purple clusters

Heavy on the trellis lie:  
 When we crush those purple clusters  
 Filled with sweetness to the core —  
 Lo! it is the life of Linus  
 That the presses shall outpour;  
 But Linus we shall see no more.

He is gone with all of beauty,  
 Withered from the season's crown,  
 One by one, slow-faltering downward —  
 As these vine-leaves falter down!  
 Otherwhere is other mourning —  
 Ay, the boatman stills his oar,  
 Stays the shepherd, winding foldward,  
 At far cries that, searching sore,  
 Make murmur of *no more! no more!*

This the burden, this the sorrow,  
 Where they winnow out the corn;  
 This the burden breathing lonely  
 Through the hunter's unblown horn!  
 Say, to those that mourn Adonis,  
 Trampled by the mountain boar —  
 Say to those that yet mourn Daphnis,  
 On the misty threshing floor,  
 That Linus — Linus is no more!

Ask if they have hope of Daphnis  
 When the morrow spring is born:  
 Will he rise among the furrows,  
 Midst the tender blades of corn?  
 Ask the foresters if Cypris  
 Their Adonis will restore? —  
*Plenteous flowers wake after Winter, —  
 Not the flower that bloomed before!  
 And Linus — Linus wakes no more.*

# SOME CURIOUS VERSIONS OF SHAKESPEARE

By FREDERICK W. KILBOURNE

**T**WO previous articles in *Poet Lore* have been devoted to a discussion of the whole subject of versions of Shakespeare before 1800, and to a *catalogue raisonné* of such works, with a short characterization of those about which information is obtainable. Even the brief statements or descriptions therein given are sufficient to indicate that many of these alterations differ greatly, and some of them very strangely, from their originals.

Thinking that it may be of interest to have fuller accounts of some of the more curious of these products of the perverse ingenuity of Shakespeare's adapters and would-be improvers, I have selected for this purpose several of the remade plays, whose right to be characterized as strange will be conceded, I am sure, to be beyond dispute.

The first I shall take up is Charles Johnson's alteration of 'As You Like It,' which, for the sake of having a more significant title, he called *Love in a Forest*. Johnson, who was a tavern-keeper as well as a writer of plays, and as a poetaster of the time is said to be mentioned in one of the versions of the 'Dunciad,' dedicated the printed copies of his play to the Worshipful Society of Free Masons, of which he was evidently an enthusiastic member.

The play, when acted in 1723, met with no success, and was withdrawn after six performances. Strangely enough, its original seems to have been entirely unknown to the stage of the period, for there is no record of its representation from the Restoration until 1740, when it was acted about twenty-five times at Drury Lane. This fact makes all the more laudable Johnson's desire, as expressed in his prologue, of restoring to the stage one more of Shakespeare's plays, and had he been content with this and not have deemed it necessary to revise Shakespeare for the purpose, we should have been much indebted to him. But unfortunately his judgment was at fault and he stultified himself by his declaration that he had 'refined his [Shakespeare's] ore,' 'weeded the beautiful parterre,' and 'restored the scheme from time and error.' Behold the result of the refining, weeding, and restoring processes! Touchstone, Audrey, William, Corin, and Phœbe



are removed root and branch. Silvius appears only in Act II, Scene 4, where he speaks about twenty lines given to Corin in the original. How the deficiency thus created is made up will be seen in the course of the account of the play, which follows.

The first two acts are not greatly changed. A ludicrous modification is that of the wrestling bout to a combat in the lists, before beginning which Charles and Orlando defy each other with the speeches of Bolingbroke and Norfolk in 'Richard the Second,' I. i. Jacques himself reports his moralizing on the deer, a change approved by Genest but criticized by Furness as 'obliterating one of Shakespeare's artistic touches, whereby an important character is described and the keynote struck before he himself appears.'

More considerable changes appear in the Third Act. The verses which Celia ought to read are omitted, and she makes the comments and verses given to Touchstone in Shakespeare's play. After Orlando and Jacques enter, the chief change in the play is instituted, namely, the wooing of Celia by Jacques. This is done in the words of Touchstone to Audrey, patched with some speeches of Benedick's from 'Much Ado,' the whole dialogue being given an eighteenth century tone. This 'monstrous device,' curiously enough, anticipates George Sand's French version of the play, *Comme il Vous Plaira*, but the coincidence is undoubtedly a mere accident, as it is not likely she had read Johnson's play.

The Fourth Act opens with a conversation in which Jacques tells Rosalind of his love for Celia. Viola's speech, 'She never told her love,' etc., is inserted in the scene between Rosalind and Orlando. It is Robert Du Bois who brings Rosalind Orlando's excuse for not keeping his promise, and he is the brother who is rescued from the lioness. Oliver is reported as having made away with himself to escape punishment, thus making Orlando his father's heir.

Of course, the changes already made affect the dénouement somewhat, but the play ends substantially as in Shakespeare, except that Jacques marries Celia. To compensate for the omitted portions, the burlesque play of *Pyramus and Thisbe* from 'Midsummer Night's Dream' is dragged in, being represented before the Duke during the interval between the exit of the disguised Rosalind and her return in her true character.

Johnson's chief purpose appears to have been to give the play greater unity of action by limiting the action to fewer characters and to improve the characterizations of the chief persons. In following out the first design

he has deprived us of some of the best of the original; how lamentably he has failed in the second is almost too obvious from the foregoing account of his strange changes to need comment.

What shall be said of the transformation of the melancholy Jacques into an eighteenth century lover? It is certainly most remarkable. One of Shakespeare's most distinctive characters, a universal favorite nowadays, is to our minds thereby entirely spoiled. Nothing but a complete failure to comprehend the great dramatist's purpose or ignorance of true dramatic art could have brought about such a perversion. The comedy is, as Furness points out, so thoroughly English that it cannot be transplanted to German or French soil. The Germans cannot appreciate the sparkling wit and vivacity of Rosalind, and consequently turn to Jacques and Touchstone as the leading characters. How it strikes a French mind may be learned from an examination of Sand's *Comme Il Vous Plaira*, in which Jacques is made the hero, being converted from a misogynist into a jealous lover, almost provoked to a duel with Orlando by Celia's coquetry. Johnson's mind seems to have undergone a sort of Frenchification, if one may so speak, the process being checked, however, before it was completed, so that he did not carry the change in the characterization of Jacques so far as his French successor. At any rate, both, it will be admitted, have debased the character most effectually. Perhaps the best criticism on the transformed Jacques is that which Johnson makes Celia herself utter, 'Jacques's love looks a little awkward; it does not sit so easy on him.' We should, however, amend it by making the language stronger.

The omission of Touchstone and Audrey deprives us of some of the most delightful comedy to be found anywhere, and that of Corin and Phœbe lowers the characterization of Rosalind somewhat by taking away from her her desire to make a lover happy by using her good offices in his behalf.

Another useless and very bad change is the removal of Oliver and the substitution of Robert as the brother rescued by Orlando. This was made necessary by the change in the lover of Celia. Perhaps, also, Johnson had in mind poetical justice, which would be, in his opinion, better satisfied by having Oliver take his own life. But how much it injures the conception of Orlando, besides removing one of the chief teachings of the play, the lesson of forgiveness, to take away from him the opportunity to show his magnanimity in preserving and forgiving an enemy! We must admit that

Oliver's conversion is a little sudden, the great dramatist being undoubtedly influenced not a little by the dramatic convention which called for a pairing off of the chief characters in the fifth act. Nevertheless, one gets a fresh admiration for Shakespeare's genius, in observing his method of 'making earthly things even,' as compared with that of his uninspired reviser.

A greater Johnson has lamented that Shakespeare lost the opportunity for a fine piece of moralizing, in not recording the conversation between the usurping duke and the hermit. Fortunately this idea did not occur to his lesser namesake, for which we may be grateful.

The dialogue when Shakespeare is followed is not greatly altered, but of course Johnson's changes and omissions make necessary much of his own composition.

As a concluding word it may be affirmed that this version is an extremely bad transformation of Shakespeare's most charming comedy. As we have seen, it was the opinion even of Johnson's contemporaries that this play was not good.

Another pleasing comedy that has suffered violence at the hands of revisers and adapters is 'The Taming of the Shrew,' as, besides being altered, it has been resorted to for farces and afterpieces.

The chief alteration is so unique as to be well worth a little attention. Here, again, there is a change of title, but in this case it is a much more violent one. Indeed were the original title not appended as a subtitle to the altered play, the disguise would be complete. *Sauny, the Scot, or the Taming of the Shrew*, is one of the earliest versions of Shakespeare, for it was first acted in April, 1667, although not printed until 1698. It is attributed, with much probability, to the Actor Lacy, though Langbaine in his account of dramatic writers does not speak of it as his. Lacy himself took the part of Sauny, who is Grumio turned into a Scotchman. The play met with considerable success, although Pepys, who records seeing it, thought it 'generally but a mean play' with 'some very good pieces in it.'

The scene of the play is transferred to London, the dialogue is shortened and strangely enough converted into prose, and the fifth act is almost entirely new. Petruchio remains as in the original, but the names of the most of the other dramatis personæ are changed. Katherine becomes Margaret, daughter of Lord Beaufoy (Baptista). In Winlove, son of Sir Lionel Winlove, and a country gentleman of Oxford education, may be



recognized Lucentio, now become an Englishman. Gremio, Hortensio, and Biondello become respectively Woodall, a rich old citizen, Geraldo, and Jamy. The character of Sauny is much more important than that of Grumio in Shakespeare's play. He is Petruchio's Scotch servant and a mere buffoon. Curiously enough, his language, which is often coarse, is not Scotch in its idiom or apparent pronunciation, but Yorkshire dialect. Margaret and Petruchio talk like people of the London streets.

The Induction is omitted — not a bad change, as its representation is unnecessary. The First Act is very short, consisting of Shakespeare's first scene only. The second scene of Act I and the whole of Act II constitute Lacy's Second Act. Sauny figures very prominently in this act. Act III consists of Shakespeare's Third Act with the first two scenes of his Fourth Act. Winlove (Lucentio) speaks a kind of French English. Petruchio makes Margaret smoke. Snatchpenny, a London thief, has the part of the pedant. The remainder of Act IV and the first scene of Act V of the original make up Lacy's Fourth Act. Woodall is represented as hiring Winlove, as a Frenchman, to woo Bianca for him. Act V, as has been said, is almost entirely Lacy's, although the wager on the wives' obedience is introduced. It consists mainly in a prolongation of Margaret's resistance to Petruchio. He declares her to be dead and orders his servants to carry her out and bury her. The wager episode follows and then the play ends with a dance.

It will be seen that the play has thus been transformed into a low comedy or into a mere farce. The change of scene has been attended with a marked lowering of the whole tone of the play and a striking degradation of the chief characters. For this the little good humor that has been added is far from compensating, much less does it excuse it. The prolongation of Margaret's stubbornness, while perhaps good fooling, certainly cannot be called an improvement or even a welcome addition. Shakespeare knew when to stop.

On the whole, the play, although bad enough as an alteration of Shakespeare, is still a fairly good play, because so much of the original is retained. There was no call to change the setting and to degrade the play. This and the destruction of the poetry are the chief features to be condemned. It is only one more proof of the lack of anything like reverence for Shakespeare among the playwrights and audiences of the period, that



such a version could be made and, moreover, be tolerated, let alone be received with applause, as it was.

I pass now to one of the strangest alterations in the list, James Miller's *The Universal Passion*, which was acted nine times and printed in 1737. The Old Variorum editors put it down as a pasticcio of 'Much Ado About Nothing,' 'As You Like It,' and 'Love's Labor's Lost.' This is not so, as there is nothing from either of the latter two. Another writer describes it as an alteration of 'All's Well that Ends Well.' It is evident that these authorities had not read the play. Any one seeing simply the list of characters might easily be led to think it an alteration of several of Shakespeare's plays, but there is no excuse for stating an unverified inference as a fact.

The play is, in truth, a wretched jumble of 'Much Ado about Nothing' and Molière's 'Princess of Elis.' Miller in his prologue acknowledges his indebtedness to Shakespeare, but says nothing of Molière.

The scene is laid at Genoa and the characters (with their Shakespearean equivalents) are as follows:

Protheus, a nobleman of Genoa (Benedick);  
 Joculo, the court jester;  
 Bellario, a young Venetian lord (Claudio);  
 Gratiano, the Duke of Genoa (Leonato);  
 Byron, bastard brother to the Duke (Don John);  
 Gremio (Borachio and Conrade);  
 Porco (Dogberry);  
 Asino (Verges);  
 Lucilia (Hero);  
 Liberia (Beatrice);  
 Delia (Margaret).

Most of the First Act is from Molière, somewhat altered. Bellario is in love with Lucilia, but, as she is in the habit of treating her suitors with contempt, he determines to affect indifference to her. He engages Joculo to help him. Gratiano, the father of Lucilia, expresses to her his wish that she should marry and she declares to him her aversion to matrimony. The remainder of the act, consisting mostly of a wit combat between Protheus and Liberia, is from the first and third scenes of the First Act of 'Much Ado.'

Molière furnishes almost all of Act II, although some dialogue is taken from Shakespeare. The action is chiefly occupied with the affairs of Bellario and Lucilia, each of whom pretends to be in love with some one else.

In the Third Act, the first part of which is chiefly from Molière, Lucilia consents to take Bellario after Joculo tells her that her suitor has rescued her father from two ruffians and after her father himself urges her to do so. At this point Miller deserts Molière, Lucilia is speedily and completely metamorphosed into Shakespeare's Hero, and the play follows *Much Ado* in the main, though with many changes in minor details, from Don Pedro's proposal in Act II, i, to bring about a match between Benedick and Beatrice to the end.

In attempting to improve upon his original the reviser has fallen into many absurdities. In particular, the Fifth Act is badly confused. For example, he introduces a scene between Joculo and Delia in which she begs that worthy to intercede for her with Lucilia, at a time when that lady is supposed to be dead.

Miller alters the dialogue greatly, introduces lines from 'Twelfth Night' and 'Two Gentlemen of Verona,' and altogether has succeeded in making a most wretched amalgamation of two good plays.

It cannot be supposed that a compilation from Shakespeare and Molière should be a wholly bad play. Even the most violent treatment cannot rob two such geniuses of their vigor, but they have certainly suffered sadly at the hands of Miller. It is not worth while to do more than censure the general principle this alteration exhibits. To make a play by combining different plays of the same author's, or plays in the same language, is bad enough, but to make one out of the plays of authors writing in different languages is too contemptible a practice on which to waste any words. Besides, in this case, what an absurdity to metamorphose suddenly Molière's vivacious heroine, who somewhat resembles Beatrice, into the quiet-spirited Hero!

As a final word on Miller's lack of art, it may be said that whenever he varies from his originals he alters for the worse and often succeeds in spoiling scenes or characters. There can be no dissent from the opinion that this is about the most outrageous instance of lack of reverence for two great masters and of the length to which a would-be improver of Shakespeare will go.

There is no better example of the fatuity of attempting to circumscribe the romantic drama by the artificial rules of the classical drama than the revision now to be considered, the two tragedies which Sheffield made out of 'Julius Cæsar.'

John Sheffield, Earl of Mulgrave, Marquis of Normanby, and Duke of Buckinghamshire, was a man and writer of no little reputation in his day. He was an intimate friend of, and even a co-worker with, Dryden, who spoke of him as 'Sharp-judging Adriel, the Muses' friend. Himself a muse,' and who dedicated to him his 'Auranzebe' and his translation of the *Æneid*. He was also a friend of Pope, who 'at the command of His Grace,' wrote two of the choruses in the Duke's second play. Of course, living in the age that he did, he would be likely to be a thoroughgoing classicist, and those who have read his verse *Essay on Poetry* will not need to be told that he was in accord with his time. This being the case, one can readily anticipate that, when he set to work to alter 'Julius Cæsar,' he would have the intention of making it 'regular' if possible, and such we find to be the spirit in which his revision was made.

His alterations were never acted, but were published by his duchess in 1722, after his death. In order to observe the unities and to bring Shakespeare's play into harmony with the classical form, he divided it, as has been said, into two plays, which he called '*The Tragedy of Julius Cæsar*' and '*The Death of Marcus Brutus*,' and furnished each with a prologue and choruses. In the prologue to the first play, he says,

'Hope to mend Shakespeare! or to match his style!  
'Tis such a jest would make a stoic smile.  
Too fond of fame, our poet soars too high;  
Yet freely owns he wants the wings to fly;  
That he confesses while he does the fault.'

If such was his real opinion we wonder at his vanity in undertaking this well-nigh impossible task. Sheffield is so solicitous lest anyone should think he neglects to observe the unity of time, that he is careful to state that the play begins the day before Cæsar's death and ends within an hour after it.

The alterations in the plot of the first play are slight, but the diction is much changed and there is a good deal of Sheffield's own poetry. In the First Act, all the low comedy is omitted and the offering of the crown is

made a part of the action. In Act II, the scene between Brutus and Portia is transformed into an insipid love dialogue. Calphurnia is omitted in Act III, the ill omens being reported by the priests. Act IV is without change as to action. Brutus's address is turned into blank verse and the Fifth Act ends with Antony's address, the opening lines of which are worth quoting as an example of Sheffield's improvement upon Shakespeare.

'Friends, countrymen, and Romans, hear me gently;  
I come to bury Cæsar, not to praise him.  
Lo here the fatal end of all his glory:  
The evil that men do, lives after them;  
The good is often bury'd in their graves;  
So let it be with Cæsar. Noble Brutus  
Has told you Cæsar was ambitious:  
If he was so, then he was much to blame;  
And he has dearly paid for his offense.  
I come to do my duty to dead Cæsar.'

The second tragedy, having but two acts of the original to draw upon, called for much additional material. Accordingly the Duke introduces several new characters, as Theodotus, a philosopher; Dolabella; Varius, a young Roman, bred at Athens; and Junia, wife of Cassius and sister of Brutus. In reality, an almost entirely new play is manufactured, as the first three acts are entirely Sheffield's, and although the substance of the fourth and fifth acts is Shakespeare's, the words are the Duke's. Many variations are made even when the scenes are founded on Shakespeare. For instance, instead of Pindarus unwillingly holding the sword for Cassius to run upon, the servant kills himself, after which his master, encouraged by his example, or reproached by it, stabs himself. This is precisely as in the case of Eros and Antony, in 'Antony and Cleopatra,' which probably suggested the change here.

The scene lies at Athens in the first three acts and near Philippi in the last two. The Duke apologizes for thus violating the unity of place:

'Our scene is Athens:  
But here our author, besides other faults  
Of ill expressions and of vulgar thoughts,  
Commits one crime that needs an act of grace  
And breaks the law of unity of place.'



Truly an audacious thing to do! The unity of time, however, we are informed, has been preserved, for the play begins the day before the battle of Philippi and ends with that event. Here the Duke's solicitude has made him absurdly inconsistent, for the movements could not be made from Athens to Philippi in the time, nor could Cassius get back in twenty-four hours from Sardis, where Junia says he has gone. Probably his grace did not look into the geography of his scene, which is unpardonable in so great a stickler for correctness.

This is the only attempt to give a play of Shakespeare's a strictly classical form, and no reader of the Duke's plays will have any doubt as to the superiority of Shakespeare's treatment. The best excuse for Sheffield's two plays lies in Shakespeare's duality of heroes. But Brutus is the one upon whom Shakespeare meant to fix the greatest attention, and his purpose is to show how Brutus's misfortunes come as the result of his one error in assassinating Cæsar—doing evil that good may come. Shakespeare's reason for not ending his play with the murder of Cæsar appears in the words of Brutus over Cassius's body:

'O Julius Cæsar, thou art mighty yet!  
Thy spirit walks abroad and turns our swords  
In our own proper entrails.'

But the critics, among them the Duke, did not see this in their shortsightedness.

The battle between the classicists and the romanticists over the unities has been fought and the victory lies with the latter, so there is no necessity for a discussion of them here. Suffice it to say that the attempt to make over Shakespeare's play so as to conform to them has resulted in a very bad alteration of it. Sheffield's inconsistency has been pointed out, and when, besides his violence to the construction of the play, he has so spoiled the verse, as the sample given abundantly testifies, we can have nothing but contempt for his misguided efforts.

There are several other versions that might properly claim a place in an article dealing with curious ones. Indeed, so many of them belong more or less to this category that it is difficult to choose among them. But a stop must be made somewhere, and so I have fixed upon Otway's *Caius Marius* as the last I shall describe. This play, which is, strictly, not a version of Shakespeare at all but a borrowing, or rather a theft, from him,

certainly bears a highly curious relation to 'Romeo and Juliet,' from which it is in part taken.

That Otway, who, at his best, could produce the finest tragedies of his age, should stoop to commit such a literary crime as this play exhibits — he says himself that he has 'rifled him [Shakespeare] of half a play' — can be explained only as due to the exigency of his pecuniary affairs.

The quarrel between Marius and Sulla doubtless occurred to him as a suitable subject for a tragedy and, having, as usual, to write for bread, he was probably anxious to have his play ready at the earliest possible moment. The feud between the houses of Montague and Capulet being familiar to him, he evidently, in an evil moment, conceived the idea of transferring its incidents to the enmity between the partisans of Marius and those of Sulla, and of making use also of as much of Shakespeare's dialogue as his plan permitted. 'To such low shifts, of late,' says he, by way of apology, 'are poets worn.'

In treating of this strange hodgepodge of Shakespeare and Roman history, I shall pay attention only to the Shakespearean portions, as being those that come within the scope of my subject. As to the character of the parts of the play which are Otway's own, no more need be said than that they follow fairly closely the historical facts.

Caius Marius is represented as having a son, Marius Junior, who is in love with Lavinia, daughter of Metellus. The last is a partisan of Sulla and wishes his chief to be his son-in-law. This device affords opportunity to introduce several scenes and many passages from 'Romeo and Juliet.' The greater part of the Nurse's character is retained and Sulpitius uses some of Mercutio's speeches.

The First Act is almost all Otway's. A mangled form of the description of Queen Mab is spoken by Sulpitius. In the Second Act, Metellus expresses to Lavinia his desire that she should be married, as Lady Capulet does to Juliet; most of the Nurse's lines appear, but in prose, and Metellus speaks some of Capulet's lines in III., 5, of 'Romeo and Juliet.' Sulpitius conjures for Marius Junior, as Mercutio for Romeo in Shakespeare, and then follows the garden scene between Marius Junior and Lavinia, most of the lines being taken from Shakespeare. The Third Act includes considerable of 'Romeo and Juliet': Lavinia's nurse comes to young Marius and is quizzed by Sulpitius; Lavinia speaks Juliet's soliloquy in III., 2;

and then comes a scene between her and the Nurse, somewhat as in Shakespeare's II., 5. In the Fourth Act about twenty lines of Shakespeare's III., 5 are introduced in the parting scene between Marius Junior and Lavinia, the Priest of Hymen gives her a sleeping potion, she speaks some lines from IV., 1, and, after the priest goes out, Juliet's soliloquy in IV., 3. Shakespeare is again laid under a heavy contribution in Otway's last act. The Nurse discovers Lavinia apparently dead, Marius Junior hears of her death, soliloquizes as in Shakespeare, and buys poison of an apothecary. At the tomb young Marius kills the priest, not knowing who he is, and drinks the poison, but before he dies Lavinia awakes. She later kills herself, and the play ends with some lines, partly Mercutio's, spoken by Sulpitius.

From this brief account of the relation of Otway's play to Shakespeare's it will be seen that Otway speaks truly when he declares he has pilfered half a play. He makes some changes in the passages he steals, in the way of abridgement, and to some of the scenes he follows he adds considerable of his own.

It is not worth while to waste any time or words upon such a contemptible piece of thieving as this. It would seem as if Otway might have found material enough for a play without resorting to such an expedient. The only redeeming feature of it all is that he had sufficient good sense not to alter greatly what he stole, but this scarcely makes his sin the less.

His main change, the restoration of Lavinia to consciousness before Marius Junior dies, is pronounced by Genest to be an improvement, and this device is retained in Theophilus Gibber's version and in Garrick's, and the revision of the latter by Kemble. Whether it heightens the pathos of the situation or not is a debatable question. It may make it a little more tragic, but it seems almost too much piling on of agony to make Romeo discover that he has poisoned himself unnecessarily.

# MR. HOWELLS' PHILOSOPHY AND 'THE SON OF ROYAL LANGBRITH.'

BY E. S. CHAMBERLAYNE

**M**R. HOWELLS has attained the distinction which some few living writers in each generation share with the phenomena of nature, the distinction of being criticised, even, if you will, of being roundly abused, as the weather is, for example, and of being, at the same time, artistically almost as indispensable, almost as much taken for granted, as the weather itself. No late riser, hurrying to his office after a bad night, is of too mean a spirit to fling his jibe at the day's excess of heat or cold or wet, and to feel himself somehow made more righteous by so doing. And in much the same way the mean spirited thinkers of the hour, dyspeptic from gorging at the 'quick lunch' counters of fiction, turn to Mr. Howells with a grumble or a complaint that is, in its essence, merely a recognition of the position he has attained. For Mr. Howells has become one of the chief elements in our American literary weather. One may say at once that one doesn't like the climate — which makes it obviously open to one to move — but so long as one lives, intellectually, in America it is essential to a certain very desirable quality of mind that one accept Mr. Howells, with all his limitations, in the same philosophical spirit in which one meets the trifling infelicities of our peculiar American climate.

And in recent years he has given us nothing that so well repays a critical acceptance as the vision of himself that appears in his latest novel. In 'The Son of Royal Langbrith,' he has produced, perhaps without intention, a tragedy. I fancy, indeed, that if he ever wrote what was tragic in the objective, dramatic sense it would be more or less despite his conscious purpose. For he shrinks, artistically, from frankly grappling with problems that for the ordinary novelist exercise a sort of fascination. The tragedies of life, for Mr. Howells, one very well knows, are far more subtle, far more delicate things than such crude dramatic expressions of life as fill the newspaper and the more cheaply popular novel. But in the story of Dr. Anther he has found one of the oldest forms of popular tragedy. And though he has treated it, of necessity, in the manner peculiar to himself, he has not robbed it of its essentially tragic elements.



It may be Mr. Howells's misfortune — it is certainly his charm — that his attitude toward life is rarely quite his reader's attitude, is perhaps rarely the attitude of his countrymen, of his contemporaries. And for this, however roughly it may occasionally rub his sensibilities, we must be selfishly grateful. For, though we in America still are, and may always be, too immature, in a literary sense, to view life as he views it, we are far from wishing him to view it as we do. It is not in the least necessary to agree with Mr. Howells — or, so far as that goes, of course, with any man — in order thoroughly to like him. We do thoroughly like him, and, if one may venture to guess, this is perhaps just because we so little agree with him.

One rarely realizes it, one perhaps never fully appreciates it, and yet in a sense it is true, that the chief appeal of any art lies less in its technical excellence, less in what we have come to consider its objective truth or beauty, than in a kind of subtle self-expression of the artist. There is a great deal of talk — most of it very idle talk — about the technique of this or the other school of expression. Realism, romanticism, impressionism: the terms cover a deal of careless thinking. But, in effect, what we call style or manner is no more than the dress in which an artist arrays himself. And dress, however expressive of self, is always a relative thing. We don't make friends with a man's clothes. In a word, there is in every work of art something besides beauty, something besides truth. There is in it always an artist. For it is a fact, though we have so far accepted it as only a theory, that landscape painting actually may be the expression of one's emotions in the presence of nature. And Mr. Henry James, I believe, has somewhere given us the corollary of this, that fiction is the novelist's impression of life. The books in which foreigners record their impressions of a country are always received in opposite ways by the two classes into which their readers are divided. Those who are ignorant of the country turn to the writer for a knowledge of what he has seen; those who are well informed turn to the things he has seen for a knowledge of the writer.

The novelist, of course, is merely a traveler who gives us from time to time his impressions of the world through which he is passing. And when we turn to any well-liked writer — as we turn to Mr. Howells in his recent novel — we fancy that we seek some expression of truth or beauty, or seek, it may be, just a picture of life itself. But in reality we never do seek these. Though perhaps unconsciously, it is always the writer that we seek, always

the writer alone that we find. If there is truth or beauty it is largely the truth or beauty of the artist's mind, the truth or beauty of that mystery we call personality. We know Shakespeare's heart far better than we know the life men lived under Elizabeth of England. The great Russians have revealed themselves far more clearly than they have revealed the manners of their countrymen. We know the mind of Balzac; we only doubt and question now his picture of the time in which he lived.

And this is true, with all respect, of Mr. Howells. One might say of him, as is often said of clever women, that it is easy to disagree with him, but impossible not to like him. Some of us disagreed with him about Silas Lapham, and many, many of us, I fear, disagreed with him about the daughters of that ill-fated paint merchant. We should like to be able now, some of us, to look forward a few years to the time when Lapham's granddaughters, fresh from college and a year abroad, should settle down in one of Boston's 'younger sets.' Lapham was so typically an American of the better sort that we take it a little hard he should not still stand for us in his representative capacity, as so related to one of these 'younger sets.' But we do not take it hard that Mr. Howells in this earlier work has given us so clear a vision of his literary personality. America can very well endure the loss of the finest product of Lapham's million, the modern American girl — we have her, as it is, in such abundance — but the America of today, and more, one fancies, the America of tomorrow, could ill endure the loss to its letters of this expression of the strong, kind, sane spirit we all admire.

And some of us again, I fear, as we finish the tragic story of Dr. Anther in this later novel, will feel constrained to disagree with Mr. Howells about that admirable old New England village doctor. We want to feel that life would have treated him more kindly than Mr. Howells has treated him. We want to make ourselves believe that he would have had something finer than the peace of acquiescence to fill his final hours when fate denied his love. We would have had him suffer. Surely the love of so fine a nature as his was worthy a little suffering. He was to die, it seems, in any event, and end it all. Peace was so poor a thing to give him. He deserved better of life than that.

And yet, in this novel we have Mr. Howells as we perhaps have not so fully, have not so clearly had him in any work since he revealed the breadth and tolerance of his mind in 'The Rise of Silas Lapham.' And, in truth,

it is constantly with his literary personality as here revealed, and not with the pictured life of this small New England village, that we find ourselves most concerned. His picture of village life interests us, the ethical problem he discusses through his characters is always an attractive one, the somewhat prosaic love affair of Dr. Anther compels a measure of acceptance which Mr. Howells's more prosaic love affairs have not always done. But in the end the chief interest and certainly the lasting value of the work will be found in its self-revelation of the author.

The middle-aged doctor in 'The Son of Royal Langbrith' loves a widow who lacks the courage to tell her son that his father was a scoundrel, and so to win for herself the young man's sanction for the second marriage that, as it is, the boy's ignorant worship of his father's memory would make a sacrilege. The ostensible problem of the tale is the ethical question whether the truth should be told about the man who is believed in the village to have been a worthy character, the question whether, from largely selfish motives, one should ever set in motion moral forces that might prove, however slightly or subtly, of evil effect. The problem is treated as only Mr. Howells could treat it, and Dr. Anther's conclusion that he is not justified in bending the weak will of the woman he loves to compass the end they both desire becomes, with some reservations, the reader's own.

The ethical problem is satisfactorily solved; but there appears to be still a question unanswered. And it is in the answer to this question that one finds the heart of Mr. Howells's philosophy. Dr. Anther is the hero of the novel. The widow's son, with his blind worship of his unworthy father, is merely one of the implements fate has used to thwart the Doctor's love. The real problem seems only to be fairly stated when this first and superficial question has been settled. For the real problem, the question toward which the current of the story has been setting from the first, is the old, old question of the human will in its relation to destiny. What shall be a man's attitude toward the Power that thwarts his will? Anther is not a great personage. There is no glitter and tinsel about him, very little even of cleverness and worldly knowledge in his composition; though Mr. Howells has seen in him a slightly clearer, more refined intelligence than Lapham required for his career. But the world-old tragedy is as truly stated in this prosaic, middle-aged man with his love for a weak and simple woman as in any dramatic philosopher or poet of the past. For none of the vital things



of life is primarily a matter of expression. No man, were he poet or clown, ever found speech that would rightly express his love; and the tragedy of life is as real in the private of the Guard, crushed and dying in the ditch, as in the emperor, riding off into the night with the bitterness of Waterloo upon his heart. Men of duller vision have rebuked Mr. Howells for not giving his problems a broader, more vivid statement; as though love and life, purpose and failure and death were matters of mere expression and somehow lost their essence when not stated in courtly phrases.

It is not, however, the particular expression he has here chosen that so arrests attention. The life he pictures is much like that of his other novels. The New England villagers and the young Harvard men seem as true, as like to life, as thoroughly natural, in a word, as any of the long line of those that have come before them. There is even discernible in the impalpable medium in which they move a kind of scent — one would not like to call it a fragrance — as though the moral essence of long generations of Puritan consciences, slowly drying and hardening, had permeated the atmosphere, as in some localities one detects, faint and delicate and by no means disagreeable, the distant suggestion of dried and salted cod. The casual reader may esteem the Doctor's love story but slightly; and, indeed, if the casual reader be young — as she is likely to be — she may even fancy that the undisciplined Harvard student, with his own little love affair, is the center of interest. But the story is the story of Dr. Anther; and we follow with appreciation the vision of his struggle, as he gropes, dumb and blind, amid the shadows of desire — as, in degree, we all must do — until he wins his way to the one right course that fate has allotted him. And yet, there is in the novel something more engrossing than even this view of Anther's tragedy. It is, in a word, just the expression, in this new form, of the view that Mr. Howells takes, artistically, of all that is tragic.

Perhaps a man's personality never anywhere gets quite so clear a statement as in his attitude toward the tragedy of life. We have all smiled fondly over the pages of Victor Hugo. That delightful soul meets the tragic with a Gallic zest and lightness that somehow are always suggestive of Hotspur killing his seven men before breakfast and coming in to complain to his wife that life is dull. Victor Hugo turns to the tragic as some men turn to play or to high finance, for the very joy of the game. Hawthorne, on the other hand, one might fancy, sought the tragedy of life because,



dreaming, moody, long shut unnaturally within himself, only the tragic in life could furnish objective forms for the shadows that had gathered in the disused chambers of his soul. Mr. Howells turns to the tragic, if at all, as in this recent novel, with an air of reluctance, as though under compulsion of his exacting literary conscience. But he meets it, when found, with a philosophy as far removed from the self-centered gloom of his countryman as it is from the impersonal, almost sprightly gloom of the great Frenchman. In fact, artistically, there is for Mr. Howells practically no gloom in life. He has been touched by the serenity and tolerance of age. He has come into the secret of content. Life, for him, holds tragedies, of course; but they are so, one sees, only because men fail of the right view of life. For what is bitterness in them may be transmuted into serenity and peace, into even joy and happiness of a kind, if one but has this secret. And in 'The Son of Royal Langbrith' Dr. Anther has the ill fortune to receive this secret from Mr. Howells.

Dr. Anther, in a word, wins peace, not as we all may in the kind embrace of Time, which gave us birth, but at once — on the spot, as one may say — by the simple expedient of abandoning, not alone the woman he loves, but his love as well. His sudden tranquillity comes to one with the effect of a shock. And if, in the end, the atmosphere of the story is one of gloom, it is an atmosphere born less of the Doctor's death than of the deeper tragedy of the death of his love. For his love dies with the birth of his peace; he may not realize it, it is open to question whether Mr. Howells realized it, but it dies as surely, almost as dramatically, as the Doctor himself does.

For it is not in love to abandon its object without suffering. Peace comes with time, not with renunciation. To love, in such a case as this, is inevitably to suffer. And what, indeed, one asks, is suffering, what unendurable thing is it, that it should be escaped at such a cost? After all, love is the stuff that life is made of. Philosophy and the calm serenity of age are doubtless well in their way; but their way is not the way of youth. And youth, as it happens, is the abiding element of life. The world never grows old. Men are always at the beginning. Through the ages they have been pushing their slow way into the shadows of the Unknown. The way looks long in the retrospect. But the Mystery they search is boundless, and they stand today where they stood yesterday, where they will stand tomorrow, where, in effect, they will always stand, at the threshold of life. It is idle

for age to tell them it has found the way of peace, has discovered an escape from suffering. Who wishes to escape? Not youth, surely. Not love. What does youth reckon of suffering? And love—love is not love without suffering. There are many finer things in life than peace. Oh, if one comes to that, there are many finer things in life than the wisdom and serenity of age. There are, for example, the blunders and the follies of youth, the blind struggles of ignorance and weakness, the inevitable failure of the dreams of love and their eternal rebirth. These things are finer, for it is upon these that the structure of human life, like the ocean coral, is slowly reared.

It is the failing of common men to view life only in its relation to themselves; they fail to see life whole and themselves as only factors. The child wonders for what purpose curious bugs and insects are created. And men look upon trees and plants and animals only as ministering in some way to themselves. It never occurs to them that an oak, for instance, or a toy spaniel, may exist primarily for itself. It is only the artist who sees all life as so existing; for it is only beauty that translates these alien forms of being into terms that men can comprehend. Science and philosophy fail in this, for they are bounded by reason; and the mystery of the spirit that is in all life is never revealed to the mind alone. No mere intellectual effort will ever bring us into the heart of another personality. Love will do it for the individual; and art, closer always to love than to philosophy, will do it for the race. Men of a certain temper view woman as always something relative to man; they see her as the loved mistress or as wife and mother, but in all other ways they see her as only a kind of inferior man. But the true literary artist never compares her; he lets her stand alone and be herself. He shows to cruder, duller minds the vision of her beauty; and common men, touched by this vision, may know her, if they will, as she is.

It is the same with many of the common things of life; they lie so close about us that we never think of looking at them as other than related to ourselves. We see the life of the average person in terms of the life we live, or of the life we aspire to live, and so turn from it. And when an artist with so fine a feeling as Mr. Howells takes these seemingly inferior forms of life and reveals their essential truth and beauty, he does us a service that we cannot appreciate too highly. For art, after all, is far more true, far more enduring, than any philosophy of life.

In fact, though Mr. Howells's philosophy is so sane and kind and sure an element in his work, it is his artistic vision that makes the stronger appeal. We see this in the conclusion of the present story. Mrs. Langbrith, as he sees her, is perhaps as weak a woman as any he has shown us, just as Dr. Anther is one of his finest, strongest men. But Mr. Howells whispers no philosophical secret to the woman in her distress; he leaves her to life and to her woman's nature. And these deal with her far more kindly, leave her more consistent with herself, leave her, in a word, by her very suffering and grief, closer to the reader's sympathies than her lover's dearly bought tranquillity leaves him. She has been weak, throughout the story, where he is strong, weak in will, weak perhaps in mind; but in the end she shows some evidence of the woman's strength that has been latent in her, shows at least the woman's power to love and to suffer. And the reader knows that this, however crude her expression of it, is as fine a thing as the man's strength he has been earlier asked to view.

It is easy to say that Mr. Howells would make a deeper appeal if his artistic vision of life were less obscured by the rosy clouds of his philosophy. But that is merely saying that if he were not Mr. Howells he would obviously be someone else. And, in truth, we do not want him other than he is. The American climate has various admittable infelicities, but on the whole it suits the American temper. And more than that, it bears its part — perhaps no small one — in forming this temper, of which in a modest way we sometimes boast. We grumble about our climate now and then, but our fault finding is itself of the whimsical American kind which only foreigners ever make the blunder of taking seriously. It is, after all, our climate and no one's else; we may say of it what we will. But let no alien raise a voice against it. It must not be touched with ungentle hand; it is something essentially American and therefore not to be profaned. And so the younger generation makes rather free with Mr. Howells, as the way of younger generations mostly is. They recognize certain infelicities in his work; but he, too, suits their temper, else he could not have had so large, though of course so unacknowledged, a share in forming it. But let no man who is not, artistically, his countryman raise a voice against him. He is not to be profaned by alien touch. He is ours and no one's else. For he, too, in what is faulty, as in what is finest, truest, best, is essentially American.



# LIFE AND LETTERS

**T**HE PLAY given in this number of POET LORE by that remarkable new Russian, Maxim Gorki, is his latest dramatic production, and is given here, so far as we can ascertain, for the first time in English. It follows upon the play of slum life, known to some of our readers, doubtless, through the German version, called 'Nachtasyl.' (For an exhaustive *critique* of this new writer, see the article on him in POET LORE, Autumn number, 1904.) This current piece is an illustration of quite another phase of Russian life, among the class calling itself the 'Intellectuals,' and it portrays this class in the haunt it loves, the summer cottages of the forest country surrounding St. Petersburg.

The piece well exemplifies the singularity of Gorki's art and the characteristically serious purpose animating it.

Judged by the usual dramatic standards as to plot, construction, and movement, this piece would be sentenced at a first glance as desperately chaotic. It may also be observed, however, that it does not profess to be a 'Drama,' but merely 'Scenes.' And these 'Scenes' exhibit characters and dialogue of an extraordinarily present-moment quality, realistic to the utmost degree of the desultory and just-as-it-comes variety.

With all its longwinded, irrelevant caprice of talk, its fitfulness in the 'relating' of groups and persons, and the fragmentariness of what coherence there is among them toward any unified outcome, the play, as a whole, amounts to an exposition of Russian social frivolity in the class called in England the 'upper middle' class. It is an exposition made by a faithful and patriotic, although a

keenly cynical literary artist, who probes to heal.

Despite the eccentric method, gradually the reader catches the artistic and ethical clew to this dramatic labyrinth. This play without method has yet a method in its lack of method. This play without design has this design—drift. It is the drift of discontented idlers, restlessly amusing themselves on the brink of social revolution. Some two or three of them are half aware of the evil day ahead and the ill-spent days now passing. All of them are more or less unconsciously affected by a lurking suspicion of their own superficialness, and these clever and susceptible but materially-minded 'Summer-folk,' cultivating their leisurely pleasures so epicureanly in fair weather, and so readily clashed into ridiculous and contemptible discord at the first rough thrust breaking in upon the smooth surface of their days, are so to the life shown to us that we are inclined to sum them up unfeelingly, at the end, as Shalimoff is made to sum them up in the closing sentence of these 'Scenes' from Russian life. Then we realize the grim pathos implied, and that Gorki has most skilfully led us to think of them as a swarm of drifting summer flies beginning to buzz prodigiously with apprehension because they are destined to be swept from the face of the earth at the approach of serious winter-weather life in Russia, and to be succeeded by the stronger people of a new Russia.

The strange piece is not without its significance as reflected upon somewhat similar conditions of socially-selfish life in this and other countries.

BROWNING'S 'Blot on the Scutcheon,' when put on the stage, has a straightfor-



ward power to move the heart. Its emotions are as pure and simple as any presented by Herne in his plays of American domestic life, such, for example, as 'Griffith Davenport.' Beside Browning's play the sophisticated passions of most other modern stage pieces appear elaborately conscious and grown up. On the other hand, the unashamed directness of Shakespeare's Ferdinand and Miranda, whose 'fire i' th' blood' is openly curbed by Prospero's wisdom and magic, seem primitive and far away.

Shakespeare's lovers are, indeed, related to Browning's in the simple directness of youthful love, but they live on an enchanted isle, girdled about with the fair unrealities of fancy; while Browning's live in England, the formal, stately, substantial England of the eighteenth century.

The wooing of Richard Feverel and Lucy is comparable in its morning quality to the love surprising Mertoun and Mildred. And the conflict of the later happiness of Meredith's youthful pair with the insidious rigidities of English social custom, although in detail so different, is not unlike the conflict of the future married happiness of Mildred with the social codes of honor armed against her in the ideals of her brother, whose whole life has been devoted to holding up the head of his family. He holds it up with so supreme a pose that it is bound to draw down upon it at some time unruly Nature's tragic laughter. The time arrives and makes the drama of the 'Blot.'

The complexity of Browning's play comes in, thus, through the social situation which shapes the tragic climax. Criticism of that climax as unnecessary is likely to be due to a failure to understand that the antithesis is designedly and realistically drawn between the pure simplicity of human nature in the lovers

and the complexity of social nature embodied in Tresham. He is the flower of a consummate social perfection, entirely true as an ideal both to his time and character.

The falsity in its application, when it condemns his sister and blights her future, he is certainly intelligent enough to detect as soon as he learns from Mertoun's lips that he, the suitor, is the clandestine lover. Yet this enlightening word, which might have averted his sword and spoiled the tragedy, is just what turns the rage of Tresham's righteousness from Mildred upon Mertoun, and causes him to let fall the stroke that makes the tragedy.

The Poet is unerring in precipitating the fatality then, because the obscure pressure of the ages, and the secret compulsion of race, are necessarily beforehand with reason at such a moment and prompt in the blood. And also, because all the reason and character in Tresham have until then been loyally applied toward making him the liege creature, the professed standard-bearer of the bequeathed family pride, whose momentum alone would drive him its own way for a time, although he were to see clear, as he does, by the lightning stroke of his own action, an instant later.

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IN the production of 'The Blot,' by Mrs. Sarah Cowell Lemoyne last spring, opening in New York April 7th, at the Hudson Theatre, in Boston May 15th, at the Park Theatre, the simpler aspects of the play were irresistible in their effect upon the appreciation of the audience. The complexer aspects, dependent upon what may be called the social atmosphere, and demanding a high degree of artistic excellence in the conception and of finish in the acting, were not so satisfactorily rendered. The Tresham of Mr. W.

Beach succeeded in expressing the simpler touches of brotherly tenderness, and also the more external truths of the demeanor required for the interplay with the old retainer, Gerard, a character part acted to perfection by Mr. Theo Hamilton. The heroics, too, of the passage at arms with Mertoun in the great scene under Mildred's window, were extremely effective. He was decidedly unsuccessful in portraying the stately habits of idealism belonging to the character and the social atmosphere. These habits of idealism are dramatically important, almost essential, in this play, since they do not belong merely to external etiquette and deportment, valuable as they are pictorially there also. They have sunk deep. They have become religious in Tresham's breast, building up within him the master-motive and infatuation on which the tragic situation rests.

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BROWNING'S characters are not apt to be 'in the air.' They usually belong to an ascertainable social environment. Historical study may well be spent upon them. And this is one of the things which make it so interesting and so difficult to do them justice, and which also make it so well worth while. The human nature and life in them are doubly real in being true to each single character and to the social atmosphere and social relations in which they move.

The scene in which Mertoun asks Tresham for his sister's hand was disappointing. The characters did not belong to their century, and their pictorial costumes only made them seem the more made-up and dressed for some society masked function. The historic illusion the plot requires was not satisfied.

For the soliloquy scene under the oaks, too, a Tresham organically capable of thinking and feeling as Tresham thought

and felt then, is peculiarly requisite.

These were the least perfectly realized portions of scenes in many other respects admirably filled.

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MILDRED'S nature and character seemed almost ideally incarnate in Miss Grace Elliston's still and grave ingenuousness. She showed in her personation just the last and ripest phase of a youthfulness still mere girlhood while bordering on the mature, and a character precociously intelligent, but quite devoid of the external sprightliness and buoyant shrewdness so generally belonging, for example, to modern American girlhood. The English type imagined by Browning suits just this well-rounded statuesqueness, just this unslim sort of maidenliness. And his inner situation requires just such a highly organized, high-minded, and sensitive, yet phlegmatic and docile nature, to make us see why she was so stunned, so hopeless and helpless beneath the threat of her fate. She would be naturally slow to distrust or criticize conventional ideals of life and honor upheld by a loved brother. Even a younger Gwendolen of her time, much more a modern American girl, would be likelier to circumvent or control them instead of enduring them as Mildred did. But such a loyal, slow-sure heart sees wholly right when it does see. And when the tragic blow falls, it finds, through the spiritual illumination of its own steadfast love, just such divine words as Mildred's to say in place of any harsh judgment or resentment.

Miss Elliston's beautiful voice and repressed manner, even in a certain effect of teachableness and lack of independent vigor which they occasionally betrayed, were almost as well adjusted as her person to create the illusion which the character of Mildred requires.

Her selection and training for the interpretation, so well given, speak highly for Mrs. Lemoyné's cultured judgment. So, in fact, does the whole play. It owed life and inspiration to her management. No hearer could fail to thank her with enthusiasm for so poetic a presentment of a charming play. Some of the clumsy subterfuges resorted to in the Barrett stage version must have rendered it more stagey instead of more stageable. Mrs. Lemoyné's version will have proved this, once for all. No succeeding manager will think it needful, for example, to transfer the final dialogue between Mildred and Tresham from Mildred's chamber, where it is manifestly suitable it should be, to the park, for the sake of inducing Mildred to guess that Tresham has slain Mertoun from seeing her lover's cloak lying on the grass, instead of from feeling it in her brother's manner when he comes to her, and proving it by seeing his empty scabbard.

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MRS. LEMOYNÉ'S own fulfillment of the part of Gwendolen was not so adequate in personal presentment, quality of voice, and repose of manner as in the vivacious intelligence of shades of meaning in her reading, and in her beautiful costuming. Perhaps Gwendolen, also, like Mr. Beach's Tresham and Mr. Albaugh's frank and boyish Mertoun, needed a more organic grounding on the ease of well-bred courtliness denoting the historic epoch of the play. Although incisively and unerringly intuitional, Browning's Gwendolen is one whose intuitions 'toy with the bow, yet hit the white.'

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'MARLOWE,' as played at the opening of the new theatre in the Elizabeth Cary

Agassiz House at Radcliffe College at Cambridge, June 19th and 20th, was a rare pleasure to witness. The title-rôle was played with distinction in impersonation and phrasing by Professor George P. Baker, and Mr. Lyman's versatile presentment of the tenderness and the fierce malignity required by the moodiness of the man who was Marlowe's evil genius, stood out in high relief.

The poetic value of this play, since it was printed a year or two ago, has become very well recognized. No stage presentation was needed to assure us of its delicate beauty, or even of the fragrance of the Elizabethan age enfolded in the conception of the characters and the pleasant fashioning of its phrases. This poetic beauty and this Elizabethan fragrance constituted an essential part of the unusual pleasure in seeing it put on the stage. The unassuming good taste and sufficiently scholarly care exercised in the details of setting and properties further marked it favorably above the few attempts made on the professional stage of late to produce any modern plays of such good literary quality. For when the public has been given pieces that could lay claim to being poetic, the result has been pretentious rather than finished.

Still, the main thing about Josephine Preston Peabody's 'Marlowe' was neither that it was gracefully acted or well produced, nor even that it was charming to heed and behold, but that it acted well and held the interest of the audience.

When compared in dramatic value, as in fairness it should be, with plays of its own poetic class, it must be admitted, by virtue of its stage trial, to stand better in breadth of qualities than Aldrich's 'Judith' or Phillips' 'Ulysses,' for it adds to the poetic value in which it is akin to these plays a firmer, better-



balanced stage construction, and a lighter sportive vein, showing a capacity for humor. The fourth act of the play reached its highest altitude; and in this act the supreme moment was one that summed up in a symbolic incident the character of Marlowe and his relation with Alyson. When the restless, insatiable Poet would quench his thirst, he renounces wine and will take from the hand of his adoring 'little Quietude' nothing but 'a cup of water.' This was, of course, an essentially poetic touch, figurative and subtle, but it was a poetry growing so directly from the vital situation, and this backed the symbol so obviously that it became a moving incident in the dramatic sense. It was felt, if not consciously realized, by the audience.

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RUSSIA'S condition of revolution has caused an upheaval which affects the world in art as well as in political significance. One of the first good results of this anarchy is an enforced acquaintance with Russian literature, music, and dramatic art.

The past spring season has brought a strange company of actors to America, who started without resources and without friends in the foreign lands they proposed to visit. Their errand was quixotic: Mr. Paul Orleeff proposed to carry all over the world a play called 'The Chosen People,' which sets forth the persecution of the Jews in Russia. It was proscribed by the censor. This play is an extraordinary one, covering the whole Jewish question and finding in the characters voices for Zionism, for amalgamation, for the Hebrew faith, for social democracy, for segregation, as the case may be. This discussion is dramatically interwoven with a simple story. The scene is in an old Jewish watchmaker's home. It deals with the old man, his

son and daughter, who are free-thinking university students, a Gentile who wishes to marry the girl, an ardent Zionist, his rival, a social democrat, and a prosperous Jewish physician, who stands for worldly success. It is a remarkable piece of work, both because of its art and of the art with which it was given. Mr. Paul Orleeff, who was bidden by Maxim Gorki to carry the drama abroad, plays the Zionist; Madame Alla Nasimoff, hailed during a short season in London as a Russian Duse, plays Lia, the Jewish girl; and a company of thirteen, under the admirable training of Orleeff, produced a piece of consistent art in which their personalities count for the parts they present. This has made of the construction of the play drawn by Tchirikoff a whole of remarkable texture. The technique of Orleeff as stage manager, after his career of twenty years in Russia, fuses his materials into a single expression. There is no question of a melodramatic appeal to the audience. The 'fourth wall' is there. It is life, simple and without self-consciousness, which the audience may see as if by a strange chance. The American habit of theatricalism is absolutely absent.

In addition to this play the Orleeff company has given five others: 'Crime and Punishment' and 'Karamasoff Brothers' by Dostoievsky; 'Ghosts' by Ibsen; 'Feodor Ivanovitch' by Count Alexis Tolstoi; 'Misfortune' by Androvitch; and 'Countess Julie' by August Strindberg. The latter was a benefit for Madame Alla Nasimoff, a beautiful, strange little Russian, with a thrilling voice and a mingled method, in which the 'repressed' is colored at times by a really great emotional outburst.

Madame Nasimoff is returning from Russia in September with a new company, costumes which she has procured in Paris, and a repertory of thirty-two new



plays by both the Tolstoï, and by Gorki, Tchirikoff, Andreev, and others. The season to be given is arranged in series. An Ibsen series will be given, presenting plays not yet seen in America; a Mæterlinck series, and one each of Gorki, Tolstoï, Dostoievsky, Strindberg, Hauptmann, Südermann. The new play of Gorki, written in prison, 'The Children of the Sun,' will be produced among the novelties. Another will be the 'Salome' of Oscar Wilde.

A little theatre in East Third Street has been taken and is to be remodeled. Its patrons include many names among the prominent Russian Jews. After the first performance of 'The Chosen People' by the courtesy of Charles Frohman at the Herald Square Theatre, the company was obliged last season to continue its presentations at the various theatres on the Bowery, to which many American lovers of a superb dramatic art were content to make their pilgrimages.

F. B.

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FRENCH appreciation of Shakespeare is placed earlier than that of any other nation's critics by Monsieur Jusserand's citation in his 'History of English Literature' of the opinion of Nicholas Clement, librarian to Louis XIV, who between 1675 and 1684 catalogued the books of his master. Louis XIV possessed a copy of Shakespeare! There is no reason to suppose that he ever opened it. But his librarian had an opinion of the poet which is in the main favorable. 'This English poet,' he writes, 'has a fine imagination; his descriptions are true to nature, and he expresses himself with exquisite precision; but these fine qualities are marred by the rubbish with which his comedies are interlarded.' This criticism was never pub-

lished; it proves at least that the name of Shakespeare had reached France at the end of the seventeenth century. It was in 1694 that Addison made his list of the best English poets without including Shakespeare.

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A LOVE-LETTER of antiquity, perhaps the oldest in existence, dated by its erudite finders as belonging to 2200 B. C., has been discovered in Chaldea recently, at Sippara, the Sepharvoni of the Bible. The lady lived there, her correspondent in Babylon, and he writes on clay to her, hoping she may come to him in the month of festivals, called Marchesvan:

'To the lady, Kasbuya [little ewe] says Gimil Marduk [the favorite of Merodach] this: May the sun god of Marduk afford you eternal life. I write wishing that I may know how your health is. Oh, send me a message about it. I live in Babylon and have not seen you, and for this reason I am very anxious. Send me a message that will tell me when you will come to me, so that I may be happy. Come in Marchesvan. May you live long for my sake.'

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IN the old French of Benoît's 'Roman de Troie,' F. M. Warren, in a recent number of the *Modern Language Notes*, asks his scientific colleagues if they cannot recognize an image of the new-discovered substance, radium:

'Une pierre ot enz alumee  
Dont il n'ist flambe ne fumeé;  
Sanz descroistre art et nuit et jor;  
Granz est li feus de sa cholor.'

— vv. 14825-14828.

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# THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

**T**HE edition of this number of *Poet Lore* is the largest ever printed. It will reach many new readers, and we hope gain many new friends; the great majority of *Poet Lore's* old subscribers are its friends as well. Most of them have watched it through all its years and phases, they have seen its growth and gradual expansion and are, we hope, gratified to see the magazine as it is today, in the perfect flower of fulfilled ideals.

\* \* \*

To our new friends we would explain a little. Unlike the majority of magazines, *Poet Lore* is not made with the main eye on the advertising returns, neither is it designed for the great general public. Instead, it is meant for those few who can appreciate a magazine which is, in the highest sense, *A Magazine of Letters*, and which for sixteen years has maintained an editorial standard of excellence not even attempted by any other American periodical. In an age characterized as commercial, and in a country where the sign of the dollar is the crest of nobility, such an attitude is, in itself, an achievement.

\* \* \*

THIS number is a fair sample of what others will be, although it will be our endeavor to continue the constant improvement hitherto shown in the magazine. If you are interested in this issue we are sure you will be in future numbers and we shall be glad to receive all subscriptions with the understanding that the full price will be refunded to any dis-

satisfied subscriber. We do not see how it is possible to make a fairer offer than this.

\* \* \*

It is entirely contrary to our custom to distribute free samples, but if you have any friends whom you think would be interested in *Poet Lore*, we shall be glad to send them a copy with our compliments. It seems to us that no one really interested in modern letters can see one copy of *Poet Lore* without wishing to see it regularly.

\* \* \*

WITH the present number is established a new department, RECENT GERMAN CRITICISM, under the direction of Professor Paul H. Grumann of the University of Nebraska. A large number of scholars have been secured as contributors, and considerable space will be devoted regularly to this work, which it is our intention to render of distinct value to those interested in German literature. The department will cover the whole field of German literature, although special attention will be devoted to recent movements.

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EVERY reader of *Poet Lore* will be particularly interested in one of our new books for this fall, *Alterations and Adaptations of Shakespeare*, by Frederick W. Kilbourne, Ph.D. A small portion of this work has already been printed in *Poet Lore* — "Some Curious Versions of Shakespeare" in the present number being one of the articles — but the main part of the work is now published for the first time. It is a book that no lover or student of Shakespeare can afford to overlook.







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