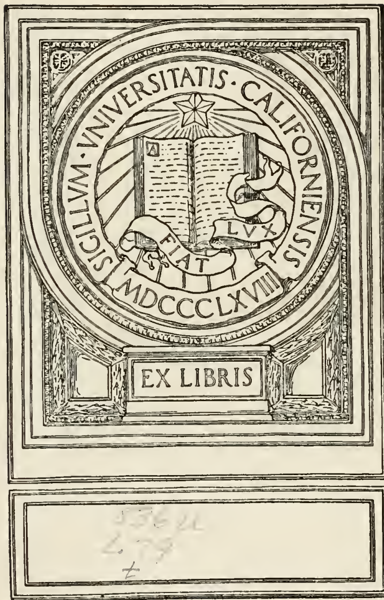
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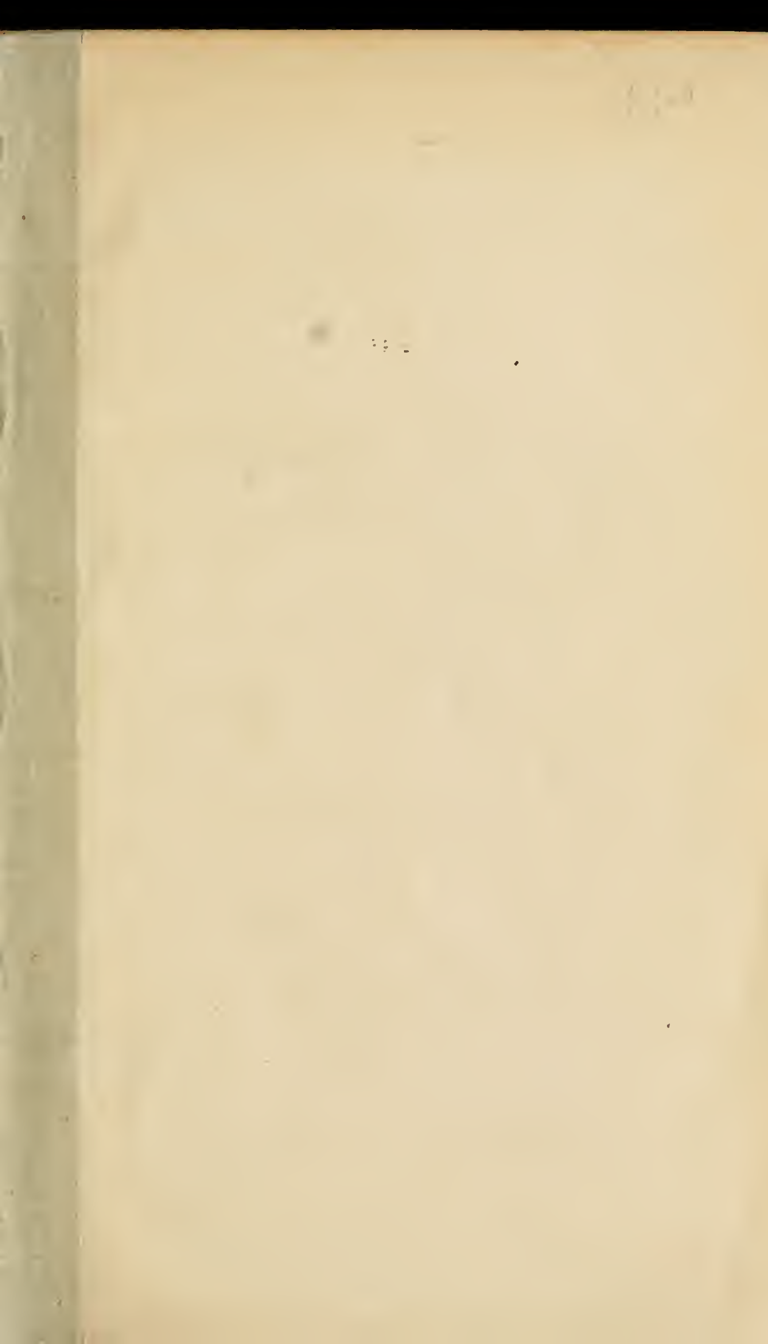

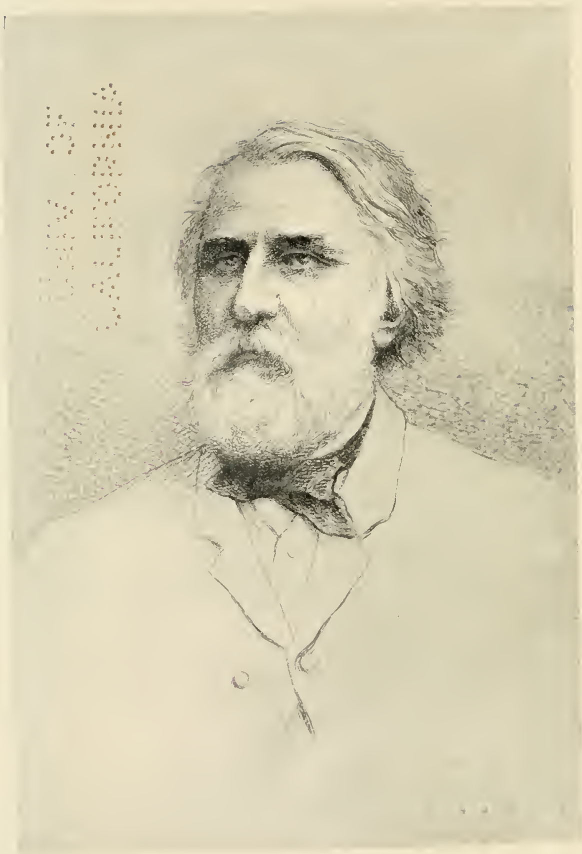

IVAN TURGENEV.

[Frontispiece.

TWO RUSSIAN REFORMERS

TWO RUSSIAN REFORMERS

IVAN TURGENEV
LEO TOLSTOY

BY

J. A. T. LLOYD

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"My one desire for my tomb is that they shall engrave upon it what my book has accomplished for the emancipation of the serfs."

IVAN TURGENEV.

TURGENEV

perienced in all its bitterness the acrid distress of childhood. Long afterwards, in one of those projections of memory almost physical in their intensity, he was to picture himself as "drinking, with a kind of bitter pleasure, the salt water of his tears." But it was here, too, that he breathed in those unforgettable impressions of Russian country life with which he was afterwards to charm and to astonish Europe. At Spasskoë he learned to become a sportsman, and commenced those wandering habits which were to give liberty, through his "Annals of a Sportsman," to millions of human beings. His love of nature was at this time almost a passion, and he has told us that in the evenings he would often steal out by himself to meet and to embrace —a lime-tree. Over and over again in his novels he returns to that mysterious Russian garden in which there seemed to ferment the drowsy, humming life of all the summers in the world. One sees him escaping to the solace of this haunted garden, a lonely boy, spied upon by parasites and often punished with malignant severity. One sees him becoming involuntarily a watcher, as though he had been born a connoisseur of souls. For, here on the very threshold of youth, disillusion has come to him. The difficult relations between his father and mother were not concealed from these young, questioning eyes. Child as he was, he had learned to suspect

those nearest to him. Long afterwards he exclaimed, with a knowledge of life that had its origin in his very childhood : " But as for marrying, what a cruel irony ! "

And it was not only with lime trees that he kept appointments in this garden of wonder. Very soon he knew what it was to wait breathlessly for hurried footsteps on the fine sand. Very soon he divined some, at least, of the secrets of that human passion which retained for him to the very end something of freshness and mystery and tenderness. He met once suddenly among the raspberry bushes a young serf girl in whose presence he became speechless. Perhaps it was she who came to him in the blazing heat of a summer day and, though he was the master, seized him by the hair as she uttered the one word, " Come." The name of this girl was Claudie, and forty years later Turgenev recalled with intense emotion "ce doux empoignement " of his hair. But neither Claudie nor any other serf girl taught him to believe in love, and he had already ceased to believe in the bounty of Providence. " It is here in this same garden," he wrote from Spasskoë in 1868, " that I witnessed, when quite a child, the contest of an adder and a toad which made me for the first time doubtful of a good Providence."

In order to understand not only the childhood of Ivan Turgenev but also the whole trend of his work, his aspirations, his reasonable patience, one

must know something of Madame Turgenev, his mother. For, it was she, more than any one else, who imbued his youth with the idea of tyranny and his manhood with an unceasing resistance to it. Madame Turgenev had experienced tyranny in her own childhood. Her step-father hated her and ill-treated her until she reached her seventeenth year, when he began to persecute her with still more sinister attentions. She escaped from his house half-dressed, and took refuge with her uncle, Ivan Loutovinoff, at Spasskoë. In spite of the demands of her mother, her uncle retained the guardianship of his niece, and at the age of thirty she inherited his immense fortune, including the property of Spasskoë, where her husband, Sergueï Nicolaevitch Turgenev, whom she married soon after her uncle's death, came to live. Here she lived the life of a Russian châtelaine of the old school. She had her own chapel and her own theatre, the actors being recruited from her serfs, who also provided her with an orchestra. Her adopted daughter admits, in one passage at least, that though she was neither young nor beautiful, and in spite of the fact that her face was pitted with small-pox, she was so *spirituelle* that she was always surrounded by a crowd of adorers. Her relations with both her sons seem to have been always more or less difficult, but this entry in her private journal, dated 1839, is addressed to her son Ivan: "C'est que Jean, c'est mon

soleil à moi; je ne vois que lui, et lorsqu'il s'éclipse, je ne vois plus clair, je ne sais plus où j'en suis. Le cœur d'une mère ne se trompe jamais, et vous savez, Jean, que mon instinct est plus sûr que ma raison."

It was stated in a review that Madame Turgenev bequeathed this journal to her son, but her adopted daughter maintains that it was burnt in the garden before her eyes in 1849. "Is it in virtue," she asks, "of the fatal law of heredity that Ivan Turgenev in his turn refused to publish his own journal, and, following the example of his mother, burnt it at Bougival in a garden?" Both of these journals are a loss, the one to literature, the other to all those who would seek to understand the mental attitude of the serf-owners of long ago.

Madame Turgenev could not understand how her son, who was a noble, could wish to become a writer. A writer, she tells him, is a man who scratches paper for money. Her son should enter the army and serve the Czar. She was not, however, wholly hostile to the Arts; and when Liszt came to Moscow, as he did that very year, Madame Turgenev went with her son to the concert-hall. She was unable to walk, and as, through an oversight, the customary means of conveying her had been neglected, Ivan carried her in his arms up the steep steps of the concert-hall. When Madame Viardot came to Moscow in 1846 Madame Turgenev, in spite of her disapproval of her son's enthusiasm,

went to hear her. "Il faut avouer pourtant," she admitted grudgingly, "que cette maudite bohémienne chante fort bien!"

But if Madame Turgenev was disdainful towards artists, she was absolutely tyrannous towards her serfs, even towards the doctor, Porphyre Kartacheff, who accompanied Ivan when he was a university student in Berlin. Porphyre acted as a kind of superior valet, and when they returned to Russia the relations between master and servant were most cordial and Madame Turgenev alone continued to treat him as a serf. Ivan implored his mother to emancipate him, but she absolutely refused. Once, when her adopted daughter was ill, Madame Turgenev wished to call in other doctors, but Porphyre assured her that it was unnecessary and that he himself would cure the patient. Madame Turgenev looked him in the eyes as she said: "Remember, if you do not cure her you will go to Siberia." Porphyre accepted the risk and, fortunately for him, his patient recovered.

The châtelaine was equally inflexible in her attitude towards her son, Nicolas, who aroused her anger by wishing to make a love-match with a Mlle Schwartz. "Just as Ivan Turgenev," comments his adopted sister, "was Russian in appearance, so his brother was English. When I read the romance of 'Jane Eyre' I could not represent to myself Rochester except with the features of

Nicolas Turgenev." For the rest, Nicolas seemed to her to be a born tease, was a master of languages, had a strong voice as opposed to Ivan's shrill one, and was far less anxious than Ivan to render services to his fellow beings. Under the heading " A mon fils Nicolas " there was a note in Madame Turgenev's journal warning him against the trammels of passion. She was unable, however, to prevent this marriage, but when she learnt that her son Nicolas had children in St. Petersburg she would not allow them to enter her house. She ordered them to be brought in front of the window, from which she observed them dispassionately, remarking that the eldest resembled his father at the same age. And this was her only comment on her grandchildren. She always asserted, indeed, that this union was illegal, and she tried uselessly to bribe her son to desert his wife and children. In 1849, however, she actually gave her consent to this marriage, just as a teırible affliction had fallen upon her son's household, the three children having died in one winter. "One might say," Nicolas observed long afterwards to his adopted sister, " that it was the malediction of my mother which brought about the death of my children." This recalled a repellent and characteristic scene. Madame Turgenev, for some reason or other, had asked her son for the portrait of his children, but when it arrived at Spasskoë she tore it into fragments.

Such violence was by no means unusual, and as one gradually realises the picture of Turgenev's home one begins to understand those half-savage interiors into which he introduces us so often in "The Annals of a Sportsman." There was a major-domo named Soboleff upon whom she was accustomed to vent her spleen. One of his duties was to bring her a glass of water, of which she constantly complained, finding it always of the wrong temperature. On one occasion, she threw the water in his face, after which he brought her more in another glass. Then, standing in front of an Icon, the serf exclaimed: "I swear before this sacred image that I have not changed the water. . . . That which Madame has just drunk is the same as the other." Madame Turgenev ordered him out of the room at once, and when he was next seen he appeared altogether a changed being: "Instead of the elegant evening coat, he was wearing a wretched grey cloth caftan and held a broom in his hand. An order from his mistress had made him forfeit his position of major-domo for that of sweeper of the yard. He remained for four years in this new employment, until he was replaced by the mute, the master of Moumou."

The old despot remembered well the tyranny that had warped her own youth. Once she visited with her adopted daughter her mother's property, and together they explored the silent

old house. As they came out of the drawing-room they passed into a corridor, where Madame Turgenev's companion was astonished at seeing a door barricaded by planks. "I went up to it and placed my hand on the old brass latch which stuck out between the planks, when Madame Turgenev seized my hand and cried out: 'Don't touch it, don't touch it; these rooms are accursed.' I shall never forget her accent nor the expression of her face, such fear and hatred and fury were written in it." Madame Turgenev dragged her away from these apartments of her step-father, which she remembered with all the old fierce bitterness unassuaged.

Life with Madame Turgenev, towards the end, became utterly intolerable for everybody. On October 28, 1845, the birthday of Ivan was being celebrated with the customary fête, which included sucking-pigs and a plentiful supply of brandy. The festivities took place as usual, but in the evening Madame Turgenev pretended to be dying. She sent for her confessor, and placing before her the portrait of her son Ivan, exclaimed, "Adieu, Ivan! Adieu, Nicolas! Adieu, my children!" Then she ordered her forty servants and all the men employed about the house, from the attendant to the cashier, to say "Good-bye" to her. When they had filed out of the room, Madame Turgenev declared that she felt better, and asked for tea. The next day the following "order" appeared:

"I give orders that to-morrow morning the disobedient servants, Nicolas Jakovlef, Ivan Petrof and Egor Kondratatief, shall sweep the court in front of my windows." These names were those of the servants who had not appeared at her bedside, possibly because they were a little drunk that evening. "Good-for-nothings! drunkards!" exclaimed Madame Turgenev—"they rejoiced at the death of their mistress!" At another time the châtelaine said that she was too ill to allow the fêtes of Easter week to take place.

But Madame Turgenev had the courage of her qualities, and when cholera broke out in the village she exhibited not the faintest trace of fear. When it had diminished she went to confession, and with all her old arrogance insisted upon confessing in the presence of her little court, in spite of the fact that it was against the rules of the Church. Her despotism was quite as merciless as that of any one of the Russian serf-owners who appear in "The Annals of a Sportsman." When she discovered the marriage of her son, Nicolas, she was enraged against Poliakoff, her major-domo, for having kept the news from her. So furious was she on this occasion that she was on the point of throwing a huge crutch at his head when the entrance of Nicolas Turgenev, her brother-in-law, checked her, thus probably saving Poliakoff's life. The next day he was banished to a distant property and was reduced from the rank of major-domo

to that of a simple copyist. His wife, Agatha, was *enceinte* at the time and sick with grief, but Madame Turgenev was immovable. The next year, however, she did repent of this particular act of tyranny, and not only restored Poliakoff to his old position but actually asked Agatha to pardon her. But it was almost impossible to make Madame Turgenev realise the very idea of liberty, and Turgenev championed the cause of the serfs in vain. But even in those early days he prophesied that the day of freedom would assuredly come.

He also championed his brother's cause, now that Madame Turgenev had depiived Nicolas of all means of existence. To every demand his mother opposed a deep cunning under the mask of generosity. She offered, in fact, a property to each of her sons, but always declined to legalise the action. Nothing, indeed, seems to have given her greater amusement than this comedy of giving which meant nothing at all. "I pity my brother," protested Ivan Turgenev. "Why have you made him so wretched? You accorded him authority to marry, you made him leave the service and come here with his family, while at St. Petersburg he was earning his living . . . and since he has arrived, you torture him . . . you torment him ceaselessly. . . ." Neither of her sons was allowed to come into her presence without permission, and once when Ivan asked to see her she flew into a rage and tore up his portrait. But she was

furious when she heard that the critics had attacked his work; "Comment! toi un noble, un Tourguéneff, on ose te critiquer!"

Towards the end the brothers left for Tourguénevo, their father's property, and Madame Turgenev, on hearing the news, started off for Spasskoë in a rage. On arrival she was informed that her sons had entered the house for an hour or two, whereupon she lashed Poliakoff across the face for alluding to them as "our masters." The brothers continued to live at Tourguénevo, which was only a few miles away, and Nicolas saw his mother on November 15, 1850. The next day Ivan tried to see her, but was too late, for she was already dead. She had certainly become softer in these last days, for she left not only money but liberty to Poliakoff and Porphyre. "Yes!" commented Agatha, "I have suffered a great deal from the late Madame Turgenev; but none the less, I was very fond of her. She was a real mistress."

As one reads the intimately personal memoir by his adopted sister, one sees how Turgenev struggled hopelessly against this coma of tyranny which lay everywhere around him. It was unnecessary to convince his reason; by temperament he was antagonistic to the idea of owning a fellow-creature, and yet even he violated this deep inner conviction and purchased a serf girl. Turgenev had a rich uncle at Moscow, at whose house he met

a cousin, Elizabeth Turgenev, a blonde of about sixteen who possessed a property near Orel. She administered the affairs of this village herself, and Turgenev paid her a visit once or twice every week. Elizabeth had a young *femme de chambre,* a serf girl named Féoctista who was called Fétistka. She was not at all beautiful, but she appealed to Turgenev just as some of the wistful serf girls in his sketches appealed to him. " Fétistka," writes Pavlovsky, " did not strike one at first glance; her beauty was not at all extraordinary. A brunette, thinnish, not ugly but not pretty, nothing more, one might have pictured her readily thus; but on observing her more closely, one found in her drawn features, in her pretty face tanned by the sun, in her sad glances, something which attracted and charmed." Turgenev observed her closely; he was charmed.

Elizabeth Turgenev was very fond of Fétistka and had her dressed like a lady. Her cousin had already sworn to do his best to bring about the abolition of the serfs, but none the less he desired to purchase Fétistka. Elizabeth refused his price, saying that on no account would she be separated from her maid. After much bargaining the price of seven hundred roubles was arranged, though a serf girl at that time was valued at a maximum of fifty roubles. Turgenev took her to Spasskoë-Célo, where he remained in retirement with her for about a year. During this time he tried to

teach her to read, but apparently with very little success. He seems, indeed, to have wearied of her quickly enough, and to have taken to shooting as a distraction. None the less, it was probably this romance *manqué* that inspired that sensitive sympathy with a serf girl in a false position which is so significant in "Fathers and Sons." In that book it is the old-fashioned Pavel who bids his brother realise that a serf girl is a fellow human being, and it is by his advice, and not at all at the advice of Bazaroff, the new type, that he finally marries her. Turgenev sinned against his own conscience in this sinister purchase, but at least he did everything in his power for Fétistka's daughter, Assia, whose education was superintended by Madame Viardot, about whose methods Turgenev very nearly fought a duel with Count Tolstoy.

It was at Spasskoë that Ivan Turgenev turned away from his cosmopolitan education and sought from a serf named Pounine the inspiration of Russian poetry. In "Pounine and Babourine" he has sketched the old serf reading aloud from a big book to the young master, who has just escaped from the French governess. The boy hangs on every word, renewing in the quiet garden the ancient traditions of his race from which all these foreign preceptors were endeavouring to tear him away. Turgenev never lost his boyish absorption in nature, which is so different from verbose admiration of scenery. He loved best the land-

scapes with which human life blends with neither disdain nor terror. The magnificence of Switzerland was too remote from human life to appeal to him whose dreams came always from the mountainless steppes.

Turgenev was not merely to recall the childish incidents of the garden of Spasskoë. He was to recreate, almost as if in a trance, each of those poignant impressions that had been stamped upon his youth. Suddenly, at one or other of those dinners recorded so minutely in the "Journal des Goncourts," in the midst of all the Parisian gossip, arid, mocking, fatigued, the Russian giant would feel himself transplanted into that old garden of his Russian home. Once more to his nostrils, suffocated by the boulevards of Paris, there would return the old sweet, sharp scents, and he would hear through all that mordant chatter, the sound of hurrying footsteps darting through the shadows or the love-laugh of a young girl in the fading light. It is no wonder that these Parisians listened to him as he visualised across their dinner table these pictures penetrated by the distilled perfume of youth and regret. And these impressions, physical in their intensity and involuntarily truthful, he was to reproduce, as in a veritable potpourri of memories, in two exquisite works.

Turgenev's "First Love" has in it more than a hint of actual memory—has in it, indeed, the very

aroma of illusion which words are usually impotent to disclose. It is the preservation of a boyish idolatry which, in at least one instance, survived as a stab of actual pain. Turgenev, according to the account of his mother's adopted daughter, was very much missed at home after fame had come to him in the outer world. One person in particular regretted his absence, and when he returned on a visit she came over and over again to the house in order to attract the man whom years before she had dismissed as a foolish boy.

"For a woman who is nearly forty," observed Madame Turgenev, "she is really not so bad. She has put herself to all this trouble for you, and you have shown yourself scarcely grateful."

"It is true," replied Turgenev in all seriousness, "but at the time that I loved her I was still almost a child. What did I not suffer then! . . . I remember that when she passed close to me, my heart seemed ready to leap out of my breast. . . . But that very happy time has passed! Now, I understand that love no more. . . . I have no longer that ardour of youth; it was made up of that love which contented itself with a glance, with a flower that fell from her hair. It was enough for me to pick up that flower, and I was happy, and I asked for nothing more."

It is the desire of the moth for the star incongruously blended with the scrutinising analysis of Turgenev that gives an acrid tenderness to this

emotional experience, making, again with disconcerting incongruity, a human document out of a work of art.

The memory of "Spring Torrents" was also precious to Turgenev, in spite of the attacks made upon it by the Russian critics. One day Pavlovsky expressed his appreciation of it, and Turgenev was delighted. "The whole of that story," said he, "is true. I have lived it and felt it personally. It is my own history. Madame Polozoff is an incarnation of the Princess Troubetzkoï, whom I knew very well. In her time she made a great deal of sensation in Paris, and she is still remembered there. Pantaleone lived at her house. He occupied there an intermediate position between the rôle of friend and that of servitor. The Italian family, too, is taken from life. But I have changed the details and I have transposed, for I cannot photograph blindly. For example, the Princess was a native of Bohemia by birth; I have drawn the type of a Russian *grande dame* of plebeian extraction. As for Pantaleone, I have placed him in the Italian family. . . . I wrote this romance with real pleasure, and I love it as I love all my works written in this spirit."

In the course of this conversation Turgenev protested bitterly against the Russian critics, who demanded always from him a thesis instead of an experience, a political proclamation instead

of a work of art. That is the old grudge against Turgenev, and it survives to the present day. But the charm of such exquisite regrets also survives, and one might as well protest against the torrents of Spring as against this book to which they have lent their name, their power and their first rush of happiness.

Asked which of his books he loved best, Turgenev replied: "'First Love.' It is a true story, which happened just as I have related it and whose principal hero even is my father." Here, indeed, we have not merely a record of early passion but the first love of youth itself. Others have sought to recapture the aroma of love's first lost illusion, but they have done so almost invariably with lyric intensity of feeling. Turgenev, in this book, as in all his works, remains a psychologist. The boy watches Zinaíaida, unobserved, as he thinks, and from that moment he is "translated" like Titania's weaver. He is her slave from that moment, and nobody, least of all himself, can tell her what he feels. But in spite of all the magic of his dream he is curiously observant of her and of everybody and of everything around her. He notes accurately the signs of poverty in her home. He notices the objectionable manners of the old princess, her mother. Boy as he is, he analyses each one of her admirers and differentiates between the phases of their homage. He is sensitive to the slightest change in the girl's attitude towards him-

self. He is a poet to whom the slightest concrete detail preserves the significance of its moment. He is a lover and at the same time a realist. His realism, here, as always, is part of himself, involuntary, and shows itself even in the most exalted moments—when, for example, he kisses for the first time that cool white hand. Not for an instant does acumen lose itself in ecstasy. The boy knows that all do not love Zinaíaida as he himself loves her. Already he divines that there is in the atmosphere of passion something menacing and evil. Something lurks below the fair outer surface. All is not good in the sunlight; he had learnt that lesson once and for ever in the Eden of Spasskoë; and so even in this first love-dream of youth Turgenev was to detect the suggestion of passion, withering and baneful.

The attitude of the younger towards the older generation is divulged in every page of this treasury of the heart's secrets. It is his own father and mother whom he reveals in this clear-eyed scrutiny of youth. How well he knew the exteriors of those familiar figures! How well he divined what he was always forbidden to know—the inner recesses of their temperaments! One sees the elderly, jealous woman dissatisfied with life and incapable of either adaptability or submission. She is suspicious of her husband and suspicious of her son. That bitter boyhood of the great novelist is mercilessly revealed without any softening

process of memory. The old quarrels, the old insults, the old recriminations vibrate into life after the interval of years. It is as though all the unuttered secrets of that old garden of his childhood had been preserved in the cylinders of some mysterious phonograph, a phonograph to which nature had communicated the drowsy whispers of summer, a phonograph which had caught and mellowed all this life that had so long passed away. Everybody lives in this old house as though the novelist had restored them to life by the intensity of his memory. All the old bitter jealousy, the brooding doubt, the rancour of long ago stirs again restlessly in these pages. And it is in this hostile, difficult atmosphere that the boy's delicate secret swells into tremulous life.

As he tells the story he drops a hint here and there, as it were half by accident, about one or other of these unknown people. We catch a chance fragment of a conversation. An exclamation is overheard, and gradually we know these people in precisely the same sense that the young lover of Zinaíaida knows them. Like him, we are, after a fashion, learning them. Like him, too, we divine only too quickly that all is not well in this idyl of first love.

And then the Russian magician presents to us the ultimate illusion of his art. The boy discovers that Zinaíaida is in love. Not for a moment had he been deceived by this or that swift, sudden caprice.

He had suffered on those occasions, but he had known always that the thing he feared had not happened as yet. When it did happen, he recognised instantly the malady, the consuming malady of Phædra, because, to no small extent, he shared it. Now love has come to her, but not for him. Somebody has the right to wait for her beside the fountain in the garden. Somebody is able to rouse the wonderful love-light in those mocking, restless eyes. Who is it ? All youth is stammering out the eternal question. And the change in the girl is at once as significant in its external simplicity and its internal complexity as the change in her boy lover. Each now is drawn to each because they breathe a common atmosphere, the baneful atmosphere of passion, which, even in the garden of Spasskoë, Turgenev had learned to suspect. The boy suspects now, and the little drama, in which all youth is compressed, develops slowly like youth's own secret, and without any obtrusion of merely fictitious incident. It is life that we are watching, and in spite of his equivocal insouciance Turgenev has infused something of the terror of life into this idyl of regret.

Somebody is waiting for the woman he loves. Somebody is waiting for Zinaíaida in the pervaded darkness of the night. Somebody will peer into those gleaming eyes through the shadows to learn the secret that had been always withheld from him. The boy will kill him ; he will kill the

enemy who has slain his dream. The fantasy of boyish passion has become a nightmare of hatred. Knife in hand he awaits the man whom Zinaíaida is luring into this garden which has lost its innocence. Through the long hours of the night he watches, and then he hears footsteps at last. He is ready to kill now, to kill swiftly and surely; but all at once he stays his hand. It is his own father who is approaching the fountain in that mysterious garden.

Instantly the boy's soul seems to shrivel, driven back into the timidity of youth. All the hidden, hideous background of his dear fantasy reveals itself. That is what life is, it seems. The suffering of love strikes at each in turn. And now—so infinitely deeper is the psychology of Turgenev than the inflamed Byronism of the Romantics—the boy feels drawn towards his father by reason of this mystery which has entered the life of each. He continues to share this mystery and to be drawn towards the master of Zinaíaida, even when he sees her kissing her naked arm, red from the lash of his father's horsewhip. Yes, love is like that, too; it has room for everything, the implacable malady. Here, as in all his works, Turgenev refuses to make life fit in with the little plots and plans of the experienced novelist. Zinaíaida, after all this inner tragedy which is regarded as comedy by the outside world, survives and marries. Her boy lover will see her again,

and will consciously seek to renew that spell which had brought the magic of regret into his youth. But some wretched little accident intervenes, and when at last he calls at her house it is only to hear that she is dead.

In the quiet of Spasskoë the slow years followed each other languidly as the whisper of the outer world comes to those who cling to the steppes. It was the steppes and the natural life of the Russian peasant, stifled and starved though it was, that saved the future novelist from the artificial influences of his home. He was badly treated, but his brother Nicolas fared even worse. Only the servants deigned to speak the mother tongue. The conversations between his parents, often bitter and quarrelsome, were carried on in French, and when Varvara Petrovna uttered a prayer to her God it was in the polite language of France. Sympathy between parents and children was non-existent, and in his childhood Turgenev acquired that intensified sense of injustice which was afterwards to find expression in so many of his works.

The days of foreign governesses and tutors passed, and Turgenev was placed in a school kept by a German in Moscow, after which he entered the Institut Lazaref in the same city. Here, too, his native language was ignored, but the boy became enthusiastic on the subject of Zagoskino, one of whose works was being read aloud by a

professor. "I know him by heart," he writes; "one day I fell on a pupil who interrupted the reading with my fists clenched." In 1832, in his fifteenth year, he left the Institut Lazaref in order to prepare for the University. A complete period of his life had already closed, a period which, so far as his art is concerned, was unconsciously fruitful. Already there had come into being that curious duality which is so significant in the evasive temperament of Turgenev. It is a commonplace to explain this duality by the statement that there were two Turgenevs, the one occidental and the other oriental. The duality, however, lies far deeper than this, and had already asserted itself in his suppressed and imaginative youth. There were already formed, in embryo as it were, the two Turgenevs who were to exist always side by side, the one luminous, receptive, impassive, with a deep love of nature and a sympathy for his fellow man, sensitive to all impressions whether of life or art, the other equally sensitive, but suspicious almost to the point of malady, distrustful alike of nature and of man, sombre with the ineradicable doubt of the ultimate purpose of life, as though his whole future had been shadowed by that combat between an adder and a toad in the garden of Spasskoë. The one Turgenev was to become docile, affectionate, fond of home and of the simplest domestic pleasures, while the other Turgenev, remembering all the enigmatic

secrets and bitter suspicions of his early home, was to insist, sometimes sadly, sometimes ironically, on celibacy. Already passion had entered those curious twin lives, for the first of which it was to retain always the aroma of tenderness, of romance, of the eternally unexpected, while for the other life of that other Turgenev it was to be ever tainted by the poison of suspicion, by the gnawing regret for the misunderstood moment and the ironical caress. To Turgenev, as to Alfred de Musset, there sounded even in childhood a haunting whisper of a companion who was never to forsake him :

> Je ne suis ni dieu ni démon,
> Et tu m'as nommé par mon nom
> Quand tu m'as appelé ton frère ;
> Où tu vas, j'y serai toujours,
> Jusqu'au dernier de tes jours,
> Où j'irai m'asseoir sur ta pierre.
>
> Le ciel m'a confié ton cœur ;
> Quand tu seras dans la douleur,
> Viens à moi sans inquiétude ;
> Je te suivrai sur le chemin,
> Mais je ne puis toucher ta main.
> Ami, je suis la Solitude.

What solitude was to the French poet, suspicion became for the Russian novelist.

But in the early university days Turgenev surrendered himself to the generous influence of ideas. At the University of Moscow he came under the

spell of German philosophy, and particularly under that of Hegel. These influences, however, which inspired so many young Russians, did not damp the normal high spirits of youth. The devotees of Hegel seem to have been rather uproarious undergraduates, and there were frequent disturbances in the class-rooms and even the lectures were occasionally interrupted. In 1835, on the death of his father and the entry of his brother into the School of Artillery, the family moved to the new capital, and Turgenev entered the University of St. Petersburg. Here, no less a person than Gogol was one of the examiners, but it was not until he had resigned that the students became aware that he was the famous author of the "Revizor."

Even as a boy of seventeen Turgenev had developed a curious love of mystification, which never wholly deserted him in after-life. Questioned by a professor on the subject of trials by ordeal, the future novelist enumerated the different tests, including among them that of the calf's tail. Asked for details, he explained that in certain cases a calf's tail was greased and placed in the hands of the accused. The beast was then struck with a stick, and if its tail did not slip through the hands of the accused at the first blow he was declared innocent. Asked for references, Turgenev gave several, but was eventually exposed on a point of chronology. Years afterwards he loved to invent more personal mystifications. He would

declare himself the hero of incidents or accidents, ranging from the capture of a woman's heart to an affair of a runaway horse. He would even invent a wholly imaginary game bag and invite his friends to dinner on the strength of it. In short, he was to jest on the most trivial and on the most serious matters.

At Petersburg, however, he was seized by literary aspirations for the first time, although he had already made crude attempts at poetry in his school days. Already, too, the love of wandering, which he has so often interpreted, seems to have entered his heart. In 1838 he started on his first journey abroad on the steamer *Nicholas I.* The crossing was not without a hint of tragedy, for the young student was startled while at a game of cards by the cry of "Fire." Turgenev, according to some accounts, dashed on deck, hustling women and children and crying out at the top of his shrill voice, which contrasted so with his enormous body, "Save me! I am the only son of a rich widow. Ten thousand roubles to him who will save me." It seems that for the moment Turgenev, who after all was only a boy at the time, lost his head, though he denied specifically that he ever uttered the words imputed to him. In any case the incident is not in the least typical. What is typical is that years afterwards, while taking part in private theatricals, he exclaimed once again, with one knows not what touch of acrid self-

mockery, "Save me! I am the only son of a rich widow."

Turgenev visited Europe to see, in his own words, "men and things, more especially men." It is worth while insisting upon this point because the future author of "The Annals of a Sportsman" is said to have sworn an Oath of Hannibal against serfdom and to have gone to the West solely in search of weapons against the enemy of his country. Turgenev, with those sad memories of his childhood in his heart, may have formulated some such design, but he was probably quite unconscious of any special mission when he commenced, with his mentor, Porphyre Kartacheff, his studies at Berlin. Here he found himself again in the familiar atmosphere of Hegel. But other things had entered his life besides German philosophy. It is the period of those generous illusions which afterwards become comparatively cold. It is the period in which even Turgenev was almost whole-hearted in his scrutiny of life. Never was life to be so nearly sweet as it was in these careless student days. These memories, at least, were to survive almost untainted by irony. We have glimpses of the young Russian enjoying life, indulging in a little love affair with a *couturière*, growing enthusiastic about German poetry, and even rat-hunting with a spirited terrier! He travels, too, in Switzerland and Italy as well as in Germany, until at the age of twenty-three he

returns to Russia. The period of youth is over. It is fortunately by no means a sealed book, for Turgenev is the Sanin of "Torrents of Spring," no less certainly than he is the hero of "First Love."

Almost every great writer has one book more close to him than any other. Dickens has acknowledged "David Copperfield," and Turgenev has acknowledged "First Love," which on his own authority is absolutely taken from his own life. But there is another book which is almost equally personal, whose pages are also torn from memory. It is, indeed, a sequel to "First Love," and may well be said to be, with its companion volume, to the great Russian what "Le Petit Chose" was to Alphonse Daudet. For, Sanin at twenty-one is Turgenev himself, and the charm of that love-torrent at Frankfort is the charm of a remembered passion. Like the author, Sanin is tall, with clear eyes and an attractive expression. Glancing back at him, Turgenev maintains that softness and nothing but softness was the keynote of his nature. But it is impossible to judge Sanin harshly, for all the fragrance of unsullied memory steals into this love-story of reality. Sanin in the confectioner's shop chatting with these Italians over chocolate and angel-cake, with the poor old ex-baritone dancing attendance in the background, who can forget the picture? Life glides by for Sanin like a dream, and we share the dream even as we fear the exquisite regret which is to follow

it. Sanin, however, can be hard enough on occasion, in spite of that inner softness of his, as he soon proves. They were lunching together outside a café—the beautiful Italian girl, Gemma, her German fiancé, her brother, and Sanin himself. A drunken German officer recognised her as the daughter of a confectioner and, swaggering up to the table, seized a rose that belonged to her in the presence of her fiancé. Instantly Sanin, who is not her fiancé at all, takes up the challenge and rebukes the officer's insolence with all the courage of youth and devoted love. A duel follows as a matter of course, but Turgenev remains a remorselessly sincere artist who is incapable of sacrificing his art to the trumpet-call of the noisy romancers. It is life, life, life that he gives us in that duel scene in the fresh morning, as the doctor, openly bored, sits yawning on the grass while the seconds discuss the preliminaries.

Sanin survives the foolish duel, and now there is nothing whatever to check the "torrents of spring" that are surging in his heart. He loves this beautiful Italian girl, and his secret escapes from him as simply and with as inevitable an accordance with nature as buds burst into the larger life. Sanin himself at this time "lives like a plant," and his life is almost as free from complexity. Gemma has broken with her German fiancé and will marry him, Sanin. But first he will return to Russia and sell his property. It

is all quite simple, for he is his own master and there is nothing to stand between him and the girl he loves. Then he meets the ridiculous and clumsy Ippolit Polozov, who suggests that his rich wife might purchase Sanin's property. So Sanin drives with him to discuss the matter with Maria Nikolaevna, who is half a gipsy and possesses that daring and alluring beauty which works such havoc in the romances of Turgenev. It is the old, old story. The good love is being poisoned by the evil passion. The spell of youth and goodness and freshness has been exchanged for the spell of the flesh. Sanin's romance is over, and he sends a lying letter of excuse to his fiancée and in the end accompanies Maria Nikolaevna to Paris. Years afterwards he learns that Gemma had gone to the United States. He writes to her, and she sends him a photograph which seems to be the Gemma of twenty years ago. It is the photograph of her eldest child, and she herself has been happily married across the Atlantic during these long years of his disillusion.

There is in this second book of youth the same regret, the same sense of a missed happiness as in the first. But at least it has not been poisoned, like the first, at its very source. One feels here that hope and happiness and love are not impossible illusions, and the " might have been " at least is substituted for the implacable " non concessere dei."

CHAPTER II

AT the age of twenty-three Turgenev very nearly became a University professor. At this time he seems to have been completely Germanised. Afterwards, like Heine, he was to surrender himself to the influence of Paris, but in both cases of apparent foreign absorption the novelist remained entirely Russian. It was only in an outer sense that he became modified by the deep dreams of German philosophy or the lucid serenity of French taste. In an inner sense the German influence both at Moscow and Berlin implanted in Turgenev not so much the erudition of the savant as the seeds of idealism which were to find expression here and there through all his work, but particularly in two books, the one impregnated with apathy and despair and the other illumined by at least a recognition of the higher hope.

As one reads the novels of Turgenev one finds oneself over and over again in some heated and crowded room where, over a samovar, young men with white eager faces are clamouring over ideas with as passionate a persistence as brokers clamour

over securities. What is the meaning of life? they ask, and at any moment, it would seem, each is willing to cast his individual existence into the melting-pot of destiny. Surely these people will save Russia! With a heart beating like this the great silent country cannot remain always inanimate and cold. Yes, they are speaking for Russia, and their words vibrate with the noble rhythm of revolt and the straining faces are lit up by sunken, tameless eyes. In spite of their exaltation the picture is so real that we seem to be in the room with them without the consciousness of having been ushered into it. A sentence here and there, a trick of manner, this or that piece of shabby furniture, mentioned apparently at random with that abhorrence of the over-emphasis of detail which Turgenev could never conceal even from Emile Zola—the picture is bitten in before your eyes so easily, so apparently lazily, that you are oblivious of the concealment of art. You are in the room with the students, but now Turgenev's manner differentiates itself from the more familiar methods. You are in the room with them, but you are not exactly one of them. You do not mix with them as you do, for example, with the friends that George Eliot makes for you. Between you and the creations of Turgenev there is always a slight veil, whether of irony or of an instinctive dislike of intimacy. These people can never be your intimates, any more than they are the in-

timates of the author himself. You are, in fact, a watcher just as he is always a watcher. For, the suspicion of Turgenev is at work even in this atmosphere of generous illusion. And gradually you begin to divine the difference between the word and the deed, the expression of the will in rhetoric and the expression of the will in action. Something cold and sinister comes between you and these young men, just as there is something repellent between them and the master who has flung them into life. He, too, is listening to their souls, but he cannot believe in their message. Some of them, the tricksters, do not believe in it themselves. Others, the martyrs, will scrawl the message in their own heart's blood. Tricksters and martyrs alike, they talk on and on and on, but their voices will never penetrate into the desolate distances of the steppes, and Turgenev suspects them always of an impotence which they have forgotten during this exaltation of the nerves.

In his student days, however, Turgenev himself had shared these illusions, and he is never wholly ironical, except perhaps in "Smoke," when describing these endless Russian talks which are so conspicuous in "Dimitri Rudin." At Berlin Turgenev made the acquaintance of a fellow student named Michel Bakounine, who afterwards became an anarchist. He endeavoured to form the young Turgenev in his own opinions,

and there is little doubt that he appears as that saddest of all the despairing heroes of Turgenev, Dimitri Rudin. Rudin is doubtless Bakounine, so expressively, with that ruthless watchfulness of his, does the novelist insinuate certain external touches by which his old comrade can be recognised. But in Rudin there is also not a little of Turgenev himself, not the Sanin who "lived like a plant," but the enthusiast for Goethe and Schiller and all the apostles of the larger life of the soul. Self-portraiture unquestionably creeps in, but even in this, the same cold, questioning suspicion is at work. For, Turgenev, if he suspected others, was no less suspicious of himself. More than once the Slav dreamer of reality hinted at this attitude of self-criticism. On one occasion Polonski found him on the verge of despair. "Tell me my name in six letters," exclaimed Turgenev: "it is *trouss* (poltroon)."

That, of course, was but the exaggeration of a mood, but there can be little doubt that even in these early days the novelist was as much inclined to mock himself as he was to mock other people. For the rest, he was genuinely kind-hearted, and became a benefactor to his poor literary friends, although he was not rich enough to fill the rôle of Mæcenas. It was at this period of his life that he came permanently under the influence of women of the world, who were, he confessed, the only women who could inspire him. The con-

fession is interesting, because his heroines are almost invariably *ingénues*, and when he introduces a woman of the world, whether as Maria Nikolaevna in a modified sense or Irene in "Smoke" in a highly developed sense, she brings with her inevitably the atmosphere of destruction. There was a woman of the people, however, for whom he experienced a passing passion, and once he asked her what she would like him to give her as a present. She replied that she would like some soap, so that her hands might be delicate for her lover's lips to kiss. Turgenev recalled the little incident at the Magny restaurant with that freshness of memory which seemed actually to visualise before these fatigued men of the world a poor serf girl pleading for some little hint of the beauty of life, pleading that she might appear to her lover even for a passing hour like those others! Her identity is uncertain, but it was at about this time that the novelist met the mother of his daughter who was afterwards educated in Paris under the supervision of Madame Viardot.

It was in this year, 1843, that he met the critic Bielinski, who was in great poverty and already the victim of phthisis. He, like Turgenev, was convinced that Western civilisation was necessary to Russia, though he admired profoundly, as did the novelist in spite of all his criticism of his compatriots, the Russian soul. There were endless conversations, Russian conversations, between

them. "What!" exclaimed Bielinski on one occasion after a discussion of six hours, "we do not know yet if God exists, and you wish to dine!"

In this same year Turgenev met the person who was to influence his life far more profoundly than the Russian critic who first welcomed him into the ranks of literature. In 1843 Malibran's sister, Pauline Garcia, came to sing in St. Petersburg for the first time. From the very first moment Turgenev appears to have become her slave. He speaks about her to everyone, even to his mother, who becomes uneasy and goes to hear "cette maudite bohémienne" sing on her visit to Moscow. Turgenev, in short, is as possessed by this artist as any one of his own stricken heroes. In his exaltation he describes to Bielinski the ecstasy of the moment in which the singer passed a perfumed handkerchief across his forehead. In 1847 she had become Madame Viardot, and Turgenev went to Europe in her train. At Berlin, however, he deserted the Viardots and went in search of Bielinski at Stettin in order to take the dying critic to the waters of Salzbrunn in Silesia. The old discussions were immediately resumed between the two friends, but after a few weeks Turgenev suddenly disappeared. "The devil alone knows where he's gone," writes Bielinski, but at St. Petersburg they said that he was once more in the diva's train. As a matter of fact he was sometimes with the Viardots and

sometimes quite alone. In 1848 he visits France for the first time, and his impressions are by no means enthusiastic. "It is decidedly not beautiful," he wrote on arriving at Lyons in the same year. During the absence of the Viardots he determined to learn the diva's language, and steeped himself in Calderon, after which he plunged into the French classics and was astonished at the subtleties of Pascal's "Provençales." Among the moderns George Sand especially appealed to him—George Sand, who wrote among so many other fragments of wisdom, "Pauline Garcia-Viardot, . . . le plus beau génie de femme de notre époque." But on the whole Turgenev, with a curious mixture of luminous vision and microscopic analysis, was dissatisfied with French life and thought and with his own life in France. Years before at Petersburg people had noticed the odd pranks of the Russian novelist. At Paris they were to become almost abnormal. It is recorded in Polonski's "Souvenirs," for example, that during this period he was frequently seized with fits of spleen. Once, during an attack of this kind at Paris, he made himself a high pointed cap out of a blind torn from a window, and decked with this cap he placed himself in a corner with his nose to the wall and waited until the mood had passed. Often, it seems, he had recourse to this strange treatment for those *crises des nerfs* which were in such violent contrast to the habitual suavity of his genius.

AVENUE AT SPASSKOË

In 1849 he writes from Courtavenel, Madame Viardot's country-house in Brie: "I have a great deal of time here, and I make use of it by doing the most perfectly useless things. From time to time this is necessary for me. Without this safety-valve I should be in danger of becoming very stupid one day for good and all."

But his old love for and intimate sympathy with nature—mingled with a certain involuntary suspicion—continued to survive. At Ville-d'Avray, in 1848, as long before in the garden of Spasskoë or in the Black Forest of his later student days, he was unable "to see without emotion a branch covered with foliage outline itself clearly against the blue sky." He had not altogether outgrown that Sanin who "lived like a plant and had no idea that one could live otherwise." He perceived with all the old freshness of insight the charm of nature, but he perceived it as the result of implacable and mysterious forces without pity or concern for himself or any other unit of the human race. The gentle beliefs and confidences of his temperament slipped away from this watcher who had come as close to nature as to man. The cautious ironical suspicion of life deepened into something more sinister. The master of irony became conscious of life as a brooding, threatening envelopment under whose hovering shadow only children can laugh and play in tranquillity. It seems as though there had reached this impassive

brooder vibrations from other planes of being, vibrations to which ordinary human nerves are impervious. Certainly Turgenev, who sought always tranquillity, was haunted during a seemingly uneventful career by menaces and doubts with which the ordinary man is wholly unconcerned.

In the meantime things had been happening in his own country. Dostoievski had just been sent to Siberia, and Bielinski had only escaped the same fate by death. Turgenev's mother was ill, and in 1850 the novelist finally decided to return to Russia. Varvara Petrovna grew rapidly worse, and her character was but little modified by the approach of death. Turgenev had no illusions as to her want of sympathy for her children. She had quarrelled with him before, and even at the very end, as we have seen, she refused to be reconciled. He did not arrive at her house until she was already dead, and she had left for him no message either of forgiveness or remorse.

On his mother's death the novelist found himself a man of independent means, and this fact was of considerable importance to his whole future development. It meant for him artistic independence, and it was only in art that Turgenev was not a dilettante. His "Annals of a Sportsman" appeared in 1852, and by this book the novelist enfranchised millions of human beings. But when it came to personal participation in political action, his rôle, though he rather prided

himself on it, was insignificant. He was, at all events, imprisoned, and the incident gave him pleasure and even amusement, for on one occasion, while drinking a bottle of champagne with his gaoler, that worthy official was good enough to click glasses with him " to Robespierre ! " In the same year he commenced " Rudin," the book of all others in which the political and philosophic enthusiasms that roused him at Moscow and St. Petersburg and Berlin were to find utterance. In this book all those interminable conversations with Bielinski renewed themselves, and if there are irony and disillusion in the volume every page of it is none the less impregnated with the saddest of all regrets, the regret for the generous dream to which one's heart will no longer respond.

The following year was marked by the Crimean War, which meant for Turgenev nothing more or less than the discovery of Count Tolstoy. "Have you read his ' Sebastopol ' ? " he writes in 1855 to Serge Aksakof. "As for me, I read it and I cried hurrah and I drank the author's health." Some little time afterwards he met the future author of "Anna Karanina." From the very first their personalities grated on each other, and it is this grating of personalities that accounts for that exploited quarrel which so nearly led to the exchange of pistol-shots between the two great Russian authors. The immediate cause of this quarrel was a contemptuous comment by Tolstoy

on Turgenev's education of his daughter, but the real cause was undoubtedly the latent antagonism of two temperaments, each after its own fashion peıfectly sincere. The antagonism of temperament would also explain that posthumous quarrel between the author of "Smoke" and the author of "Sapho." Turgenev, however, as yet knew little of Alphonse Daudet or any of the other guests at those famous dinners at Magny. But he was already becoming weary of Russia, and in 1856 he crossed the frontier never to return for any length of time.

For the next eight years his life was typical of "la nature errante de l'homme russe," but he did not travel solely for pleasure or even for distraction. He had come to Europe to consult specialists, and they sent him in search of health in all directions. His letters at this time were preoccupied with the state of his health. He was haunted by the fear of becoming a physical wreck, and his friends were resigned to the probability of his premature death. All over Europe he sought for that illusion which is called the peace of the soul, but always it escaped him even when it seemed most close at hand. In Russia he had sighed for the increased vitality and mental stimulus of Europe. In France he longed for the garden of Spasskoë and the languor of his native Russian steppes. It was only for the sake of his daughter and the Viardots that he con-

sented to remain. The French authors at this time bored him, from Victor Hugo and Lamartine to George Sand and Alexandre Dumas. He protested against the materialism of the French, against the animal delight in massed humanity which is so conspicuous in the genius of Balzac. With his head the Russian novelist might welcome the seething of European ideas, but in his heart there was always a nostalgia which he himself condemned as illusive. On the one hand he was *déraciné* and in need of association with the national influences of his race; on the other hand he was emancipated and no longer capable of sharing the old national aspirations. The two Turgenevs, in short, were fretting against each other, each longing for some resting-place of the soul in which the other could place no confidence. For, at this period, Turgenev was a wanderer in a deeper sense than that of physical distance, and all these longings blended mockingly and yet sadly with the idealism of the early student days which finds expression in two books: "Rudin," the book of despair, and "Liza," the book of renunciation.

In one of his letters Turgenev alludes to the Russians as "the strangest, the most astonishing people on the face of the earth." In "Rudin" he gives us the very core of the Russian character. The plot, as usual, is one of almost disdainful simplicity. A tired, middle-aged man who is a brilliant talker is received as a tame cat in a more

or less luxurious country-house. Everybody is dazzled by his rhetoric, and the mistress of the house encourages him to talk, for these fine phrases and sentiments are really a relief from the boredom of country life. When Rudin has stopped talking other people discuss general propositions in eager words. Only the daughter of the house remains silent in the background. On the surface that is all.

But underneath the surface what depths of hope and hopelessness, of steadfastness and shame are to be found in this story of a failure beyond the remorse of words! Rudin is absolutely natural. One sees him enter the house, and from that moment he takes possession of it, not as an actor takes possession of the stage but as a dreamer wins the hearts of those who remember their youth. He is not a conscious impostor; there is nothing of Tartuffe about him, and still less of Pecksniff. He talks of noble endeavour not in order to deceive others but because he wishes to be thrilled by it himself. Devoid of will-power, he wishes to will intensely. For the rest, he plays upon the formless dreams of youth as an artist upon some delicate and exquisite musical instrument. He points always upward towards the great heights, but he is paralysed by the very thought of scaling the least of them. "He has enthusiasm," says Lezhnyov of him; "the coldness is in his blood—that is not his

fault—and not in his head. He is not an actor, as I called him, not a cheat, nor a scoundrel; he lives at other people's expense not like a swindler, but like a child." But Rudin is not wholly explained by this estimate. He is not in the least a Horace Skimpole. He is a creature driven, as it were, by some hidden mechanism to diffuse his energy without reference to the concentration demanded by action. He is a victim rather than an impostor, and at his worst he is nobler than many who condemn him. Nobody can condemn him more than he condemns himself when he half guesses his own petrifying secret: "A strange, almost farcical fate is mine. I would devote myself—eagerly, wholly—to some cause; and I cannot devote myself. I shall end by sacrificing myself to some folly or other in which I shall not even believe." It was only too true; but first he was to play upon that most subtle and mysterious instrument of all, a young girl's heart.

No heroine could be at once more enigmatic and more candid than Natalya, the silent listener who waits in the background for this man who is speaking so eloquently of liberty and life. These Russian girls in the novels of Turgenev are not waiting for a Prince Charming to win them by some flattering caress. They are not waiting for someone to lure them into a world of romance to the accompaniment of dream music. On the contrary, they await a leader who is engaged in the

actual struggle with misery and slavery and pain. To him, if only he is the right man, they will gladly dedicate their lives, sacrificing all their guarded youthfulness and their protected beauty. For they are willing, oh, so willing, to follow the hard road, the dangerous road, the road that winds desolately away from home and friends and the familiar safety. Patiently they wait for him who will lead. And so, while Rudin talks in the drawing-room to the admiration of the mother, the daughter believes that she has found at last the master who will reveal to her the heroic promptings of her own heart. It matters nothing to her that the man is elderly and poor, a baffled, battered person who has won none of the prizes of life. She believes in him, and she shares passionately his great moments. It is fatally easy for him to play flexibly on these sensitive heart-strings. He talks to her of youth and poetry and love and the glorious revolt against the bondage of the soul. She believes that his heart is warm and living as her own, and that it, too, vibrates to the golden rhythm of his words. He speaks to her of love. Of course he loves her ; he is not so dead to the very ashes of illusion as not to love this beautiful young girl who believes in him when he can no longer believe in himself. Of course he loves her, and in her turn the girl believes in him as the master of her destiny.

But very soon her mother hears of this un-

expected idyl. She is naturally irritated, and tells her daughter that it is out of the question for her to marry a bohemian outcast like Rudin. Natalya does not hesitate for a single instant between authority and love. She is willing to follow Rudin, the wanderer, to the ends of the earth. He is her master; let him lead the way and she will follow it. Let him declare at once what they must do. "What we must do?" replies Rudin: "of course submit." Then the girl understands. It has all been sound, just the clatter of words, that has stirred so mysteriously the deep, unutterable secrets of her heart. Rudin is only the man who submits. After all, that is her hero, the man who submits. She is sorry for him because he is not what he might have been. She is sorry for him for being only the imitation of something noble and true. She turns away from him, as so many others have turned away from him and will yet turn away from him again.

But Turgenev does not belabour the unfortunate Rudin after the fashion of the English and, in another sense, the French novelists. Rudin, victim though he be of his own inherent want of will, is none the less a factor in this too patient and voiceless Russia. There is something noble in his heart that is independent of the rhetorical nobility of his words. He who has known hardship does not cling to the soft places when he happens upon

them. He is capable of becoming weary of the kindness of the powerful. Half dazed though he is by his own rhetoric, he is at least willing to drift upon any wave of destiny. He is utterly incapable of becoming an approved parasite, and parasites are the first to condemn him. Pigasov, for example, says of him: "If he begins to abuse himself, he humbles himself into the dust: come, one thinks, he will never dare to face the light of day after that. Not a bit of it! It only cheers him up, as if he treated himself to a glass of grog." That is all that Pigasov can say for him, but then Pigasov is a man who accepts bribes. Turgenev does not condemn Rudin in that way. For Turgenev the poor, baffled, shabby figure recalls all those eager memories of the student days which even his own habitual irony could not wholly rob of their charm. Rudin revives those breathless conversations in which young men declaimed about the meaning of life, the meaning of love, declaimed about beauty and passion and art, about anything in short except selfishness, avarice, exclusion, and that withered and withering pride which narrows for ever the human soul. Of those dwarfing influences, at least, poor Rudin knew nothing; he was never to learn them. Fantastic always, as much in his sincere desire to believe as in the rhetorical expression of belief, he dies, as he had prophesied, in a cause for which he has no spark of enthusiasm. A worn, grey-

haired, forlorn figure raises a flag over the barricades of Paris, and is instantly shot down. To his comrades he is known as the *Polonais*, but he is a Russian and his name is Dmitri Rudin.

The dispiriting effect of this sombre and beautiful story is at least half dispelled by what one might call its companion volume, "Liza, or A Nest of Nobles." There is much of Turgenev's early manhood in Rudin, but in Lavretski there is, as it were, the completion, the fulfilment of what the first years of maturity have meant to the Russian novelist. One must not accept Lavretski as meaning for Turgenev what Levin, for example, means for Tolstoy. But at least Lavretski represents a Russian gentleman who, after travelling in the west, has determined to settle down in his native country and make the best use of his acquired knowledge for the benefit of his native Russia. So unpretentious is he that Turgenev's irony passes harmlessly over him. He is, indeed, the very antithesis of Rudin. He is not at all talkative, but he is capable of making good his words in action. He is sincere and incapable of willingly breaking his faith. But it is not words alone that can play with human destiny, as Liza, the young girl who is waiting for him, just as Natalya was waiting for Rudin, discovers to her cost. She, too, is searching for the noblest. She, too, is simple and kind, but with depths in her nature that cannot reveal

themselves in facile confessions. And Lavretski, like Turgenev himself, recognises the immense potentiality, the immense significance of all the silence and tenderness and fidelity that this quiet unassuming Liza possesses as the birthright of her race.

Unlike Sanin on the one hand or Rudin on the other, Lavretski is sure of himself. He knows what he wants. He knows what is the best amid the meretricious glitter of more showy promises. But life sweeps him aside just as easily, just as ruthlessly, as it does Sanin or Rudin. Years before, having made an unfortunate marriage, he had separated from his wife who had been unfaithful to him. And now, just as he is learning to love Liza, he receives a Parisian newspaper in which there is a rather florid announcement of his wife's death. He is free. At last he is free. Already something of the aroma of his secret has escaped from him. Already, without words, his soul has communicated with Liza's soul ; the divined secret can now be uttered honourably. In this state of mind he returns to his house, and is startled by the scent of patchouli. His wife has come back to beg for forgiveness, and has brought her little daughter with her to plead for her. There had been an error in that Parisian newspaper. His wife is alive and well, and anxious, oh, so anxious, to be forgiven and to forget. Penitence and patchouli blend in the easily spoken appeal.

The very soul of the woman is rouged, and Lavretski reads it as easily as one reads a rouged face under a hard light. Lavretski knows her, and all these words mean nothing at all to him. But to the outside world she is not in the least the conventionalised erring woman. It is not the general type, but a strongly individualised woman who is dragging the suffocating memories of the boulevards into the lonely longings of the steppes. Of course Liza is sacrificed. The frou-frou of this scented woman brushes aside all the bloom of her delicate and almost wordless love. Lavretski refuses to live with his wife, but Liza is lost to him for ever. She enters a convent and he sees her only once again. But in that last meeting all the charm of renunciation and regret is stamped upon a love scene in which no word is spoken, in which only a glance conveys the message of an inalienable tenderness.

Lavretski is exceptional among the heroes of Turgenev in so far as he is a Slavophil as opposed to the westernised Panshin. Asked what he means to do now that he has returned from Europe, Lavretski answers, quite in the manner of Tolstoy's heroes, "Till the soil and try to till it as well as possible." But he is, after all, a very mild Slavophil. It is in Liza rather than in him that one seems to penetrate into depth after depth of the Russian temperament. She is close to the Russian people without knowing how to be con-

descending towards them. She is national without proclaiming it in phrases: "The Russian turn of mind gladdened her." She is essentially the elder sister of Natalya, one of those silent concentrated beings who will follow steadfastly to the death the man who proclaims himself a leader in act as well as in word. Lavretski was such a man, and there is not in this book the inner despair and dryness of disillusion that one finds in the pages of "Rudin."

This dryness of disillusion, this concrete recognition of imposture and self-imposture was to persist throughout the life of Turgenev. But with it, permeating it and redeeming it, there lingered always that savour of caressing regret which makes Liza at once so simple and so unforgettable. Turgenev was to experience to satiety every nuance of the promise and the despair of passion, but he was also to preserve the freshness of insight which was his precious inheritance from the beginning. Nobody is more delicately merciful than he when he is probing the depths of youth's troubled heart. Here, at least, there is no cause for that hesitating mockery with which he so often chills those who would penetrate too intimately into his dream. Here, at least, there is no cause for that gentle pessimism which surrounds, as with a nebula, so many of his emotional creations. In the heart of Turgenev there survived to the very end two Russian figures, each

sombre, one by reason of an inner coldness and the other by reason of the external irony of life. These figures are Rudin and Liza, and it is not by accident that it is the woman who expresses that serene confidence in goodness by which one of the two Turgenevs was always haunted. This other Turgenev was at no time a prey to the fatigue of him who sees too clearly. He remembered always that a woman's love is wonderful and strange, and he who had analysed so pitilessly the tormented rhetoric on Rudin's lips bowed humbly before the candour of Liza's eyes.

CHAPTER III

MADAME VIARDOT gave up the theatre in 1864 and installed herself with her family in Baden-Baden, to which German town, beloved of Russians, she was followed by Ivan Turgenev. At first he took a small house of only one story with a garden, but he had built for himself a house of some pretensions also with a garden and some beautiful trees. Here, quite close to the Viardots, he settled down in 1868 to continue the most fruitful period of his literary life, the period which may be said to have commenced with the publication of "Fathers and Sons" in 1860.

Baden-Baden was a suitable resting-place after his gipsy wanderings, and here he began to concentrate more remorselessly than ever his suspicious intelligence upon the younger generation of Russia's vanguard, the successors of Rudin and Lavretski. In all Europe there could scarcely have been a better centre for this than Baden-Baden, whose "Russian tree" forms the pivot of "Smoke." Here he studied with that fixed equivocal gaze of his—the alert gaze of a dreamer,

the poetic glance of an analyst—those emancipated talkers who proclaimed themselves the champions of Russia. On their side they maintained derisively that Turgenev was out of touch with the intellectual life of the younger generation of his compatriots. His answers to this charge, however, were given in three books of varying shades of irony, each of which, without passion and without malignity, showed how he could strike if he had the will to display such futile force.

In the meantime his external life flowed by in perfect calm. He was comparatively happy, for he had acquired that love for the sameness of one day with another which, wanderer though he had been and exile though he continued to be, he shared with his future friend, Gustave Flaubert. With Madame Viardot he would enjoy music, and with her husband he would enjoy sport. Naturally gossip was more or less malignant on the subject of this old friendship, but to gossip Turgenev was by temperament wholly indifferent. The life suited him, giving him the particular phase of exotic domesticity which could alone satisfy his difficult and yet incongruously simple nature. Baden-Baden, too, supplied him with those cosmopolitan types which are so conspicuous in his novels. Here he could observe all manner of men and women equally zealous in pursuit of excitement or rest—foreigners airing or dissimulating

their oddities, Russians furtively imitating the peculiarities of the foreigners they condemned, Russians preaching freedom while their pockets bulged with roubles wrung from their former serfs. And at any moment in this fashionable European resort the frou-frou of some woman's skirts might revive in him that first thrill of memory which is Turgenev's substitute for romanticism. No better background, indeed, could be imagined for his peculiar powers, first as a student of the younger Russia that denied him, and secondly as a searcher for those ultimate secrets of the human heart which no one, perhaps, has ever shared with him.

But in spite of this outer tranquillity old fears clung to him. His health troubled him unceasingly, and sometimes, doubtless, he was haunted by nostalgia. For, after all, it was but one of those two Turgenevs that was leading contentedly this uprooted life. The longing for return would come to him, and he would go back to his country, not only to receive his revenues, but to win back the first freshness of his impressions of Russian life. Constantly in his books he interprets the sense of return, the impression of long empty houses, of creaking, neglected doors, of curtains rustling in some empty but pervaded room. At each visit to Spasskoë he would renew also those memories of childhood, the interpretation of which is one of the very rarest of even Turgenev's

rare gifts. He would inspect his property and at the same time resume those kindly and rather boisterous Russian friendships from which the more conventional life of the West had never wholly withdrawn him. Nor had he forgotten his old delight in exaggeration, and he would invent rhapsodies about his estate, inducing his friends to visit him through alluring descriptions of his country house, his park, and above all of a fair neighbour who, their host assured them, would enslave each of them at the first glance. Off they would start, then, from Moscow, only to discover that the country house and the park were nothing very wonderful and the mysterious beauty positively ugly. But Turgenev's hospitality and good spirits, the shooting, the swimming in the pond, and above all, perhaps, the excellent *champignons à la crême* would revive the spirits of these deluded visitors. Then they would organise private theatricals, in which the peruke of Turgenev's Oedipus was a source of great astonishment. It was at one of these theatrical representations that Turgenev uttered the historic repetition of a cry once attributed to him in real earnest: "Save me! I am the only son of a rich widow!"

But as time passed amusement gave place to more serious considerations. The emancipation of the serfs was commencing, and the attention of Turgenev, as of all other thinking Russians, was focussed upon the constitution of Russia.

As early as 1850 the novelist had enfranchised his own servants, endowing them with both land and houses. As for the serfs on the land, he had given them a choice between *barchtchina*, the corvée, and *abrok*, tenure in money. In addition to this he founded a hospital for the peasants, and after the abolition of serfdom and the liquidation of accounts between masters and peasants, he endowed his servants gratuitously and even restored to the moujiks a fifth of the indemnity which they owed him for arable land. Besides all these concessions, which were in reality gifts, he made them a present of wood and other perquisites, the right to which was always renewed on his different returns to Spasskoë. Now, as always, the relations between Turgenev and his dependants were easy-going in the extreme. He remained always the master who had so easily made a friend of Porphyre Kartacheff. On one occasion he was on his way to pay a visit in his own carriage drawn by his own horses with his own coachman and footman. Suddenly the equipage stopped in the middle of the road, and the footman and the coachman commenced a game of cards. Their master looked on without protest and waited patiently until the end of the game. Turgenev, in spite of his long subjection to Western influences, was in natural accord with the national temperament, and could not be otherwise than sympathetic in his rôle of landed proprietor.

One cannot lay too great stress on this point, because the great novelist has been so often accused of having proved false to principles which, as a matter of fact, he never professed.

His relations with his own peasants may be judged from this characteristic little prophecy. "One day," said he to his friend Polonski, "we shall be seated behind the house drinking tea. Suddenly there will arrive by the garden a crowd of peasants. They will take off their hats and bow profoundly. 'Well, brothers,' I shall say to them, 'what is it that you want?' 'Excuse us, master,' they will reply: 'don't get angry. You are a good master, and we love you well. . . . But all the same we must hang you, and him as well' (pointing you out Polonski). 'What's that? Hang us?' 'Oh, yes! there is a Ukase that orders it. . . . We have brought a rope. Say your prayers. . . . We can easily wait a little while.'"

It is easy to see that life in Russia was becoming rather difficult for this cosmopolitan, whom his peasants, because of his eye-glass, called their "blind man."

But if life was difficult in the country it was far worse at St. Petersburg, where the police worried him as soon as he left the train. Here, too, he, the most suave and docile of men, was dragged into disputes with his brother authors. He was bothered by Gontcharof, who considered

himself plagiarised, and he had difficulties for editorial reasons with Nekrassof. Society received him without much enthusiasm and with a cordiality that rose and fell with his vogue as a novelist. The capital brought but little inspiration to Ivan Turgenev, and even at Spasskoë much of the illusion of the early days seemed to him to have fled, leaving his old home desolate and silent.

His relations with Tolstoy became exceedingly strained during one of these visits to Russia. Turgenev had given an account of the method of education that he had adopted for his daughter when the younger novelist interrupted him with, "Ah, yes: you are making experiments *in anima vili!*" Naturally, Turgenev was furious, and the incident very nearly led to a duel on more than one occasion. They were guests of the poet Fet at the time, and after Turgenev had so far lost control of himself as to threaten to strike Tolstoy he apologised instantly to his hostess. They left the house in different carriages, and Tolstoy sent two challenges en route, only one of which was received. Some time afterwards, when the old quarrel was apparently dead and buried, some mischief-maker told Turgenev that Tolstoy had practically accused him of cowardice, whereupon he sent a challenge immediately. His rival, however, replied that he had been misinformed, and peace was established between them. In reality their temperaments were hopelessly

antagonistic, and it was impossible for them to be genuine friends, though they continued to exchange visits. On one of these visits to Yasnaya Polyana Turgenev discussed over a game of chess with his host the old topic of giving all that one has to the poor. "What! everything that one has?" exclaimed Turgenev, with incredulous insistence. "Then you will give everything, everything that is in this room, even the table on which we are playing?" To which Tolstoy replied grimly: "Even the table on which we are playing."

But though Turgenev was neither interested in nor convinced by the "conversion" of Count Tolstoy, no one appreciated his work as an artist more keenly than he. In "War and Peace" he detected at once that the weak points were those which the public welcomed with enthusiasm—namely the historic and psychological *longueurs*—while what was really of the first order was the series of military and descriptive pictures. Turgenev asked from the artist only art, and his standpoint remained the same even when he was dying. He preserved always his own kind of sincerity, the earnestness of the artist as opposed to the earnestness of the conscious reformer. "My good and dear Friend," he wrote to Tolstoy almost at the very last,—"It is a long time since I have written to you, because I have been and I am, to speak frankly, on my death-bed. I cannot get well, there is no use in thinking of it. I write

to you before everything else to tell you how happy I have been to be your contemporary, and to express to you my last and immediate prayer. My friend, return to literature! Reflect that this gift has come to you from the Source of all things."

His relations with Dostoievsky were from first to last even more unfortunate. Dostoievsky introduced him in one of his novels as Karmazinoff, a spiteful and unsuccessful author. "They tell me," wrote Turgenev to Polonsky, "that Dostoievsky has brought me upon the stage; much good may it do him! He paid me a visit at Baden-Baden five years ago, not in order to repay me the money that he had borrowed, but in order to insult me in every kind of way on the subject of 'Smoke,' which, according to him, ought to be burnt by the common hangman. I listened in absolute silence to this philippic. What did I learn a little later? I had expressed to him all sorts of criminal opinions, which he had hastened to communicate to Berteneff—Berteneff in fact wrote to me about it. This would be a calumny pure and simple if Dostoievsky were not out of his mind, as I have very little doubt that he is. Perhaps he dreamed all that. But, Heavens! what miserable tittle-tattle!"

The antagonism between them was of old standing. One day, about the year 1840, several friends of Turgenev were playing cards at his house, and

among them were Belinsky, Ogareff and Hertzen. Dostoievsky was expected, and just as he entered the room there happened to be a general outburst of laughter at some foolish mistake of one of the players. Dostoievsky grew pale and left the room without uttering a word. At first no notice was taken of this, as they expected that he would return; but as he did not do so, his host went out to see what had become of him. The servant informed him that Fedor Mikhailovitch had been walking up and down outside the house for the last hour, without his hat. Turgenev rushed out of the house and asked Dostoievsky the meaning of this strange conduct. "By God!" exclaimed his guest, "it is intolerable! Wherever I go everybody mocks me. I had scarcely put foot in your house when you and your guests overwhelmed me with your ridicule. Are you not ashamed of it?" Turgenev did his best to convince him that no one had the slightest intention of making fun of him, but it was quite useless. He would not listen to reason, and returned to the hall only for his hat and overcoat, after which he left abruptly.

Dostoievsky's hatred of Turgenev became more and more bitter. That strange Russian of genius had himself been struck by the guillotine more than by any other of the wonders of Europe, and when Turgenev's "Execution of Troppman" appeared, he attacked it savagely for what he considered its

mincing affectation. "King Lear" also seemed to him feeble. "He is failing, he is becoming more and more pale," Dostoievsky gloated in triumph.

In the end the suave and ironical Turgenev grew almost equally bitter, and "C'est du Dostoievsky" became his most scornful comment. He retaliated also in print, and represented his rival as a badly balanced mediocrity. It is a misfortune that these two great Russian writers should have been so antipathetic to one another. It is a profound misfortune that he who best interpreted to the Western world the soul of Russia should have been the personal antagonist of the veritable confessor of that soul. For, whatever sombre, inchoate message wells up from the depths of the Slav's heart was Dostoievsky's by right of suffering, of punishment, of divination. He, and neither Turgenev nor Tolstoy, is the ultimate revealer of the wounded soul of the Slav who believes without reasoning, who divines without analysing, who feels without knowing. And Turgenev knew in his heart, through all his gentle, penetrating irony, that this epileptic of genius was not at all a badly balanced mediocrity. When the more than ordinarily unintelligent storm of abuse greeted "Fathers and Sons" Turgenev acknowledged that Dostoievsky was the one man who really divined what he had meant by the book. However that may be, it

was a loss to the creative artist in Turgenev to have been misunderstood by the man who of all others stands nearest to the heart of the Russian people. And when Russia acknowledged her loss in the death of this stricken man, who was the very symbol of her own suffering and endurance, it is, indeed, a peculiarly ironical circumstance that Turgenev, who ought best of all to have understood, turned derisively away.

But in spite of all these miseries of antagonism which renewed themselves on his returns to Russia, the old charm of that garden at Spasskoë would occasionally assert itself, and Turgenev would feel himself again that watchful dreamer for whom irony had already commenced to mingle with dreams. But outside of this oasis he is more and more overwhelmed by the all-pervading want of the Russian people. Poverty, squalor, rags, this is what he sees on all sides of him, so that it becomes more and more impossible to believe that Russia is the lagging leader of the nations. Nor can he believe that the time is even approaching when all this inarticulate endurance will vibrate into the revolt of action. He cannot believe; and in two books, the one wholly pessimistic, the other lit up by that inner faith in the Russian people which never wholly deserted him, in "Virgin Soil" and "Fathers and Sons," he has expressed the very kernel of his disillusion.

"'Virgin Soil,'" said Turgenev on one occasion,

"has cost me a great deal of energy. Everybody insults me now. They say that I do not understand what I am writing. That is false. I have studied the subject of 'Virgin Soil' to the bottom, and in spite of all the critics, I persist, now as formerly, in my opinions on the policy to be maintained against the Government." This was typical of Turgenev's attitude not only towards one book but towards a whole series of books: "That was his *Dada*," comments Pavlovsky; "his conviction that he thoroughly understood our youth was unshakeable, and our critics could not make him retract." One of them, speaking of the articles on "Virgin Soil" which were published abroad, concluded: "Foreigners can devote articles to it; as for us, we do not even wish to spit on it." "What stinginess, good God!" retorted Turgenev. He had already lashed what he asserted to be the only sign of evidence of energy in Young Russia, Young Russia's answer to all human progress—*cracher là-dessus*.

In "Virgin Soil" we have the familiar tragedy of the Russian Hamlet repeated upon the most hopeless stage in the world. Nezhdanov, the illegitimate son of a Russian noble, who is fired by revolutionary ideas, is at the same time conscious that he knows nothing of the Russian people for whose benefit the revolution is to be effected. He is engaged as a tutor by a certain Sipyagin, a Russian Liberal who preserves a sneaking affection

for the knout. At his house the young student meets his niece Marianna, a dependant who is out of sympathy with everybody and everything in this well-ordered house. She, too, longs passionately, not to acquire something for her own benefit, but to do something for Russia. She begins by falling in love with Nezhdanov.

The situation is only too familiar in the novels of Turgenev. With Nezhdanov it is a case of "I would and I would not." Instinctively he shrinks from this girl who believes in him; instinctively he realises that he will never be able to translate the resolutions that flash from her eyes. He is a poet, and action is demanded of him. He is a dreamer of complex dreams, and Fate has asked him to concentrate all the force of his being upon one woman. It is not in his nature to respond whole-heartedly to this ironical challenge of destiny. But as this romance has commenced he must do his part as best he can, and so he runs away with Marianna, and they conceal themselves in a factory of which his friend, Solomin, is manager. Here, Nezhdanov endeavours to come into touch with the Russian people. He disguises himself as a pedlar and distributes leaflets among the moujiks, who as a rule reply to him with jeers.

In the meantime the revolutionary authorities, in whose scheme of things Nezhdanov and Marianna are so many misunderstood pawns, become weary of inactivity. Something must be done.

Nezhdanov must show himself to be a leader of men. In response to the latest injunction he starts out in his horrible disguise more determined than ever, shouting revolutionary sentiments of the most advanced kind along the quiet country roads. The peasants merely stare at him in bewilderment as he drives past them in his lumbering cart. Suddenly he catches sight of a group of peasants in front of an open barn and, jumping down, he approaches them, shouting at the top of his voice ; " Freedom ! forward ! shoulder to shoulder ! " among a multitude of half-inarticulate phrases. The attitude of the peasants is that of slightly bewildered indifference, and the unfortunate leader of revolt continues his drive as far as the next village, where he is dragged into a tavern by a gigantic moujik. Then, in his rôle of a learner as well as of a teacher, he begins to drink, and the horrible vodka maddens him. Torrents of words foam from his lips—words, words, a veritable rage and torment of words. And still he drinks and drinks to the rhythm of this new rage, as though by some monstrous magic the apostle of liberty had been bewitched into a tavern hero. Even the peasants lose patience with him, handle him roughly, shout at him as he staggers into the cart to be driven back to the young girl who had sent him out as her knight-errant in the quest of liberty.

When consciousness comes back to him the

vision has lost the faintest film of glamour. He can no longer attempt to deceive himself. The farce grins up at him too closely for any subterfuge of nobility. He cannot continue, but on the other hand he cannot forsake his comrades or abandon this young girl who has trusted him with her life. She is waiting for him to tell her that he loves her with his soul, and then she will marry him. But he cannot believe even in that dream, and he will not lie, particularly now that he has read his failure in the brutalised stare of peasants' eyes. Between him and all fair dreams float the fumes of vodka ; the ennobling cry for Liberty has been drowned by the bawling of drunken clowns. Reality has pranced with heavy hoof upon the heart of this dreamer ; he can no longer screen his soul from disillusion. No longer, roused by rhetoric and furious aspirations unbacked by any evidence of action, can he hope even momentarily to deceive himself. The whole matter stands out in squalidly naked perspective. On the one side is a mere handful of thinkers, all more or less incapable of sustained, concentrated action, but faithful to their ideals, eager for sacrifice, however useless and however sordid. And opposed to these who would so gladly rescue them from themselves, are millions and millions of terribly contented people who shake them off listlessly, as some huge sullen brute would shake off flies. It is not that they have been getting out of touch

with the Russian people ; it is that they, a mere isolated group of dreamers absorbed in their own ideals, have no meaning whatsoever to the vast bulk of their compatriots. It is not that they have misunderstood the people's aspirations ; it is that as yet there are no aspirations to understand. Instead of divining some great but inarticulate dream of a race, this group of self-constituted apostles has merely endeavoured to impress its own ambitions upon a sluggish and dreamless people. It is all a mistake. From the very beginning it has been a mistake, by which there has been stamped upon many noble lives a martyrdom without result and only too often without conviction. Marianna believes in it still, but he cannot pretend to believe in it, and so he is only a clog to the girl who wishes him to share her beautiful fantasy. There is nothing for him to do upon the earth. He sees too clearly, and nothing will ever inspire him with that merciful illusion which preserves so many lives no less noble than his. And so Nezhdanov puts a bullet through his brain and leaves for ever this virgin soil upon which there still hovers the coma of the sleeping centuries. Nezhdanov is another of those stricken Russian Hamlets, but he is one of the very few heroes of Turgenev who has been, so to speak, led up to the very mouth of action.

There is in this book, however, in the person of Solomin, a new type that is the antithesis of the

Russian Hamlet. This factory manager had lived for many years in England, and had acquired the practical qualities of the Anglo-Saxon race. In his opinion there is wanted in Russia neither a Mirabeau nor a Camille Desmoulins, but rather very patient, laborious people who would teach the alphabet to children and pester their parents into making some efforts towards orderliness in their homes. That, rather than death on any imitated barricades, is, in the opinion of Solomin, the sacrifice demanded by Russia. The factory manager is utterly without enthusiasm, but also without cynicism. It is good for Russia that there should be factory managers like himself, and so he is doing his duty as a patriot by avoiding Siberia and keeping his head on his shoulders. Turgenev himself defended the cunning of Solomin as the only quality by which a revolutionary could possibly survive. Russian criticism, particularly incensed by this book, affirmed that Turgenev, living abroad, had completely forgotten Russian life and Russian aims. But the author of "Smoke," from his vantage-point of the Russian tree in Baden, was more and more overwhelmingly convinced that he knew to the core every class of Russian society. Solomin, however, was apparently a quite new type, and one, moreover, which Young Russia found it impossible to imitate.

This is perhaps remarkable, for Young Russia

had already imitated another new type in an earlier book—the nihilist hero of "Fathers and Sons." This book also is notoriously one of political disillusion, but its pessimism is infinitely less sombre than that of "Virgin Soil," in which, from the first page to the last, the suspicious Turgenev had been constantly at work. In the earlier book there is always the recognition of *useful* courage and honesty and steadfastness both in the older and in the younger generations. Above all, there is in this novel a character in whom Turgenev believes. Asked whether he had photographed Bazaroff from actual life, Turgenev replied :

"No, that is not true. That particular type had already absorbed me for a long time when, in 1860, while travelling in Germany, I met in a railway carriage a young Russian doctor. He was consumptive, tall, with black hair and a bronzed complexion. I made him talk, and was astonished at his keen and original opinions. Two hours afterwards we separated, and my novel was done. I gave two years to writing it, but that was no work for me ; it was merely a matter of putting down on paper a work already complete. You have perhaps observed that my Bazaroff is a blonde. It is the surest proof that he was sympathetic to me. In my works all my sympathetic heroes are blondes. From my own observations I have come to the conclusion that blondes are

always more sympathetic than dark people. For example, Belinsky, Hertzen and the others. . . ."

So absorbed was he by the conception of this nihilist type that while he was writing "Fathers and Sons" he kept a journal of Bazaroff: "If I read a new book, if I met an interesting man, or even if an event of importance, political or social, took place, I would enter it always in this journal from the point of view of Bazaroff. The result was a very voluminous and curious manuscript. I lost it unfortunately. Some one or other borrowed it from me to read it, and did not return it to me."

Certainly, in none of his books has Turgenev expressed more frankly his underlying belief in Russia and the Russian people than in this study of a revolt which is greater than the inchoate failure that absorbs it. Turgenev was not equivocal in regard to Bazaroff, as so many have supposed. "The death of Bazaroff," he wrote in a letter, "which the Comtesse de Sallis called *heroic* and criticises for that reason, should in my opinion give the last touch to his tragic figure; your young people, they see in it only an accident. I end on this remark. If the reader does not love Bazaroff with all his roughness, all his harshness, his pitiless dryness, his asperity—if he does not love him, I say, the fault is in me, I have not attained to my aim. To flatter like a spaniel I have not wished, although doubtless by that

means I might have been able to win over all the young people to my side; but I had no wish to purchase a popularity by concessions of that kind. It is better to lose the campaign (and I believe that I have lost it) than gain it by such a subterfuge. I dreamed of a figure, sombre, untamed, great, only half emerged from barbarism, brave, wayward and honest, none the less condemned to perish since it is always on the threshold of the future." In another letter he observes of this hero, who seems to have so far outstripped the ordinary Turgenevian hero: "The sentiment of duty, an excellent sentiment of patriotism in the true sense of that word, that is all that is wanted at the present moment. And Bazaroff, on the other hand, is a type, a precursor, a great harmonious figure, with a certain prestige, not without a certain halo."

In spite of the fact that he was to so large an extent taken from life, Bazaroff, like Solomin, was accepted as a new type evolved by Turgenev rather than one portrayed from contemporary Russian life. Resolute, arrogant, plebeian, believing in the future and emancipated from the past, the young Russian doctor is a product of materialism. His whole personality vibrates with energy, and the faith that is in him is centred not in a dream of idealism, but in the closely observed fact. Old and Young Russia alike considered themselves caricatured in this volume, in which,

however, it is not the two generations but the types themselves that are antagonistic to each other. Turgenev has repeatedly defended his hero, Bazaroff, but what was his real attitude ? It is almost impossible to recognise in this fastidious observer a whole-hearted sympathiser with Bazaroff, the man who squares his shoulders and forces his way through a browbeaten world. Turgenev by every instinct of his temperament was bound to the lazy aristocratic traditions which he ridiculed and denied. Fine, sensitive, exotic, it was almost physically repulsive to him to hob-nob with uncouth partisans of action, in his opinion at once absurd and ill-timed. And this physical fastidiousness which so enraged his enemies is betrayed in this volume almost as much as in "Virgin Soil." In that book he was unable to force himself to believe in any vital and vitalising type that might yet break through the desolating coma of Russia. In "Fathers and Sons" he persuaded himself that he was indeed captured by the personality of the young free-thinking doctor. After all here is a man at last. Here at last is the incarnation of will that, like a new elixir of life, may work through these will-less, voiceless millions.

But is he really attached to Bazaroff ? Is that suspicious Turgenev really lulled into a quiet contentment with the Russian of the future ? One can hardly believe it, in spite of Turgenev's own protests. One recalls those two duel scenes,

both in the freshness of early morning, both tinged with irony, both robbed of the faintest fringe of romance. The duel in "Spring Torrents," however, is a *jeu d'esprit* compared with the duel between Bazaroff, the representative of the new school, and Pavel, the representative of the old. Every nuance is noted in the outer bearing of each as they face each other with loaded pistols for the sake of a serf girl. Pavel is obeying his code; he is cold, faultless, correct, and from any standpoint of civilisation absolutely in the right. Physical fear is unknown to either, but Bazaroff is impressed, almost perturbed, by the quietude of the older generation. This man who knows nothing at all of Russia's hopes, nothing of the unleashed tumult of democracy, nothing of the new passion that is to galvanise the old inertia, this imperturbable figure-head of a frozen school, will assuredly shoot and shoot to kill. That is what Bazaroff understands as he faces the elderly prince, not without curiosity, at ten paces. But just as Turgenev refuses to allow any halo to surround poor Sanin after that duel near Frankfort, so he refuses to allow the exchange of pistol-shots to throw any romantic glamour upon either of these more mature combatants.

The real opponent of Bazaroff is not the wounded Russian prince, but Madame Odintzoff, the perfumed indolent woman of the world, over whose personality the two Turgenevs were always con-

tending, the one being drawn to her as to the goal of all desire, the other denying her as an enslaver of the soul. One sees her in this book as a veritable triumph of seductive indolence. Indolent, indolent, and always indolent—that is her secret, her charm and her emptiness in one. The soul of this woman permeates a household like a distilled essence laden with poisonous dreams. The rough Russian doctor is armed against every enemy but this. The plebeian can withstand the hauteur of the aristocrat, the threats of the reactionary, the denouncing clamour of the priest, but he cannot resist the troubling perfume of this woman's indolent unrest. Like hypnotism it goes to his head, and the woman is not wholly displeased that it should. She is able to haunt this savage man, whose faith has been so long confined to the exact sciences. Quietly the summer days follow each other, and more and more the young doctor trembles under a spell against which all known science is futile. The positivist has become a foolish dreamer like all the rest. How shall he, this Samson shorn of his strength, dissipate the languor of the centuries from the Russian steppes?

And the indolent woman, reading with sleepy half-closed eyes French novels between the perfumed sheets, muses dimly on this oddity of New Russia. What is this Bazaroff? Is he a man like the rest? There has been nothing like him in Russia before. After all, he might be amusing

as a new type—a plebeian with his own pride, a pride in Russia. Thus she muses on him lazily, and a little timidly even, for there are some women for whom, in La Bruyère's phrase, a gardener is also a man. For her, indeed, the young doctor seems to be essentially a man, and Bazaroff the conqueror exults in this new conquest which seems so close to him. Deeper and deeper the intensity of his passion wells up, and the embodiment of that graceful civilisation which he denies lures him on with her caressing, satisfied smile of many memories. That is what men are, rather open and simple, she seems to say to him. But after all Bazaroff may be a little different, and he shall have time to prove that he is really a novelty. She is kind to Bazaroff, the man who understands the new learning without in the least understanding the old wisdom. Suddenly he blurts out clumsily his savage secret. And now he has said to her the last word that he need ever say. If he is no more complex than that, if he has nothing more to tell her than that, the New Russian can go the old way, his own familiar way from which he should never have strayed. As a savage he was interesting enough just so long as savagery retained its own secret, but when that secret was revealed, then Bazaroff became a tedious person who ceased abruptly to amuse. His little friend, Arcady, is more akin to her. It was perhaps foolish to have played so long with one who could become so

uncouthly in earnest. "Madame Odintzoff," wrote Turgenev in a letter, "is also as little in love with Bazaroff as with Arcady. How is it that you do not see it? She is yet another type of our lazy epicurean ladies, of the women of the noblesse. The Comtesse de Sallis has understood her very well. Odintzoff wished at first to caress a wolf (Bazaroff) so that he might not bite her, then to caress the curly head of a youth and to remain always stretched out on her sofa." That is the explanation; but beneath the explanation there is something temperamental and unreasonable. In no book more than in "Fathers and Sons" does Turgenev show his almost jealous attitude towards women. No one is good enough for them except the incarnations of Turgenev himself, such as Sanin and in a lesser degree the hero of "Smoke." For example, he admittedly respects and even hails with enthusiasm the young Russian doctor while he dislikes Madame Odintzoff. At the same time he involuntarily protects her from the caresses of this sombre savage. Above all, he shares Pavel's prejudice in regard to Bazaroff's advances to the serf girl, who was not the least intimately personal of his own memories.

Bazaroff has done with them all, and goes back to the simple people from whom his life had sprung. Like Nezhdanov in "Virgin Soil," Bazaroff, the very antithesis of a Russian Hamlet, returns to the people. And to him also there comes the

sensation of powerlessness before the almost physical inertia of resistance. Bazaroff, the Slav Titan of Science who by denying old fetishes had hoped to bring into being a new faith, is beaten by this ironical stagnation. He who had felt so avid before the feast of life is paralysed in the face of this starved solitude. The old people cannot understand the brooding rage and discontent that smoulder ceaselessly in the heart of their son. The would-be Prometheus realises that in this region of endless silence he is not being punished by the gods for bestowing the gift of fire upon mortals, but that the gift itself is being thrust stupidly and indifferently aside. The motif of this book, however, is not so desolate as that of "Virgin Soil." Nezhdanov killed himself because he could not face the conflict between his dream and actuality. But for Bazaroff, no matter how terrible the odds against him, there is always at least belief even in the midst of denial. If he cannot lead men to freedom, he can at least serve science, be faithful to the truth while there is life in his body. And he can die doing his duty in the service of his own faith, a duty none the less noble because it is performed among the very humblest. The death of Bazaroff is tragic, but it is not attended by the sensation of an inner hopelessness which surrounds the death of Nezhdanov.

Each reading in turn of Russia's enigma, whether evolved in Russia or under the shade of

that Russian tree, irritated and enraged his compatriots. His old friends were disappearing one after the other, and in 1870 Hertzen died. Turgenev felt that old age had already stolen upon him, and his pessimism became more and more a fixed habit of thought. Like most of the inhabitants of Baden he was interested in the Franco-Prussian War, and he believed in the victory of the French arms, and that the French uniform would be soon conspicuous about the Russian tree. "Everybody is going away," he writes to his brother on July 27, 1870; "as for me, I remain. What can they do to me?" He was rather astonished at the subsequent action of events, and though he at first believed that the Prussians represented the future of civilisation as opposed to the past, he soon realised that they were no better than any other conquerors. He protested against the annexation of Alsace. "Nationality," he said, "has nothing to say to it here. The Alsatians are French in heart and soul."

Turgenev would have been quite content to remain on German soil if the Viardots had remained. As it was, as soon as peace was declared they moved to Paris, and the Russian, abandoning his bitter vantage-point of the Russian tree, sold his villa in order to follow them. "If they had gone to Australia," he remarked to a friend, "I would have followed them there."

As a matter of fact he followed them first to

England, and in 1871 he wrote from London to Flaubert: "I am in England, not for the pleasure of being there, but because my friends, who have been pretty well ruined by the war, have come here to try and make a little money. Nevertheless there is some good in the English people; but they all of them, even the cleverest, lead such a hard life." And before this he had already written to Flaubert, perhaps the innermost secret of both their temperaments, certainly the secret of the suave as well as of the suspicious Turgenev: "We have hard times to go through, we, who are *born onlookers.*"

CHAPTER IV

IT was in October 1871 that the purely Parisian phase of Turgenev's life commenced. The Viardots had established themselves at No. 50, Rue de Douai, and the Russian took up his quarters in the third story of the same house. Here, as at Baden-Baden, he experienced the tranquillity which was so necessary to him as an artist. "I have got back into my rut," he wrote in 1875 on his return from a visit to Russia. "Oh, the charm of days that resemble each other!" Certainly, in this Parisian family the suspicious Turgenev was almost wholly silenced. With the Viardots he had found that quietude which had eluded him always in his wanderings, that rest, as it were from oneself, which evaded so many of his heroes as they rushed across great distances in its pursuit. The days resembled each other. That was sufficient for Turgenev, who was a connoisseur in all the illusions of experience. In the morning he would work, and in the afternoon he would go to the Salon or he would pay visits. In the evening he would accompany the Viardots to the theatre. Above

all, there would be music in this home of his adoption, music that was worth listening to, as Gustave Flaubert well knew. "Hier soir," he wrote to George Sand, "Madame Viardot nous a chanté de l'Alceste . . . de pareilles émotions consolent de l'existence."

Externally at least his life was tranquil, and his reputation as a writer had long been established abroad as well as at home. He had been even called, presumably without irony, "le célèbre Musset Russe" and, rather less ineptly, "le géant des Steppes finnoises." But his very popularity irritated him. "That bores me," he said frankly. "I am turning into a picturesque old man." In short, the suspicious Turgenev, lulled to sleep in the suave atmosphere of the Viardots' home, found full scope for his morose curiosity in the analysis of French manners and the French temperament.

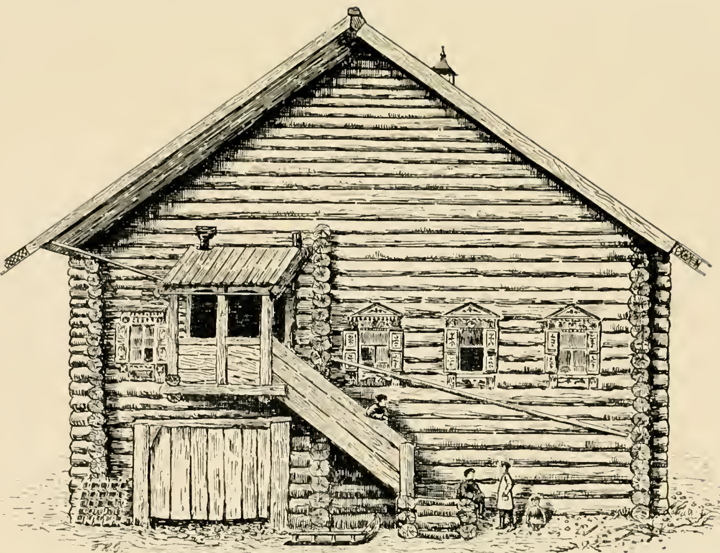
For the rest, Turgenev praised the French nation and the French individually according as the suspicious Turgenev that was in him was or was not lulled into quiescence. But when a compatriot brought the stereotyped charges against the French home Turgenev was up in arms at once. "It is the fashion amongst us," he protested, "to tear the French to pieces on this subject; but I am able to tell you that the French family has very much more solid foundations than our own." But the French spirit, though he appreciated its

exquisite suavity and biting gaiety, was alien from his meditative and ironical genius. The magniloquence of Hugo, especially, irritated him, and though he acknowledged him to be the greatest lyric poet of his period, he condemned him as a novelist. His personality was essentially grating to Turgenev. "Once," he says, "while I was at his house, we talked about German poetry. Victor Hugo, who does not like anybody to speak in his presence, interrupted me, and undertook a portrait of Goethe. 'His best work,' said he in an Olympian tone, 'is "Wallenstein."' 'Pardon, dear master, "Wallenstein" is not by Goethe. It is by Schiller.' 'It is all the same: I have read neither one nor the other; but I know them much better than those who have learnt them by heart.'" To this superb statement the author of "Smoke" made no reply.

Turgenev was never tired of alluding to Victor Hugo's vanity, and M. Garchin is the authority for this extraordinary anecdote attributed to the Russian novelist. One evening, it seems, the admirers of Victor Hugo maintained in his presence that the street in which he lived ought to bear his name. Some one then observed that the street was too small and that a more worthy one should be found. Then they began to name street after street that seemed possibly deserving of such a distinction. The streets became more and more important as the enthusiasm increased, until at

last a genuine apostle maintained that "Paris herself should esteem it an honour to bear the name of Hugo." The master, leaning against the mantel-piece, listened quietly as this auction of flattery proceeded. Then suddenly, turning to the young man who had alluded to Paris, he said very gravely, "Ça viendra, mon cher ; ça viendra !"

So far as his own work was concerned Turgenev had no belief in the expressions of French admiration. Nor did he believe that they appreciated the national genius of his country. "The French," he wrote once, "recognise no originality whatever in other peoples. The genius of England, of Germany, of Italy, is a dead letter or almost a dead letter to them ; as for my own country, do not let us speak of it ! . . . Apart from their own affairs, they are interested in nothing, they know nothing." He was profoundly sceptical, or professed to be so, about the alleged success of the French translations of his books : "Of what interest are they to the French, our dreams and our distracted heroes ! . . . My lovers are neither gay nor voluptuous ! . . . The most insignificant romance of Octave Feuillet gives them more pleasure than all mine put together." And he quotes, as though once and for ever to sum up the French standpoint towards Russian literature, the comment of a very distinguished Frenchman upon one of the masterpieces of Pushkin : "C'est plat, mon cher !" Often indifferent as to



A TYPICAL ISBA.

his own success in Paris, he was extremely anxious that Tolstoy should be appreciated there, and in this connection Charles Edmond has noted in a letter a characteristic incident. "The *Temps* had already published some of his books when, chancing to meet him one day, I remarked to him that our mutual friend Hébrard would be very glad to offer him again the hospitality of the *Temps*.

"'Let us go to my rooms,' replied Turgenev after a moment's thought, 'and I can promise both you and Hébrard a surprise with which you will be more than satisfied.'

"This was the first time that I had ever heard Ivan Serguéivitch speak in such a flattering way of his own merits. On arriving at his rooms, Turgenev took from his writing-table a roll of paper. I give what he said word for word. 'Listen,' he said: 'Here is *copy* for your paper of an absolutely first-rate kind. This means that I am not its author. The master, for he is a *real* master, is almost unknown; but I assure you, upon my soul and conscience. . . .'

"Two days afterwards there appeared in the *Temps* 'Les Souvenirs de Sébastopol,' by Léon Tolstoy."

In precisely the same spirit of disinterested kindness Turgenev did his best to make Zola known in Russia. He used to boast, indeed, of having discovered the talent of Zola, though it

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was utterly antipathetic to Turgenev, who made this comment on the creator of the "Comédie Humaine": "Balzac, c'est un ethnographe: ce n'est pas un artiste." Naturally, he considered Zola still less an artist, but he did his very best to help him in the comparatively early days when help was needed. One anecdote of Turgenev's sheds a curious light on the famous exponent of naturalism. Shortly after the publication of "L'Assommoir" Turgenev, at the suggestion of some ladies, invited Zola to read aloud from his own works, and after some persuasion he consented. "The ladies," narrates Turgenev, "expected to see a Bohemian with shock-hair standing on end, uttering right and left coarse words, impertinences, perhaps something worse. They were rather surprised when they saw that the champion of naturalism was a quite presentable young man, with his hair cut short, in evening clothes and wearing white gloves. None the less they preserved the hope that Zola would be worthy of himself during the reading, and waited for that moment with impatience. It arrived at last: Zola mounted the platform . . . but here he produced a quite unexpected scandal. Zola grew white, grew red, and remained for some seconds dumb, without being able to utter a word. He made a brave attempt to commence the reading, but alas! he himself did not recognise his own voice. His

teeth clashed against one another. The book swayed in his hand. He was unable to see. He mumbled something as he looked at the book, but his audience no longer listened to him. The ladies covered their lips with their handkerchiefs and burst out laughing; the gentlemen made unheard-of efforts to remain serious; in short the scandal was complete." Then and there Zola made a vow never to read in public again, and years afterwards he remarked to Turgenev, "Even now when I recall at night that trifle, I become hot and cold in turn."

Turgenev, on the other hand, appears to have been an intensely sympathetic reader. On one occasion he read from his own "Annals of a Sportsman," and afterwards a fragment of Pushkin. "His own work," comments Pavlovsky, "he read calmly, with mastery, so that the public, forgetting the reader, was entirely absorbed by the pictures that he sketched during his reading before their eyes. But, when the turn of the 'Tziganes' arrived, the reader's voice suddenly vibrated. His figure bent, his face grew pale. Moved, almost carried away by the subject, he appeared to have forgotten the audience and everybody else. He gave himself up without reserve to the wonderful illusion. The final scene he read with a voice scarcely audible. When he had finished and come down from the platform his hand was shaking. It seemed

to me that he was weeping, he who never wept."

But Turgenev's sympathy was not merely the sympathy of the artist, limited to works of art. He, who was all his life assailed by malevolent personal enemies, was never weary of performing the most disinterested acts of kindness. But even here the essential irony of his temperament revealed itself, and he would give, knowing all the time that he was being victimised by an impostor. For example, a certain young woman in distress in Paris insisted upon visiting Turgenev, from whom she immediately borrowed 750 francs. Shortly after this imposition Turgenev explained to a visitor that in his opinion the lady was a *comédienne*, that her distress was nothing very terrible, and that she was not separated, as she pretended to be, from her husband. Moreover, he prophesied that he had not heard the last of her and that she would not leave Paris. In this one respect, however, he was wrong. The lady did leave Paris, and shortly afterwards wrote to him from Russia. The letter said nothing about the return of the 750 francs, but reproached Turgenev for being anxious to rid himself of the writer. It ended with the modest demand for a life pension.

On another occasion a young girl came to Paris for reasons connected with her health. She was a writer, and Turgenev put himself to endless trouble

on her account, introduced her to people, went from hotel to hotel in search of a lodging for her, and even presented her to doctors who, according to him, offered their services free. In short, he did everything in his power to help her—first of all because he believed in her talent, and secondly because she had shown herself capable of self-sacrifice. For, in her own wretched Russian village, the young writer had had compassion upon a poor sick little girl whom her own parents had neglected. She had taken her with her to Moscow, paid all her expenses, and done everything for her that a mother could do for a daughter. Finally, she succeeded in curing her, but at the cost of her own health. This was a story in which Turgenev delighted, and he who was so profoundly suspicious of great reputations lowered his voice when speaking of this poor unknown writer.

There were only too many such cases, and nobody knew how to deal with them as did Turgenev, whose *malice* was almost proverbial. But no irony pervaded these little comedies of kindness. The world-novelist would carefully think out plans to help proud young people to whom one dared not offer the very suspicion of patronage. Sometimes a translation would be commissioned, for no particular reason. At other times a manuscript would be accepted by a journal to which it had never been submitted.

On one occasion at least an author had been paid in advance, but finding that his manuscript did not appear in print, he began to make inquiries. Then he would be told that the editor had gone to some place or other, nobody knew where, or perhaps that the manuscript had gone astray in the most unexpected fashion.

There are innumerable stories of such kindness on the part of the malicious Turgenev. Even towards the very end, in January 1883, a young Russian girl came to him for help. She had wished to enter the school of medicine, but on arriving she had found that she was too late for registration. The novelist promised to do what he could for her, and undertook a long correspondence on the subject. Being too ill to approach the authorities in person, he persuaded one of his friends to do so. Not content with this, hearing that the young girl was delicate, the author of "Smoke" anxiously recommended her to wear flannel vests, and asked her two weeks afterwards if she had followed his advice.

Naturally, he was constantly victimised. Sometimes he shrugged his shoulders and took the imposture as a matter of course. On the subject of one impostor at least he showed himself almost a clairvoyant. "That man," he said, "will become a collaborator of Katkoff; he will betray the Nihilists with whom he is now associated and

will cover them with mud; he will publish his recollections of me after my death, and will pose as my intimate friend. As he has letters from me, people will easily believe in our friendship, and will accept as absolute truth every word that he will put into my mouth." This prophecy was fulfilled in detail; and about another man who had deceived him Turgenev's clairvoyance was no less unerring.

But before anything else in the world Turgenev was an artist. "Has any misfortune happened to you?" he said once to a friend. "Sit down and write 'This or that has happened, I have experienced this or that emotion.' The grief will pass and the excellent page will remain. This page sometimes may become the nucleus of a great work, which will be artistic since it will be true, actually lifelike."

"It is all very well," interrupted his friend, "to say, 'Sit down and write,' when a man has perhaps but one wish, namely to blow his brains out."

"Good! What does it matter? Write that too! If all the unhappy artists were to blow their brains out, there would be none left, for they are all more or less unhappy; there cannot be artists who are actually happy. Happiness is repose, and repose creates nothing. As for me, I always keep my journal, in which I write down everything that interests me. In that journal am I

at home; I judge, and I reverse judgments, on all men and things."

"You intend to publish it one day?"

"Never! I have enjoined Madame Viardot to burn it immediately after my death, and she will fulfil my wish religiously."

Apart from the Viardots and a very few of his compatriots, he was most at his ease with Gustave Flaubert, whose work he had always admired in spite of its innate antagonism to his own. Flaubert met him for the first time in 1866, when he sat next to him at dinner. "That man," he wrote to George Sand, "has such an exquisite power of producing impressions, even in conversation, that he has shown me George Sand leaning over a balcony in Madame Viardot's château at Rosay." Three years before this, however, on February 23, 1863, we find the first note on Turgenev in the "Journal des Goncourts": "Dinner at Magny's; Charles Edmond brought us Turgenev, that foreign writer with such a delicate talent, the author of the 'Mémoires d'un Seigneur Russe' and of the 'Hamlet Russe.' He is a charming colossus, a suave giant with white hair, who seems to be the good genius of some mountain or forest. He is handsome, gloriously handsome, enormously handsome, with the blue of the heavens in his eyes, with the charm of the Russian sing-song accent, with that melody in which there lurks a suspicion of the child and of the negro. Pleased

and put at his ease by the ovation that we gave him, he talked to us curiously on the subject of Russian literature, which he maintains, from the novel to the play, to be regularly launched upon the waves of realism." Seven years later the intimacy between Turgenev and Flaubert was firmly established. "Apart from you and Turgenev," writes the Master to George Sand, "I do not know a human being with whom I can talk over things which I have really at heart." After the War Turgenev became a regular habitué at the Magny dinners. Perhaps it was the craving for serenity on the part of Flaubert which endeared him to the Russian in spite of so many differences of race and temperament. Flaubert from early childhood had had a curious antipathy to violent action, and owing to his inexhaustible work his life had been more than ordinarily sedentary. "It exasperated him," notes his pupil, Guy de Maupassant, "to see people walking or moving about him, and he declared in his mordant, sonorous, always rather theatrical voice, that it was not philosophic." "One can only write and think seated, he said." This curious antipathy to activity, this surprised and helpless irritation at merely physical disturbances is conspicuous in Flaubert's letters to George Sand during the Franco-Prussian War.

The friendship with Flaubert helps to explain much that is enigmatic in the character and in the

work of Turgenev. It explains to no small extent the Turgenevian hero with whom he has been so often reproached. It explains to no small extent his utter indifference to the hero in our own Anglo-Saxon sense. He was at home with Flaubert, but never at home with the brothers de Goncourt, or even with the author of "Sapho." The so-called quarrel with Alphonse Daudet, which was so foolishly exploited after Turgenev's death, was in reality nothing more or less than an involuntary clashing of sensitive but alien temperaments. But this involuntary clashing with Daudet, and this equally involuntary "fitting-in" with Flaubert do at least hint at the mental processes of this Slav giant, whose eyes were singularly alert in contrast with that slow meditative serenity of pessimism which was perhaps the innermost secret of Ivan Turgenev's soul. Flaubert alone, perhaps, appealed to the naïve, calm Turgenev at these Parisian dinners; while the other guests, in a more or less degree, roused that suspicious twin-self whom the author of "Salammbô" so easily disarmed.

For Turgenev—he has confessed it himself—a work of art was in no sense of the word an expression of the will, but rather the unburdening of some impression, almost, if not actually, physical in its intensity. He was, in short, an excellent illustration of hyperæsthesia. "The higher we rise," says Lombroso, "in the moral scale, the

more sensibility increases; it is the highest in great minds, and is the source of their misfortunes as well as of their triumphs. They feel and notice more things, and with greater vivacity and tenacity, than other men; their recollections are richer, and their mental combinations more fruitful. Little things, accidents that ordinary people do not see or notice, are observed by them, brought together in a thousand ways, which we call *creations*, and which are only binary and quaternary combinations of sensations." To no human being could these words be applied more aptly than to Turgenev, for whom some quite physical impression would be the embryo of a work of art. Then, for weeks, he would shut himself up in his room, walking up and down, groaning, "like a lion in a cage." After which he would sit down to write with all the facility of one whose subconsciousness is being given full play. Actual memories renewed the first salt of their sorrow in these pictures. "I must describe her," he writes, "in her open coffin, when her parents come to kiss her according to custom. . . . I have taken part in farewells of this kind. There is my day spoilt!" But when his friends protested that if these tragic pictures made him ill, it would be better to change the endings of his stories, Turgenev would not hear of such concessions. "It ends badly," he would say, "because I wish to unburden myself of a personal recollection."

This admission explains, if anything in the world can explain, that aroma of loss, of regret, of infinite happiness just missed, which pervades the very slightest of his stories.

To Flaubert he could reveal every side of his nature without the slightest suspicion or fear of misunderstanding, and in a single letter, written in 1872, he shows himself as an agreeable and kindly man of the world, and as a meditative artist. "I shall go," he writes in this letter from Russia, "straight as an arrow to Paris, then from there to my daughter in Touraine, who is on the point of making me a grandfather; then from there to Valéry-sur-Somme, where I shall rejoin my old friends, the Viardots. I shall idle and I shall work if I can, then I shall go to Paris, in order to meet there one Flaubert, whom I love much, and with whom I shall go to his home at Croisset, or to Madame Sand, at Nohant, as it appears she wants to have us there. And then from October onwards, Paris. There you are!" That was Turgenev, the amiable kindly Parisian by adoption.

But in this very letter he translates something of the savour of his native Russia. "I believe, as you do, that a visit to Russia alone with me would do you good, but it should be spent wandering about the paths of an old country garden, steeped in rustic scents, and filled with strawberries, birds, sunshine and shadow, all equally sunk in sleep, and two hundred acres of waving

rye all around us ; it used to be delicious. One finds inertia stealing over one, together with a sense of solemnity, vastness, and monotony ; a sense which has something animal in it, and something divine. One comes out of it as if one had had some strengthening bath, and takes up again the ordinary mill of existence." Such was Turgenev in his almost naïve relations with Gustave Flaubert. But undoubtedly some of his Parisian associates aroused in him that involuntary antagonism of suspicion from which no single one of his books can be said to be wholly free.

Nor in Russia could he yield himself always to the sluggish, dreaming influences, to the quietude of "under the water." There he would refer constantly to foreign friends and foreign experiences, just as in Paris he was perpetually haunted by the sense of nostalgia. But in spite of this he showed himself a real cosmopolitan in literature, translating Goethe and Swinburne as well as his own Pushkin. He was a welcome guest at Nohant no less than at Croisset, and George Sand writes of him with genuine appreciation : "Le grand *Moscove* est venu chez nous ! . . . Quel aimable et digne homme ! Et quel talent modeste ! On l'adore ici, et je donne l'exemple." His charm was felt equally at the Magny dinners, as the Journal notes : "Le doux géant, l'aimable barbare nous charme, dès le souper, par ce mélange de naïveté et de finesse, la séduction de la race slave relevée

chez lui, par l'originalité d'un esprit personnel, et par un savoir immense et cosmopolite." But even in the intimacy of these dinners the Slav remained always a stranger in a strange land. These realists were to him the very ravagers of mystery, who would describe physical passion imagining that they had interpreted love. He was constitutionally antipathetic to their habit of thought. For him, realist though he was after his own fashion, mystery was essential, was in a way the only current to which his sensitive genius would ever respond. It was impossible for him to be really *en rapport* with that Parisian cynicism which pervaded the Magny dinners in one phase or other, even if it were only the cynicism of fatigued regret. It was not a question of a man being out of touch with his fellow guests ; it was a question of the involuntary revolt of a dreamer against those who would tear him from his dream. That is what he could not forgive these talented Frenchmen, and that is why he so often turned in mind from the centre of the world's civilisation to those desolate steppes whose secret was his own.

The famous dinners were called "the dinners of the Hissed Authors." Flaubert, Alphonse Daudet has told us, was a member of this dining society through the failure of his "Candidat," Zola through the "Bouton de Rose," Goncourt on account of "Henriette Maréchal." Daudet

himself claimed right by his "Arlésienne." "As for Turgenev," he adds, "he pledged his word that he had been hissed in Russia, and as it was a long way off, we did not go there to find out." One cannot exaggerate the importance of these dinners in relation to Turgenev, because at them he was the representative and interpreter of the Russian temperament in the very heart of Europe. It was at these dinners that with an almost surreptitious tenderness he indicated rather than expressed the enigmatic charm of *la femme Russe.* It was at these dinners that in his high monotone he hinted at the innermost secret of his art—the "couleur toute particulière" of love. He found his own chosen colour of love almost invariably in a Russian woman. "Aucune autre," he said once, "ne peut aimer d'un amour aussi absolu, aussi désintéressé. Elle aime le peuple, et elle va dans ses ranges sans phrases ; elle va et elle le sert ; elle s'enfouit dans un village ; elle oublie sa propre personne, se refuse toute affection personnelle, et même la maternité."

At these dinners, too, he protested against that over-lucidity of Western logic which seemed to him inimical to what is best both in life and in art. He pleaded for the *brouillard slav.* With the Russians, he reasoned, this mist was a preserver. On a snow plough, for example, one is told not to think of the cold, for if one thinks of it one will die. "Very well," reasoned Turgenev,

"thanks to that mist of which I was just speaking, the Slav with the *chasse-neige* does not think of the cold, and with me in the same way the idea of death effaces itself and soon glides away." This Slavonic mistiness, this evasion of the last insistence of logic, this shrinking from the final verdict of justice, seemed to Turgenev to lie at the very core of the Russian character. On Sunday, March 5, 1876, he is quoted in the "Journal" as follows :

"Je n'ai, jamais si bien, vu qu'hier, combien les races sont différentes ; ça m'a fort rêvé toute la nuit. Nous sommes cependant, n'est-ce pas, nous des gens du même métier, des gens de plume ? Eh bien, hier, dans *Madame Caverlet*, quand le jeune homme a dit à l'amant de sa mère qui allait embrasser sa sœur : 'Je vous défends d'embrasser cette jeune fille.' Eh bien, j'ai éprouvé un mouvement de répulsion, et il y aurait eu cinq cents Russes dans la salle, qu'ils auraient éprouvé le même sentiment . . . et Flaubert, et les gens qui étaient dans la loge, ne l'ont pas éprouvé ce moment de répulsion. . . . J'ai beaucoup réfléchi dans la nuit. . . . Oui, vous êtes bien des latins, il y a chez vous du romain et de sa religion du droit, en un mot, vous êtes des hommes de la loi. . . . Nous, nous ne sommes pas ainsi. . . . Comment dire cela ? . . . Voyons, supposez chez nous un rond, autour duquel sont tous les vieux Russes, puis derrière, pêle-mêle, les jeunes Russes.

Eh bien, les vieux Russes disent oui ou non—auxquels acquiescent ceux qui sont derrière. Alors, figurez-vous que devant ce ' oui ou non ' la loi n'est plus, n'existe plus, car la loi chez les Russes ne se cristallise pas, comme chez vous. Un exemple, nous sommes voleurs en Russie, et cependant qu'un homme ait commis vingt vols qu'il avoue, mais qu'il soit constaté qu'il y ait eu besoin, qu'il ait faim, il est acquitté. . . . Oui, vous êtes des hommes de la loi, de l'honneur, nous, tout autocratisés que nous soyons, nous sommes des hommes, et comme il cherche son mot, je lui jette ' de l'humanité.' ' Oui, c'est cela,' reprend-il, ' nous nous sommes des hommes moins conventionnels, nous sommes des hommes de l'humanité.' "

One can almost see him, speaking in his high, nervous voice in that gentle sing-song French, towering above these men of the world as he reveals the complex barbarism of his race. There is no mockery in those enigmatic eyes as he utters the last secret of the Slav, who pardons easily because he can fully believe in no single one of the shibboleths of the centuries. Nothing has crystallised in the mobile heart of the Slav, not even regret itself. Intellectual revolt from any conventional custom means little or nothing to him, because the stamp of convention has pressed only upon the surface of a nature at once wistful and tameless. Other Russian writers had shared this synthesis of emancipation and

limitation so fully that they were unaware of its existence. Turgenev alone, or almost alone, stood, so to speak, outside of the Russian point of view, so that even in sharing and defending it he was at least able to analyse it. But this interpreter to the West, in spite of his preference for the crystallisation of art, was essentially of his own people, and in "The Annals of a Sportsman" one sees how closely allied he was in nature to the simplest of his compatriots.

But before turning to the book through which was consummated the great wish of his life, let us turn to a less kindly, to a more suspicious analysis of the Russian character.

It has been often remarked that in "On the Eve" the one individual capable of action is not a Russian at all, but a Bulgarian. In no other book, not even in "Virgin Soil," is there communicated the atmosphere of a national blow being struck for the cause of liberty. It is significant that it is a foreigner and not a Russian who is prepared to strike it.

With Insarov, the Bulgarian, we are a long way from Rudin and Lavretsky, a long way from those powerless leaders who shrank involuntarily from the abyss towards which enthusiasts, helpless as themselves, were constantly driving them. Insarov is a man of action in the Anglo-Saxon sense. In almost every one of Turgenev's novels we are introduced to the people who are waiting ;

in "On the Eve" we meet at last the man for whom they wait. He is harassed by no doubts as to side-issues; he is willing to strike at any moment. But around him there clusters the old familiar group of talkers about action. They, at least, are Russians, though Shubin, the sculptor, is French on his mother's side. Shubin, indeed, accentuates even more than any of Turgenev's wholly Russian characters the gulf between the inspiration of the moment and the sustained accomplishment of one's purpose. With his quick artist's hands he fashions busts and statues only to destroy them. He lends life to his very dreams only to parody them. It is as though in this one character there were typified every apostle of Russian liberty whose voice was his first and his last sacrifice. But Turgenev does not caricature. He draws no moral antithesis between the man who is waiting without waste of words to shed his heart's blood, and the man who seeks passionately to express what he is unable to feel. On the contrary, Shubin possesses that artistic temperament which, Turgenev knew through his own sombre experience, carried with it its own condemnation and its own punishment.

It is in Elena, however, that we have the deepest study, perhaps not only in "On the Eve" but in all the novels of Turgenev. Nor has he expressed more clearly in any other book his individual attitude towards Nature. When Odysseus met

the Princess Nausicaa in the hour of his need, he compared her with a young palm-tree, and for centuries the writers of all countries have been imitating his exquisite adroitness. But instead of being reminded of a product of Nature in the presence of a beautiful woman, Turgenev is reminded of a beautiful woman through the medium of Nature's mood.

Bersenyev, the typical Turgenevian hero, the man who looks on, the man who half loves and half strives, even he detects in the faint summer stir of leaves the phantom frou-frou of a woman's skirts. And gradually, as all the drowsy scents and sounds crowd in upon his senses, they become crystallised, as it were, into the image of a Russian girl, as fresh and virginal as though she had just awaked to life with those rustling leaves of summer. It is Elena, and Shubin also loves her or tries to love her after his fashion. Nobody, even in these novels of the last intimate analysis, comes quite so close to us as Elena. It is for her to utter much that Natalya only dared to hope. It is for her to act while Liza could only bow before the storm of fate. If in her girlhood she had shared the vague longings of these and so many others, she at least recognised, when she met him, the man for whom she had been waiting. Unlike Natalya, she could not be deceived by the vehemence of chatterers. Unlike Liza, she accepted gratefully the ultimate sacrifice. And beyond

either of them there was articulate in her the Russian capacity for pity. At first it had been centred upon animals. Starved dogs, homeless cats, sparrows, all maimed and helpless things found a protector in Elena. But all the time she has been waiting, like a young conscript, for the call of action. One realises this waiting in all the heroines of Turgenev's novels, but never more so than in the heroine of this book, in whose very title one seems to read the protracted "At last! at last!"

When Insarov meets her for the first time she is not consciously impressed by him as melodrama would have her impressed. He is so silent, and in spite of his strength so non-heroic in his personal appearance. But from the very beginning she has sub-consciously divined that this man is not as others, that he is absorbed by something beyond the mere regulations of external routine, the mere acquiescence of habit from which she would enfranchise her soul. She recognises something grand and terrible in the idea of liberating one's country, and this man is really in touch with a movement for national liberty. With him it is not merely words; with him at last it is on the eve.

And then there happens a little incident that translates her girlish confidence into a strange new world. Anna Vassilyevna, her mother, has arranged a picnic, and they drive with the young

Bulgarian to see some ruins. The weather is delightful, and they enjoy themselves immensely, when suddenly a party of noisy Germans obtrudes itself upon them. One of these, more drunk than his friends, accosts the Russian ladies. Shubin, the artist, greets him with words of malignant wit, which the German parries by the mere power of obtuseness. Even in this little crisis clever conversation counts for less than nothing. The German sweeps the sculptor aside as though he were an obtrusive twig, and continues his importunities. Then Insarov interposes, and tells him quietly that if he takes a single step forward he will be thrown into the water. The lake is close to him, but the German officer, quite incredulous, takes the forbidden step, and the next instant he is splashing in the lake. Here at last was an argument that even the German understood. When he was eventually dragged out, he merely contented himself with threatening the " Russian scoundrels " that he would make the regulation complaints.

But the incident impressed Elena. Something had been done, after all that ineffectual chatter of Shubin. An idea had been expressed in action instead of in rhetoric.

It was all very well for the critics to gibe at the insignificance of the incident. To the young Russian girl it was symbolic of the unknown—that blow that so many were preparing to strike,

that blow of which so many spoke, that blow which to many appeared already muffled and paralysed by the rage of words that anticipated it.

Elena's unconscious, involuntary choice has now become fixed and definite. This is the man who will fashion her dreams into reality. Secretly she confesses to herself this strange happiness that has burst in upon her life. In the diary of Elena we have not only the analysis of her individual temperament, but also a yet deeper analysis of those other wordless heroines, from Natalya who failed to rouse Rudin, to Liza whom fate held back from Lavretsky.

In English fiction the diary is an accepted banality, one more device for avoiding the atmosphere of real things. With Turgenev it is something quite different. This sensitive and secret confession of a soul to itself has nothing in common with the "Mes Larmes" of Thackeray's derision. Elena is telling things to herself, shaping in words all the half-guessed-at hopes and fears that are beginning to haunt her with a deeper insistence than the long vague pity of her girlhood. That is on the surface, but she is doing more than this. Unconsciously she is exploring the depths of the Russian woman's soul. This it is which makes "On the Eve" a more significant and permanent reading of Russian character than either "Rudin" or "Liza." Elena is not merely a young girl babbling the sweet secrets of her youth; she is

a Russian woman stammering out a love that is inseparable from the exaltation of sacrifice.

Sometimes at the Magny dinners the Russian would revert to his countrywomen, and in such moments the naturalism of Zola and the rest became remote and distant, and he would see close to him the silent, clear-eyed women of the steppes, who so easily detected the true thing amid the mazes and labyrinths of words. But even in this concrete confession Elena reverts to those abstractions which are never very far from the Russian's heart. What is the meaning of her youth? Why has a soul been given to her? What is the meaning of it all? Who will answer these questions? The girl reviews one after the other the men who offer her their love. Here again we are conscious of something altogether beyond the mere diary of an isolated Russian girl. For, in this helpless little circle of admirers there are many of the types by which the purpose of Russia has been so long confused. There is Shubin, the artist, clear-sighted, and at the same time devoid of inner vision, artistically sensitive, but without the penetration that is bought by endurance, without the real capacity for suffering, even the deeper suffering of art itself. Instinctively the girl shuns him, and distrusts art as the mere make-belief of life. For she knows well that he and such as he are not the men who will at last strike silently and to the death. After all,

women at their very best are themselves works of art, and they involuntarily distrust themselves little less than they distrust each other. But Shubin is by no means a mere foil to the man of action. Nor is he made to fit in with the angles and curves of other people's temperaments. He does not strike the anticipated attitude or utter the expected aphorism. Volatile and capricious, he preserves not only the artist's power for self-torment, but also the artist's divination of another's pain. But, now that we are "on the eve," Shubin and such as he must stand aside. Then there is Bersenyev, the man of brotherly sympathy, the "go-between" of science whom romance has half-caught in its coils. He, too, is powerless in the world of action, though, with that quixotic sympathy against one's own interests which is so thoroughly Russian, he is a cordial helper of Elena in her love for another man. But he, too, must give place in the hour of emancipation.

For, there is one man who has come into Elena's life who will march forward even if he has to march alone. "I am a Bulgarian," he exclaims, "and I have no need of a Russian's love." But in spite of his self-dedication to the cause of liberty that other equally immortal cause springs up swiftly and suddenly in his heart. He loves this Russian girl in spite of himself, and he is worthy of her. It is as though Natalya had met a

Rudin who was strong, and as though Liza had met a Lavretsky who was free. Devoted to the national cause, Insarov desires to retain his personal secret, but the Russian girl reads it in his eyes. She knows that her lot will be with this man, whose only hope in life is to be led against desperate odds to death. She knows that the old luxury and protection in her life must end. But she does not hesitate, any more than Natalya or Liza would have hesitated. Like flame leaping to meet flame, her own passion for sacrifice irradiates this wordless courage which she knows to be the very answer to her long inarticulate yearnings. And the man understands the delicate, exquisite thing that has come into the barren hardness of his life. It is no wonder that Turgenev, with such inner dreams as these, was not quite wholeheartedly in sympathy with some of these Parisians who labelled a dead passion much as a naturalist labels a dead moth.

But even in "On the Eve" something of the old doubt hovers on the very threshold of action. Insarov remembers the ancient oppressions and the ancient wrongs. War for Bulgarian freedom is inevitable; this blow at least is no chatterer's dream. But, foreigner though he is, Insarov is too certainly a creation of Turgenev to be wholly convinced. He, too, is conscious of that paralysing note of warning, "We are not ready." None the less, even with this note of *nitchevo* in his

heart, he prepares for instant action. And in this moment Elena comes to him bringing with her the weakening atmosphere of passion. But not for a moment does she persuade him to exchange his bayonet for her arms. She does not lure him to abandon his honour for the sake of her love. She also is overwhelmingly on the side of action. Let him go at once, but she will go with him. His cause has become hers; her marriage-settlement shall be a Turkish bullet, and her dowry the after-thrust of a Turkish bayonet. She is willing to accept both, grateful to be allowed to go upon this hard honeymoon.

And Insarov, musing upon this young girl's challenge to destiny, wonders if he has been listening only in a dream. For surely there are in the world no such women as she who but now had seemed tenderly to whisper to him. There are not women who are to be wooed with these certainties of danger and hardship instead of the promises of luxury and dominance. There are not women who will share gladly the anonymous burden of revolt, serving with no hope of personal reward the losing cause of freedom. But it had been no dream; the Russian girl had really come to him whispering the promises of her beauty and her youth. In that poor dark room of his there lingered still, fresh and perturbing as the near memory of her promise, the scent of mignonette. And with that scent there return

to him a thousand haunting memories, beautiful and stainless even as this courageous passion which has illumined and ennobled the dusky hardships of his life.

In other novels Turgenev recalls the sharp tang of physical sensation associated with the perfumes of flowers. And as one reads there arises between us and the printed page a nebula every moment taking form and life. One catches the faint forgotten swish of fantastic skirts, one hears, as in some long low empty house, the suggestion of muffled laughter, one divines a sigh of caressing regret. For one is not merely reading a book—one is in the presence of this or that heroine of Turgenev. Not only for him, but in a sense also for us, the remembered perfume has won back, as from the dead, the half-forgotten woman. Old memories crowd in upon us once more; old burdens are renewed. Old graces return with a deepened glamour, and for an instant at least the very ashes of a dead transport revive. But nowhere else, even in the novels of Turgenev, does a flower recall a personality, real as life itself, more insistently than the spray of mignonette in the dark miserable room where Insarov evokes the presence of Elena.

It is no wonder that the Bulgarian tells Elena that the Russians have hearts of pure gold! Turgenev maintained that the Russian people were "the strangest, the most astonishing people

on the face of the earth," and if he has made one of his very few men of action a foreigner instead of a Russian, he has given us in Elena one of the simplest and noblest creations in the whole world of literature. Insarov has need of such a woman, for now at the eleventh hour he is struck down by illness. While he is stumbling back to his bruised life she comes to him again. He feels her breath upon his cheek. It is too much for him, and he implores her to leave him; but she refuses, and in that moment the girl gives herself to the man who loves her in the same spirit of exaltation that he gives himself to the cause of his country's freedom. They are secretly married, and Bersenyev does all in his power to help them, so that they form a trio which is the very opposite of the *ménage à trois* so necessary to French fiction. That is Russian; and essentially Russian, too, is the forgiveness of Elena's father, who sheds tears just as the young couple are driving away in their sledge. He had been bitterly opposed to this marriage, but now that the shadow of war and danger is so close to them he cannot harden his heart for the sake of his pride.

But Elena does not accompany her husband to the front. After all, he is not to die by Turkish bullets, but of illness in Venice. He is a stricken man, and over this sombre honeymoon there hovers always a nearer menace than that of the Turkish troops. But they have their bright days,

and on one of them they listen together to Verdi's *La Traviata*. A plain, unattractive-looking girl with a feeble voice was taking the part of Violetta, when suddenly she " found herself " and expressed as by some strange new inspiration her own individual secret, the waste of youth.

Elena understood that sinister waste. For Turgenev art and life were so merged each in each as to be indivisible. Hundreds of novelists would have made a pathetic scene of this dying man watching the actress pleading for youth. For them the actress herself would have been a mere impersonal accessory with no background of her own, a mere stage property of romanticism. But in a few words Turgenev makes her a living personality from whom youth is being torn away. And when she exclaims, " Lascia mi diviro—morir si giovane," it is her own youth, and not a mere abstraction for which she is pleading with a passion that has suddenly entered the world of art. It is for her own youth and for all the youth of the world, for this stricken Bulgarian, for Elena herself, that she is pleading.

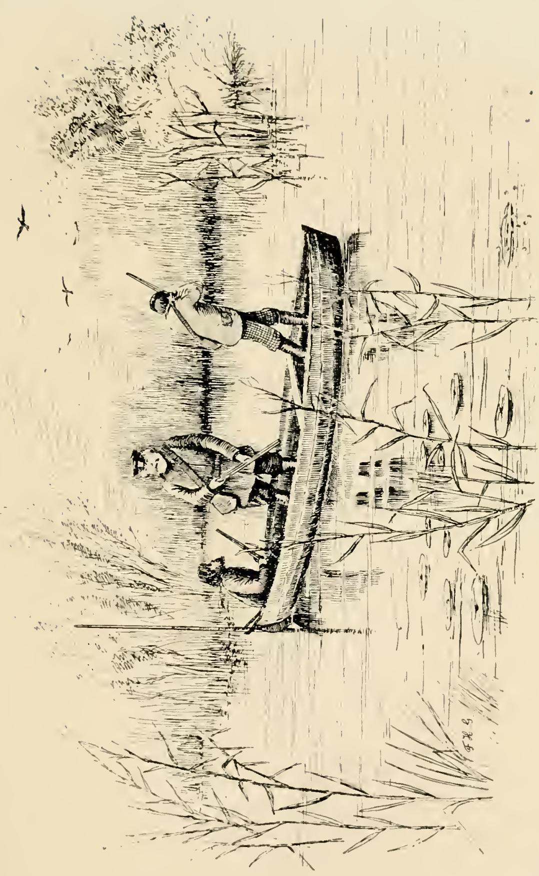
Elena felt cold, cold even in her heart, as she heard the omen of " Morir si giovane " spoken in the moment of hope. For even now Insarov expects that he may die in the defence of his country. From the other side of the Adriatic a certain Renditch is coming to accompany him to the front. Everything is in progress. The Dalma-

tian fishermen have given up their very dredging weights to make bullets. Renditch is coming! Insarov murmurs the name in his sleep. They are now literally on the eve of action; but when Renditch crosses from the Slavonic side of the Adriatic, it is only to find Insarov, the Bulgarian, dead.

For his wife there is nothing in the world now. But she will bury him in Slavonic earth, and so she leaves with his corpse for Zara. And from that moment nothing but mystery surrounds Elena. Of the others we are given at least hints, but of Elena we know only that while she preserved life she would be faithful to the dead. Only somewhere on that Dalmatian coast, or perhaps in The Herzegovina, there may have lingered a sombre woman whose very presence stole like a faint perfume into lives that swept carelessly past her own. In that atmosphere, so impregnated with the Latin and the Slavonic genius, Elena may have continued, however silently and unobtrusively, the splendid tradition of Russian womanhood. "Morir si giovane" —that had been after all the motto of "On the Eve." It was left to this Russian girl only to cherish a memory instead of inspiring an army, to be faithful not to the cause of an oppressed nation but to the memory of a dead lover.

No note of hope is struck in this novel. Here we have not even the might-have-been of regret.

Turgenev's attitude towards the illusion of national freedom is in "On the Eve" precisely the same as in all his other books. For the typical Russian is neither Shubin who is half French, nor Elena's lover who is a Bulgarian, but Uvar Ivanovitch Stahov, the inert, wordless man whose inertia is almost animal in its monstrous persistence. There is something terrible in this darkened mind, into which stray gleams flash only to die away leaving the blackness more intense. Shubin with his flippant Western glibness addresses him as a "primeval force," but the words are mere sounds to him. Shubin may chatter, and even suffer a little in the dreams of his art. Bersenyev may pore over books and watch and suffer as he sees happiness floating past him for ever. Insarov may march silently to his death, asking only to serve with his body the eternally elusive cause of freedom; but Uvar Ivanovitch is remote and detached from every one of them. He alone can wait as the Asiatic, to whom time is meaningless, waits through the centuries. All around him hearts may be throbbing to the rhythm of broken lives; high hopes may fall, and love itself may break beneath the straining cords of destiny. But he, the "primeval force," will continue to stare past them into nothingness. And yet when Shubin, the little fluttering artist of the ready tongue, asked him if there would ever be men among them, Uvar answered once at least in the



SPORT IN THE STEPPES.

affirmative. "There will be," he said. But when on the very last page of this sombre novel the same question is repeated, the Russian of all the Russians only flourishes his fingers and stares moodily into the remote distance.

"On the Eve" appeared in 1859, two years before "Fathers and Sons." But long before either of these novels had been written Turgenev had come intimately close to the real Russian people. In "The Annals of a Sportsman" the irony of that suspicious twin self remained almost stingless, so far at least as the moujiks are concerned. In the later novels more bitter views of the Russians were to find expression. But scattered through every one of them—through "Rudin," through "Liza," through "Fathers and Sons" and "On the Eve"—are unqualified tributes to the Russian people written in the same spirit that pervades that series of exquisite pictures of life whose genius flashed the message of liberty into millions of stricken lives.

Long before "The Annals of a Sportsman" Gogol had travelled through the heart of Russia, determined to show the world what manner of people these Russians were. He sees things with his own fresh eyes, and writes them down with that almost passionate truthfulness of vision which is such an incongruous accompaniment of the Russian inheritance of pity. Other nations have produced defenders of the unfortunate, but

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they do not defend them in the spirit in which the Russian defends them. Victor Hugo, for example, hurls into the rôle of the helpless an almost epic largeness of destiny. By having nothing in the world, the unfortunate one becomes a Titan towering, as it were, upon the very pedestal of misfortune. In short, the Frenchman pleads his cause by dragging him into the familiar circle of heroes. But for the Russian, and particularly for Gogol, heroes in our Western sense do not exist at all. Above and below alike, floggers and flogged, these fellows are scamps and rascals seemingly deserving only of contempt. Only Gogol himself does not regard them in that light; for him they are fellow human beings. For, in his heart, as in the heart of every Russian, there vibrates naturally and inevitably the splendid, untaught challenge of Terence—"Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto." But this man, this barbarian "with the lizard's eyes," must see them as they actually are. They must not be posed for a sentimental photograph. In his own sinister epigram, "If your nose is crooked, you must not blame the mirror."

Turgenev also was a Russian realist, and was constitutionally incapable of that make-belief of life which is the dowry of so many Anglo-Saxons, but he entered neither the Russian country house nor the Russian isba in quite the same spirit as Nicolai Gogol. It was not at all his

mission to discover everything that was wrong in Russia and to write it down. He had no mission of any kind whatever, less even than Gogol himself. But he translated in the pages of "The Annals of a Sportsman" some at least of those clustering memories that would renew themselves in the garden of his childhood. And the pity of his youth for his mother's slaves stabbed its way through all the faint sweetness of summer memories into an insistent appeal. So intimately personal were these memories, so interwoven were they with all his early aspirations, that Turgenev was never satisfied with the book. There were, perhaps, too many of these Russian memories to crowd into any single book, and there must have been many and many a page of his Russian life that was left undisturbed with so many other dreams in that dim old garden. As a matter of fact the book was not written in Russia, as is so generally believed. "Now," writes Turgenev in the course of a letter, "let us pass to your little old woman, that is to say to the public or to the critics. Like every old woman, they cling obstinately to vulgar or preconceived opinions, on however slight a basis they may rest. For example, they always maintain that after my 'Annals of a Sportsman' all my works are bad, thanks to my absence from Russia, of which, if one is to believe them, I can have no knowledge whatsoever; but this reproach can only refer to

what I have written after 1863. Up to that date, that is to say up to my forty-fifth year, I remained in Russia almost without stirring from it, except from 1848 to 1850, during which period I wrote precisely 'The Annals of a Sportsman,' while 'Rudin,' 'Liza' and 'Fathers and Sons' were written in Russia." The old quarrel between the great writer and the small critics would be faded and meaningless now, but for the fact that even to this day Turgenev is so often judged not so much by what he accomplished as a writer as by what he failed to accomplish as a reformer. But even from this most injudicious standpoint it is perhaps well that this book, which really did accomplish a great reform, was written out of his native country. For it was abroad rather than at home, in moments of mournful nostalgia, that the Russian land became an open book to Ivan Turgenev. In Russia he would be haunted ceaselessly, as he so often admits, by that life of the boulevards which appealed to one side of each of those twin selves. But when he was abroad it would appear to him that only in those sombre steppes, in those desolate flat stretches that seemed to be forgotten by time itself, could he find peace for his soul. And though the first wonder of passing through an utterly unexplored land which comes to one on opening "Dead Souls" was never to be repeated, Turgenev, in these sketches of Russian country-life, has given us

something equally individual and distinct from anything that had gone before or that has come after him.

In some half-dozen books the malice of the suspicious Turgenev was given free play. In "The Annals of a Sportsman" it is quite otherwise. It is the calm, peaceful and limpid intelligence that absorbs these rural scenes, every one of which vibrates with a depth of emotion of which the exploiters of pathos know nothing. He is not pleading a case in these pages, he is writing down little glimpses of a handful of lives by which millions may be judged. And everywhere the scents and sounds, the very languor of summer, steal upon our senses, as though the writer were exhaling from his very soul the drowsy inchoate freshness of long Russian days.

Over and over again, too, in dealing with these elemental people, he produces a most difficult illusion—that of at one and the same time hushing things up and "letting the cat out of the bag." There is no pathos either in the Victor Hugo or in the Dickens sense in these annals of lives "under the water." Nor is there the hard smile of de Maupassant when he has carved from the sad jumble of humanity one of his sinister "slices of life." Perhaps, indeed, there is no parallel—not even in Gogol's famous book—with these quiet sketches which disclose such a multitude of suffering lives. In this atmosphere the anony-

mous "souls" of Madame Turgenev take upon themselves the forms of men. The disobedient servants, people like Nicolas Jakovlef, Ivan Petrof and Egor Kondratief appear as householders almost owning their lives, real human beings with their own point of view, sometimes even slyly judging their masters. Here is the real revelation of the apparently unrevealable. Its author's pen seems to have been dipped in memory itself. Jakovlef and the rest of them had their own thoughts and dreams if one had only known, and here suddenly by some odd magic of a wandering sportsman they have leaped into immortality. Some one has seen these people, has really looked at them with seeing eyes and has written down their secrets of which they themselves were but dimly conscious. Long afterwards at one of those brilliant Parisian dinners he was to explain this amazing "method" with which Zola's well-filled note-books could never compete. It is with this "method," which has its beginning and its end in seeing things where others can only peer at them, that he introduces us to a moujik named Hor. With his high forehead, his snub nose and his small eyes, this "soul" recalls the personality of Socrates. None the less at any moment he may be flogged at his master's whim if ever the black mood should seize him. But Hor is no pessimist. Asked why he does not buy his freedom, he shakes his

head. Why should he do that ? He has a good master. Things are as they are, and this Russian Socrates is quite able to profit by them. Through talking with this man Turgenev realised for the first time " the simple, wise discourse of the Russian moujik " which Tolstoy was afterwards to accept as the last word of human wisdom.

In the simple, by no means lachrymose chatter of peasants, the good old times come back to us. A moujik, for example, tells of his old master, who " was all a master should be," and " who would have given you an odd blow, but would have forgotten it by the time that you looked round." There was one thing against him, however : he kept mistresses, and these women were difficult to the peasants, whose lives they were allowed to play with as so many easily-replaced toys. Madame Turgenev herself had been considerate and compassionate compared with these women. One of them, Akulina by name, had a young Russian sent out to be a soldier because he had spilt some chocolate on her new dress. " And he was not the only one she served so ! Ah well, these were good times, though." With such illuminating details of despotism Turgenev lights up frequently not merely the page of a book, but the life of a human being. Turgenev, who remembered Poliakoff and Agatha and so many others, understood the serf's standpoint. Repeatedly one seems to hear in " The Annals of

a Sportsman" the echo of Agatha's verdict on the old school: "Yes, I have suffered a great deal from the late Madame Turgenev; but none the less, I was very fond of her. She was a real mistress." Turgenev, writing in the last years of his mother's life, had no need to invent the misfortunes of the serfs. But this same master who can illuminate by the mention of a few odd details, who all his life protested against the accentuation of the insignificant, occasionally represents an interior with the minute fidelity of a Meissonier. In "The District Doctor" the hero reproduces the scene in the sick-room just as he might have reproduced it in an official report. That is what actually took place, and so the good doctor tells it as a matter of course, and with no apology for its humdrum exactitude. But afterwards something extraordinary happens, and he tells that also just as it occurred, without affectation and without the self-indulgence of commonplace pity.

"Morir si giovane:" others besides patriots can experience the pain of that, and the country doctor's patient was experiencing it as she lay tossing about on her tormented death-bed. She is going to die, and she has never experienced that love which is the knowledge of life. Suddenly she throws her arms around the doctor and kisses him. She is grasping at love even in the very clutch of death. The doctor understands. For

this girl, he is not so much an individual as the poor symbol of all romance from which Death is dragging her away. He understands why she hated to die before love had quickened her languid pulse. She dies the next day, and he keeps her ring. She dies, that is all about it, and he goes on to talk of quite other things—of the merchant's daughter whom he married afterwards, and of her dowry of seven thousand roubles. Then he sits down to a game of "Preference" for halfpenny points, and after winning two roubles and a half goes home perfectly satisfied with his evening. That is the Russian touch. Neither declamation on the one hand nor exclamation on the other is permitted to jar upon the sombre *naïveté* of reality. After all, life is like that. One watches death and one remembers passion, but one also plays "Preference" for halfpenny points, and if one is a Russian country doctor, one is undisguisedly glad to win two roubles and a half.

In "The Peasant Proprietor Ovsyanikov" the novelist introduces us to a *novus homo*, who is a mediator between the peasants and their owners. He, too, recalls the good old times, and tells how his father was flogged while his master looked on from a balcony. And the lady of the house herself was not too squeamish to witness the outrage from one of the windows. His offence was that he had claimed a piece of land; but eventually

a promise was wrung from him to abandon his claim, after which he was dismissed with the warning that he should be grateful for escaping alive. The piece of land in question was aptly enough called by the peasants "the Cudgelled Land." Such were the good old times, and as for the last dwindling days of serfdom, the general verdict of this book is very much the same as that of all the others: "The Old is dead, but the Young is not born."

Every now and then one finds the new spirit intruding upon the old, but on the whole it is the endurance and patience of the peasant rather than his resentment and revolt that are conspicuous. A master punishes his servant; the sense of injustice dies out with the sensation of actual physical pain. After all, life is like that, and has been always like that. It is only the Old Russia, muses Turgenev, who through this very book was to grope his way towards the New.

But in Old and New Russia alike, Nature is unendingly the same. Day after day the lazy hours repeat themselves; and again and again, with that art which lends genius to monotony, Turgenev translates the sensations of summer, the shade of birch woods, the cool of low river banks, the slow drowsy silences, the humming, buzzing under-life, the inexplicable sounds of night. In "Byezhin Prairie" in particular, he runs almost the whole gamut of summer sounds floating over

vast mountainless distances. One can see the group of boys round their supper on the open steppes listening, now interested, now half startled by the mystery that prowls so close to them, that menacing mystery of nature which for Turgenev is so intimately interwoven with the life-threads of destiny. But no matter what strange fragment of folk lore steals into any one of these sketches, the art of Turgenev never descends to the level of the intentional "thrill." It is always with actual life that he is preoccupied, and it is by reason of this preoccupation with the deep under-currents of reality that he, in the bare confines of a miserable Russian *isba,* is none the less able to reveal the cruel pressure of the whole world movement. You are talking with a group of peasants, let us say, and they are repeating time-worn stories. They are real characters strongly differentiated, and not in the least idealised products of the steppes, but none the less you are learning from them the secrets of the human race. Apparently you are on the most commonplace terms with the lowliest of human beings, but you are at the same time in the closest touch with the pervading forces of human destiny.

Very seldom, indeed, does Turgenev express his sympathy with the Russian peasant in terms of set praise ; for him the moujik is neither a newly discovered philosopher nor the innovator of a new wisdom. One definite tribute, however,

he pays to him in the recognition of the tranquil courage with which at all times he confronts death—a courage which cannot be attributed either to "indifference" or to "stolidity." One after the other they are led before us in unpretentious procession, these simple people for whom death is the last unquestioned ceremony. The Russian dies as he lives, without making any fuss about it. It is all part and parcel of this ignored peasant-life, too ordinary a matter for tears or pathetic comment. Heroism of the accepted kind casts no halo upon this unflinching last hour of the moujik's bitter comedy. But in the terrible tranquillity with which he accepts death, as he accepts every other blow of fate, there is written the final word of the endurance of generations of human lives.

At another time Turgenev shows us the almost hypnotic influence of music upon these children of the steppes. There is a singing competition in a booth for a bet, and the peasants are drinking heavily. Suddenly all these tavern loungers, aroused from their coma by a singer's voice, have become men with the winding memories of men. The very genius of their own steppes unfolds itself to them, speaks to them from beyond great distances. And the voice rises and falls to the rhythm of a strange emotion before which all are hushed but which all divine. At the end, when it is all over, they are drinking again and hob-

nobbing on the old tavern level, but one realises that at any moment these Russian moujiks may be lured away from their ignoble outer lives by the inner appeal of some new haunting voice.

But whatever their possibilities may be, these people, men, women, and children, may be bought and sold. In "Piotr Petrovitch Karataev" the novelist sketches, with one knows not what stings of personal reminiscence, the actual bargaining for the possession of a serf girl. Her rich mistress refuses to sell her, and so the would-be purchaser carries her off. In the end, however, she is discovered, and gives herself up to her former owner as though she were some sentient piece of stolen property.

And yet these people are sensitive and able to appreciate the essential liberty of love. In "The Tryst" Turgenev sketches one such peasant girl of the Old Russia whose pretty face is filled with the sombre wonder of love. She has come to meet the peasant of the New Russia, a manikin of mannerisms and attitudes for whose slightest glance she is foolishly thankful. But Viktor is tired of her. He is going back to Petersburg, and her little romance is dead. Turgenev has lavished quite exceptional minuteness upon this slight picture of a valet forsaking a serf girl. One sees not only his expression reflecting his small emotions, but even his efforts at quite other expressions. All his little valet soul seems to ooze out

through his master's clothes as he dominates this serf girl of the old times who cannot understand the new ways. Afterwards she would marry at the bidding of her parents, but always she would suffer as dumb things suffer, without explanation, as a matter of course.

Easily, as with the touch of a veritable magician, Turgenev lets fall, as though merely in passing, as though they were of no significance whatever, the secrets of such maimed lives. In "The Hamlet of the Shtchigri District" a man cannot sleep at night, and because of this insomnia he chatters out the secret of his life. He had married a young girl in the country, and even now that she is dead he is not sure as to whether he really ever loved her or not. For always, from the very beginning of their marriage, there had been an impenetrable veil between them which neither the one nor the other could brush aside. There was a "secret wound" in her life at whose origin neither of them could guess, only both knew that it was always there. Yet, as though unconsciously, the sufferer hints that the cause of this life-wound might have been simply "living too long in the country." The sadness may have been what was really consuming her—the sadness that rises like a heat-mist from the steppes, the sadness of too long patience, the inability to cope with one's happiness when one has been too long broken to the habit of endurance. There had been in her life

no commonplace explanation of this permeating melancholy which follows so close upon the reckless exuberance of the Slav. She did not pine because she was love-sick for an old memory. The light was not fading day by day from her eyes because they were becoming blinded by "les neiges d'antan." She pined like a bird without conscious regret, and in the very moment of death her eyes retained the "dumb look" by which her whole life had been shadowed.

It is this "dumb look" that is symbolic of Russian life as Turgenev presents it to us in this book. It is this "dumb look" that unites this wife of a Russian landowner to the voiceless multitude of serfs. Nowhere more than in this story do we get the sensation of the stifling oppression of Russian life which Turgenev was so frequently to experience on his visits to his own country. The gipsy girl, Masha, who deserted the hero of another story, tries to express the overwhelming sameness of the steppes, against which her whole body rebels. She tells her lover that "weariness, the divider" has come to her, and so she must go. At any cost she must wander away, as though to escape from herself. Turgenev knew well this wandering spirit, which was to give Rudin no rest except the barricades of Paris.

Almost the only direct plea for the peasants is put into the mouth of the heroine of "A Living Relic." Lukerya had been a servant in the

Sportsman's household when he was a boy. He remembers her as a "tall, plump, pink-and-white, singing, laughing, dancing creature," and now her face has become "strained and dreadful" through illness and suffering. Close as she is to death, this poor girl desires nothing for herself, but she requests the son of her old mistress to plead for the peasants, asking him if his mother "could take the least bit off their rent." One remembers how uselessly Turgenev himself had pleaded to his mother on behalf of those human chattels whom, through this very book, he was so soon to liberate. That is one of the very few direct appeals in this book of memories whose pictures are etched in with the very salt of tears. But indirectly there are such pleas on behalf of these starved and desolate lives which none who reads can ever forget. And the "method" is at all times devoid of generalities, and without the suspicion of any special pleading. Turgenev writes as one who has no cause to plead, but only reality to reveal. But the details, observantly noted, sometimes almost listlessly jotted down, as though the novelist had become too absorbed in the depths of this vast hushed life to be capable of any criticism—these cumulative details strike at one's heart with a force which no arrangement of pathos could possibly engender. The great artist knows that it is the significance of the ordinary rather than the eccentricity of the exception which has value in the revelation of life.

Here, too, he gratifies his whimsical wish that even Nature should not impose upon him by any remote and detached grandeur. The scenes through which he wanders are simple and homely landscapes, great fields of rye, birchwoods, grassy stretches of meadows fringed with lakes and rivulets. Farm-yards with no great signs of prosperity about them abound, and the ordinary domestic life of the moujik unrolls itself, so to speak, as naturally as that of any bird or beast or insect in this slumbering land.

And Turgenev is at peace with these long stretches of plain, whose very melancholy has in it a certain charm of solace. People and soil are inextricably blended in this book, which in its deep unconscious sympathy, in its slow closeness to the moujik and his environment regarded as one, sometimes passes even the range of Gogol's extraordinary insight. Without irony, without bitterness, almost without suspicion, Turgenev has given us in the pages of " The Annals of a Sportsman " a series of pictures, minute, objective, which reveal the external life of the Russian people with greater detail than perhaps any other Russian novelist, with the possible exception of Count Tolstoy. In other books, notably in " The Diary of a Superfluous Man," Turgenev has analysed the *vie intérieure* of the Slav more profoundly, but it is by no means strange that contemporary criticism should have claimed that in

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this book pre-eminently Turgenev showed himself to possess a real knowledge of Russia and the Russian people.

Perhaps in no other book is the realism of Turgenev more clearly exemplified than in these sketches; nowhere certainly is the difference between Russian and French or English realism more accentuated. French realism is only too often a snarling gibe at the very roots of human nature, while English realism is frequently a self-conscious affront to English make-belief. Neither the one nor the other could have produced these restrained and minutely beautiful pictures of crushed humanity. There are here neither the brazen brutalities of French perverseness nor the more inept aggressions of the outragers of English taste. For Turgenev, as for his compatriots, realism is not so much a method of presentation as the very oxygen of artistic life. Its language is not merely the selected medium of expression, but rather the mother-tongue of art. The great Russian realists have always aimed at writing life down as it seemed to be passing before their own vision. With them the "lacrimæ rerum" have not been sought in remotely poignant situations, but in the routine life of suffering and endurance. Essentially the democrats of art, they have deliberately ignored the proud monologues of heroes, and have turned their attention to the almost humdrum pressure of ordinary life

upon quite ordinary anonymous units. Above all, they and they alone may be said to have preferred the humble to the arrogant virtues and to have dethroned honour in favour of pity.

Turgenev in "The Annals of a Sportsman" illustrates objectively the want of crystallisation in the Russian character to which long afterwards he was to refer in Paris. He has given in this book the external lives of the moujiks, with here and there a glimpse of their inner dreams. He was afterwards to go deeper, but so far as the Russian people are concerned, had this been his only book, Turgenev would have made good his claim that his compatriots were, in spite of the autocracy of the Russian Government, the real representatives of humanity. Turgenev understood the Russian temperament because it was his own, and he experienced, perhaps little less than his enemy Dostoievsky, that peculiar Russian pity, which sees in the criminal the victim rather than the enemy of society.

But this book is important for quite another reason. Art and life with Turgenev were always intimately interwoven, so that his "method" evaded all verbal analysis. One day, according to Zola, Flaubert was explaining why Prosper Merimée's style seemed to him to be bad. Turgenev, who was present, simply could not understand the meaning of such a discussion. "I go to Oka," he exclaimed. "I find his house—that

is to say, not a house, a hut. I see a man in a blue jacket, patched, torn, with his back turned to me, digging cabbages. I go up to him and say, 'Are you such an one?' He turns, and I swear to you that in all my life I never saw such piercing eyes. Besides them, a face no bigger than a man's fist, a goat's beard, not a tooth. He was a very old man." Turgenev entered isba after isba, and examined each with the same blazing scrutiny of vision. In every one of these sketches there is no "method" at all but that—to see and to write it down with all the freshness of sudden pity. Turgenev had no need of Zola's note-book. Such scenes as these were part of his very life, and it is through them that his whole youth had been permeated with the desire to bring liberty to the Russian peasants. "The Annals of a Sportsman," indeed, is in a sense as close to the autobiography of Ivan Turgenev as either "First Love" or "Torrents of Spring."

CHAPTER V

THE author of "The Annals of a Sportsman," cosmopolitan though he became, never broke the spell of Russian influence. Year after year he deserted Paris in order to revisit his old home at Spasskoë. At each visit he found it more and more dilapidated, and at last, in 1880, he was forced to repair it on quite a grand scale. On these visits his old friends renew relations with him, and Turgenev surprises them by insisting upon strictly European methods of living. He has remained, however, a true Slav in his neglect of dates, and the arrival of invited guests is now, as always, something of a surprise to him. And just as in Paris it was his habit to speak constantly of Russia, of Russian literature, of Russian women, of the enigma of the Slav's soul, so at Spasskoë he is inclined to speak for the most part about those foreign nations whose peculiarities he has watched with such an ironical respectfulness. His listeners are a little shocked by the corruption of French morals which he unfolds to them, and the novelist passes on to the eccentricities of other countries. He points out the racial differ-

ences between the compatriots of Goethe and the compatriots of Victor Hugo. Then he turns to the English, and comments on the gulf which separates them from every nation in Europe, including Russia herself. The English appear to him to be a nation of originals. He had visited their celebrities, and had approached Carlyle apparently with the same respectful irony that he had preserved before le grand Victor Hugo. Thackeray had already greeted him with roars of laughter because he had repeated a few lines of his national poet Pushkin. "Another time," he gossips, "I was at Carlyle's house. I never saw anyone with whose originality I was more struck. According to him the greatest quality in man was a blind obedience, and he assured me that every nation that obeys its sovereign blindly is happier than free England with her constitution. When I asked him who was the greatest English poet, he mentioned a mediocrity at the end of the eighteenth century. As for Byron, he considered him beneath criticism. Then he assured me that Dickens had no weight with the English, and that he was esteemed only abroad. In a word, he retailed to me a great many stupidities of the same kind.

"One day I happened to tell him that I suffered occasionally from blurs in the eyes: I saw motes in my eyes. Once, when out shooting, I thought that I had in front of me a hare; I had already

raised my gun to my shoulder and was going to fire, when I was seized with the suspicion that what I took for a hare was perhaps only a black spot which I had before my eyes.

"Carlyle listened to me attentively, remained for a moment thoughtful, and then burst into a noisy and inextinguishable laugh. I could not understand what had put him into such a good humour; I saw nothing comic in the incident that I had just related to him.

"'Ha! ha! ha!' he exclaimed at last, still bursting with laughter: 'to fire at one's own motes in the eyes—Ha! ha! ha! To fire at a spot—Ha! ha! ha!' Then I understood the cause of his hilarity; a Frenchman or a Russian would have found nothing laughable in my story."

And Turgenev mildly sums up his impressions of our countrymen in this comment: "For the same reason an actor who makes grimaces, and who in France would be hissed off the stage to the accompaniment of baked apples, will amuse the English public and make it laugh." It was this English laugh, repeated by Thackeray, echoed by Carlyle, running indeed the whole gamut of the English temperament, that struck the Russian as the most significant of Anglo-Saxon peculiarities, except, perhaps, the national taste for hard work.

For the rest, Turgenev is a perfect mine of cosmopolitan information when at Spasskoë. But though he retails the gossip of capitals, he is very

much concerned about the moujiks. The improvements of the peasants on his estate have been hanging fire exactly as they hang fire in his novels. The infirmary, the hospital, and the school that he had commenced to build, all these are growing slowly. Only a few yards away from his village, in spite of all his precautions, a cabaret has sprung up on the property of a neighbouring prince. Turgenev himself, in spite of his most sincere wish to suppress drunkenness, is forced to give fêtes in which drunkenness has no small share. On these occasions ribbons and fal-lals are given to the women, images and sweetmeats to the children, but the male population of Spasskoë can be appeased only by buckets of vodka. It is the atmosphere of the Old Russia unchanged, apparently unchangeable, and many of these scenes might form pages of "The Annals of a Sportsman," written more than thirty years before. The old kindly relations have been renewed automatically, and on fête days the peasants swarm into their master's garden, but not to threaten him with hanging! In front of the terrace the women sing their sombre songs, while their husbands and brothers preoccupy themselves solely with vodka.

"You wish, then, to learn to read?" one of his guests asked of a group of little girls, who replied unhesitatingly: "We? Not at all. God preserve us from it!" Yes, it was certainly the

Old Russia in spite of "The Annals of a Sportsman." Towards eleven o'clock the guests would meander uncertainly back to the village, very polite, very thankful even, and regretting one thing only—the mildness of the vodka. Alone on the terrace with his house party, Turgenev would discuss, just as Rudin or Lavretsky might have discussed, the progress of the Russian people since the abolition of the serfs. This was usually the final impression of his native country left on Turgenev's mind, for these gala evenings were almost always towards the end of his visits.

Autumn was already at hand, and he would begin to think of the Boulevards and of that "European nest" in the Rue de Douai. Usually, too, in the fall of the year he would be attacked by his old enemy, gout, and he would begin to examine his own life with the same pessimistic analysis that he applied to the progress of Young Russia. Something sombre and mournful had glided into the Russian autumn, and his efforts for the welfare of the moujik would seem to him as fruitless and quixotic as those of his Hamlets of the steppes. The same sense of disillusion that so often steals into his art would steal into his life, and it would seem to him that he and his friends were only repeating the long Russian talks, always ending in nothing, which he had so often reproduced in his books.

Some years, however, there were happier ter-

minations for these Russian visits. In 1879, for example, when he visited Moscow for the inauguration of the statue of Pushkin, he received to his astonishment a series of ovations. These continued every evening when he read aloud portions of his "Annals of a Sportsman," and he was often greeted with enthusiasm even in the public streets. The same change of attitude was also visible in St. Petersburg; and two years later, on his last visit to the capital, his reconciliation with the youth of his country was complete. He, the arch-enemy of generous dreams, he, the ironical disbeliever in exclusive conspiracies, found himself toasting the future of Young Russia. All the old grudges were forgotten and forgiven. The Master was willing to learn at last. Very soon he would live permanently in his own country and work shoulder to shoulder with these young enthusiasts in establishing a new era of freedom.

But the reaction followed only too quickly. The elder generation began to ridicule him as a "vieille coquette" for having sought to please, with a complacence dishonouring to his white hair, the "petits jeunes" of his native land. A little later, when he endeavoured to collect subscriptions for a monument to Flaubert at Rouen, both generations, fathers and sons, turned their backs upon him. Turgenev, in his turn, was angry, but refused scornfully to defend himself in the Russian newspapers. A lady wrote to him from

Odessa to ask why he troubled himself about a monument to Flaubert while Gogol was still waiting for one, and she reminded him in the same letter that the Russian people were hungry. Turgenev replied that, as Flaubert had very little popularity in France, no Frenchman would be particularly grateful to him for his trouble, and that the people who say "our own poor first" are precisely those who give nothing to anybody at all. As for the motives for his sojourn in France which the lady imputed to him, these he passed over in silence, though it would be only too easy for him to retort that in France at least he was not pursued by extravagant insults. It would be best, however, "to blush for his country and be silent."

For the rest, he maintained that attacks of this kind troubled him but little, as he had arrived at the supreme serenity of a contented memory. "I have had," he said once in conversation, "every pleasure that I have been able to wish for. . . . I have worked, I have had successes, I have loved, I have been loved. . . . It is a bad thing to die before the time limit, but with me the time has come." But that was the mental attitude of only one of the Turgenevs. The other Turgenev was very far removed from this philosophic contentment. "I am again," he wrote to Polonsky as early as 1877, "in front of a table, and in my soul there is a darkness blacker than

night. The day passes like an instant, empty, aimless, colourless. There is just time to cast a glance round, and then one must take to one's bed again. One has no more right to life, no more desire to live. . . . You speak of rays of glory and of enchanting sounds. . . . Oh, my friend, we are the vibrations of a vase, broken long ago." It was in a somewhat similar mood of absolute pessimism that Flaubert had written to George Sand three years before: "J'ai été lâche dans ma jeunesse. J'ai eu peur de la vie."

The sympathy between Turgenev and Flaubert was very close, and on one side of the Russian's nature there was undoubtedly a similar shrinking from the stupid violence of life, a certain anxiety to preserve unsullied the illusions of *la vie intérieure.* This facet of Turgenev—a facet which had its place in both of those twin entities—has been described with microscopic analysis in one of his stories. More than once, in that comparatively objective book, "The Annals of a Sportsman," Turgenev called attention to the existence of a type which he calls that of the "superfluous man." In "The Diary of a Superfluous Man," that subtle and minute work of introspection which appealed so to Guizot, we have undoubtedly a glimpse into the inner life of the great Russian dreamer.

Turgenev at many periods of his life had been preoccupied by the idea of death. The habit of mind betrayed by the keeper of this diary was

intimately familiar to him. Besides, in the external details of this book there are certain personal memories of those early days in the garden of Spasskoë. For, the man who is waiting for death recalls, with that physical ecstasy of memory of which Turgenev alone is master, the half-forgotten garden scents, the cool swish of the long grass, the sun-dried sweetness of stolen Novgorod apples. Here, too, there are memories of first love as real as in Zinaíaida herself. And it is in these pages that we see the young Turgenev breathless and tongue-tied in the presence of a young serf girl whom he has brushed against by accident among the raspberry bushes in that garden of secrets. Twenty years ago! "The Superfluous Man" can hardly believe that all these tastes of things are only memories, in so persistent a wave of recollection do all the scents and sounds and inarticulate murmurings return to him. At the very parting from life it is to these things—to the garden, the pond, the crooked, quiet paths, the tall, whispering birch trees, to the waiting lime trees—that he reverts; apart from these intensely realised memories his life is empty as the death for which he is waiting. He has grasped at happiness, but it has evaded him like quicksilver. He has entered the intoxicating atmosphere of passion, but it has stifled him without infusing into him a breath of its vitalising energy. Love and laughter and success, these

things have escaped from him as phantoms. He has never mixed on terms of reality with his fellow human beings, and he understands only too well the gibe of an acquaintance who said of him that he was "the forfeit which his mother had paid at the game of life." As it is, he moves among men and women like oil on waves of water. He is superfluous, but in spite of this, perhaps even because of this, he understands. He is able to analyse, none better, the inner secrets of these others with whom he can never share either happiness or pain. His sympathetic intelligence, denied as it is all sympathy in return, is marvellously acute, particularly in regard to women. He divines the most subtle transformation of all, the transformation of the child into the woman, and for a few days of ecstatic illusion he, the Superfluous Man, believes that he himself is the magician who has wrought this wonder.

Of course he is not the magician. The magician, in point of fact, is Prince M—, a dazzling young officer from Petersburg who is already an experienced conjurer in the tricks of passion. The domestic circle in which the diarist has long been a not unwelcome habitué is immediately galvanised by the brilliance of the new-comer. The girl responds at once to the new stimulus, and the story unfolds itself on the old certain lines of tried experience. There is no preamble at all. She falls in love immediately with Prince M—,

who has his own ideas as to what the rules of the game of love should be. Then his unfortunate, unacknowledged rival details, with a minuteness of tortured introspection which all the combined notebooks of the French realists could never equal, the poor tricks and manœuvres of shame-faced, jealous love. Every attitude of youth enraged with itself is struck in this faded provincial drawing-room. He will make her sorry for having deserted him, and then he will be magnanimous and forgive her when she returns. Now he ostentatiously withdraws from her, and now he haunts her with his foolish, unnecessary presence.

And Liza too, had she but known it, is equally absorbed in a fool's paradise. She is drawn to the Prince exactly as the Superfluous Man is drawn to her. The poor fellow insults his rival with exceptional clumsiness at a ball, and a duel *à la barrière* ensues. The Superfluous Man wounds the Prince very slightly, and prepares to advance to the barrier. His adversary, however, is too contemptuous even to torment him by allowing him to come any nearer. "The duel is at an end," he exclaims, and fires in the air.

The Superfluous Man has now become an object of horror instead of indifference to Liza. He is an exile from her family circle, and it is only by chance that he can obtain glimpses into her life. One such glimpse comes to him from her carriage as she drives past with her parents and the man

who had bewitched her. She was half facing his rival, and her eyes were devouring his face. It was the known psychological moment in the game of passion. The Superfluous Man realised that Liza's soul had made its final surrender. The horses galloped past too quickly for him to observe the Prince's face, but he "fancied that he, too, was deeply touched."

He meets her again at church. There is another transformation, and once more he divines its meaning. The girl has been forced to learn the too-rapidly-turned-over pages of life. Already she has arrived at a very sombre page. The man who loves her follows at a short distance until she reaches her home. When he returns to his own quarters he is whispering to himself, "She is lost." His scrutiny, the actual scrutiny of Turgenev, into the very soul of this girl allows him no deception. He is sorry for her, but mixed with his sorrow there is a certain arid pleasure difficult to analyse. It is as though he were glad that this girl who had been so listlessly detached from his love and his pain should have found something at last which she must share with him.

But there is another transformation which is very soon forced upon the Superfluous Man. The bitter farce of love is over; the Prince Charming has returned to the capital; busy tongues are loosened against him at last. The defeated rival whose jealousy had been ridiculed is now an ac-

TURGENEV IN OLD AGE.

cepted hero in the little provincial town. Liza's parents receive him again on the old familiar footing, but there is an abyss between the girl and himself. Ever so long ago—a few weeks ago—he had watched the child trembling unconsciously into womanhood. Afterwards he had watched the woman expanding unconsciously through the generosity of love. In each of these transformations there had been a natural ripening, harmonious and unstrained as the breaking into life of spring and the passing of spring into summer. But now there was something new in this too-well-loved face. Something had come into her life through which her youth had already shrivelled. Sorrow had hardened her into self-consciousness, had hardened her especially in the defence of her secret, which she treasures avidly in her heart. For herself she feels neither regret nor shame. She has been a spendthrift of her beauty and her youth, but her glad secret is a sufficient reward. As for this good, devoted man, who loves her now as always, he is less than nothing to her and always will be less than nothing. She does not come to the Superfluous Man shedding tears of regret for having undervalued his faithfulness so long. The ironical and suspicious Turgenev has watched youth's drama much too closely for any such touching make-belief as that. On the contrary, never is she more utterly devoted to the man who

has betrayed and abandoned her, than when his defeated rival returns to offer her again the protection of his old steadfast faith. "You can say anything you like," she murmurs to him, "but let me tell you that I love that man, and always shall love him, and do not consider that he has done me any injury—quite the contrary. . . ." Well, life is like that too, it would seem; but for the Superfluous Man the third transformation is very bitter. He had hoped to be allowed to protect her from the consequences of her unrepented folly, but even in this willing sacrifice he is supplanted by another. Even in this he remains still the Superfluous Man, "the fifth wheel" of the waggon of normal life. There is nothing for him, it would seem, not even renunciation and sacrifice.

There can be little doubt that in this almost oppressively intimate book Turgenev uttered some of the festering secrets of his soul, translating at least a phase of that *peur de la vie* which Flaubert had confessed to George Sand, who for her part knew nothing of it at all. In all his books the recognition of the essential cruelty of life, the stupid cruelty as of a scythe-chariot driven by a madman, oppressed him. It oppressed him in such a work of introspection as this "Diary of a Superfluous Man," just as it had oppressed him in that series of almost objective studies, "The Annals of a Sportsman." It oppressed him particularly in a tale entitled "Mumu," which is

one more bitter page snatched from the scattered fragments of his autobiography. Apart from this, however, the little tale has a significance almost equal to any in "The Annals of a Sportsman," because it symbolises without any didactic Pan-Slavism, the desolate rôle of the Russian moujik. It is all done so easily. Turgenev merely opens the door of his old home and ushers us into it without comment. He makes no direct appeal to our sympathy, any more than in his "Annals of a Sportsman," but the story of Mumu is even more acrid with the stuff of tears. But there is no direct attack in the smooth suave narration of facts. There is, indeed, something almost Satanic in the matter-of-courseness with which he indicates the various phases of tyranny in this household which he knew so well. It is his own mother who rules this household, and like another Tacitus on a minute scale, without raising an eyebrow, without a gesture of anger, her son notes baldly the facts of the case.

There was, it seems, in the household of Madame Turgenev, a little drudge named Tatiana. She was twenty-eight years old, very thin, with a mole on her left cheek, which was regarded as an evil omen. Her fellow servant was a giant, and also a deaf-mute who could only express his emotions by gestures and whining sounds. His name was Garassim, and he conceived a violent attachment for this poor girl and constituted himself her

guardian. Naturally she was frightened of him, but none the less he persisted, bringing her little presents and defending her always from the ridicule of the other servants. And gradually the little drudge learned to confide in this inarticulate giant who had become enthralled by her weakness. But unfortunately this obscure little love-story was interfered with by their superiors. A certain Kapiton, a drunken cobbler, had given trouble to the mistress of the house, who forthwith issued an order that he should be reformed through marriage with Tatiana. The intendant passed on the order to the drunken cobbler, who, except for his fear of the deaf-mute, was willing enough to submit. Tatiana also was submissive, though she also feared this strange wild being who had after his fashion adopted her. "He will surely kill me," she said, but with complete resignation.

Then a horrible little plot occurred to this whispering underworld. There was one thing in particular that horrified and disgusted the deaf-mute, and that was drunkenness. Tatiana was told to feign drunkenness, and the frightened little drudge consented to the miserable comedy, which produced the desired effect. Thoroughly disillusioned, the giant resigned her to the drunken cobbler, who not long afterwards was sent away with his wife. And now that he was utterly alone the deaf-mute picked up a little stray dog, so that in the whole lonely world there might be

some atom of life that drew its store of happiness from him. His superiors had taken from him the woman for whom he had felt pity ; at all events the dog was left to him—they would not grudge him the dog. And every emotion that stirred in that chaotic heart was concentrated upon the little dog, Mumu. The giant tended her as though she had been his only child, and on her side Mumu felt safe only in the presence of the deaf-mute.

But, giant though he was, he was not strong enough to keep Mumu. The little dog unluckily attracted the notice of their common owner. The châtelaine happened to be in a good humour, and Mumu was pronounced to be a delightful little dog. Shortly afterwards, however, she was in a bad humour, and the sinister order was issued that Mumu should be removed. An attendant removed Mumu, but she escaped and returned to her idolised master. But even now Mumu had not learnt her lesson, but was foolish enough to annoy the châtelaine, who decreed this time that she should be destroyed. The giant shed tears as he fed his little dog for the last time, then, filled with one knows not what puzzled rage against this organised system of mindless tyranny, Garassim fled from the woman who had twice robbed him of the one thing dear to him in life.

Madame Turgenev's adopted daughter has told us the story of Mumu is taken from life. Once,

while she was making a tour of inspection through her domain, Turgenev's mother noticed a colossus at work in the fields. Struck by his appearance, she stopped the carriage and ordered him to be brought to her. He proved to be a deaf-mute, and because this fact interested her she had him enrolled then and there among the number of her personal servants. In due course André, as he was called, was taken to Moscow, where at first the city life and the paltry nature of his work disheartened this giant of the steppes. But gradually he became reconciled to the new conditions and concentrated all his affections upon his little dog, Mumu, which, however, he was compelled to destroy by the order of his mistress.

But unlike the hero of Turgenev's story André did not desert his cruel owner even after this. For on one occasion some one who was in the black books of Madame Turgenev seems to have tried to make a present of a blue cretonne blouse to the deaf-mute, who refused it with emphatic gestures. Madame Turgenev was delighted when the incident was related to her, and at nine o'clock the next morning, while she was still in bed, André was summoned to her presence. A dozen serf girls were then ordered to attend to the giant's toilet, as though he were a Slav Odysseus and they the very maidens of Nausicaa. Laughing, they vied with one another in assisting the puzzled

giant to make himself presentable for the mysterious interview. In the meantime Madame Turgenev asked her adopted daughter for a piece of blue ribbon, and then demanded the sum of ten roubles from her intendant. With one gift in each hand the châtelaine smiled graciously on André, who at sight of the presents began to mutter hoarsely in token of satisfaction. And as he left her presence the dumb giant struck his breast heavily in order to express fidelity and gratitude to the woman who had grudged him his Mumu.

Undoubtedly Turgenev's youth was shadowed by the knowledge of many such incidents in his own home. Undoubtedly, too, the terrible wordless endurance of the Russian peasant, his good qualities as well as his bad, convinced him that the time was not ripe for the final passing away of that Old Russia of which his own mother was a living symbol. Yet in his soul he is deeply sympathetic with that dumb hinterland of Europe of which André is the prototype. His absorption in André and in all that André stands for is the veritable link that most closely unites the two Turgenevs, kindling the sensitive sympathy of the one and arousing in its own sad cause the resentful, almost malignant, suspicion of the other. The memory of André and his bowed silent comrades persisted with Turgenev through all his wanderings. Nowhere in Europe, at no

dinner-party in Paris or Baden-Baden, was he ever really very far away from that terrace at Spasskoë in front of which the Russian peasant women would sing their sombre songs while their husbands caroused over the vodka. And as old age gained upon him the impressions of his youth came back to him with increasing vividness. All his life-work, his peculiar dreams of freedom in life and art, all in a sense had been anticipated in that slumbering Russian home. His very pessimism had been experienced years and years before in the garden of Spasskoë, and experience was only to deepen and broaden it. Long, long ago the one Turgenev had realised the indifference of Nature as she stares past her suppliants tearing at each other's throats under the shadow of her altar. But long ago also the calm and serene Turgenev had recognised the intervention of human pity in the merciless scheme of implacable Nature. As for the end, to read its secret Turgenev reverted to the beginning, as though the very secret beyond death had been absorbed at the commencement of life.

The dissimulation of the great novelist, that kindly dissimulation which had so often made for him such bitter enemies, had been his rôle even in boyhood, when he bowed hopelessly and helplessly before his mother's dull, tranquil tyranny. How watchful he had been before this symbol of dominance, this woman who played

with human beings' lives less carefully than a child with costly toys! It was this malignant application of brute force that had deepened at a most impressionable age his deep inherited suspicion of all things. And in the very late years of his life, when he had left far behind him both the passion and the élan of youth and the aspirations, national and personal, of manhood, and had approached those veiled portals of thought which lie beyond the barriers of human reason, Turgenev faced the supreme mystery neither with the supplication of the contrite nor with the arrogant curiosity of a later Faust. But, after his own fashion, he was imperceptibly drawn away from those realities which he had depicted with such infinite sureness of touch, and carried into a world of phantoms. Yet even in this new world there remained, steadfast and inseparable, the two Turgenevs that had shadowed each other in the garden of Spasskoë.

One evening at Magny, the younger de Goncourt, who was lying as usual on the sofa, declared that he experienced already the sensation of being dead. "As for me," said Turgenev, "it is rather different. You know how sometimes there is in a room an imperceptible perfume of musk that one cannot get rid of? . . . Very well: there is around me something like the odour of death, of dissolution." Then after a short silence he added, "I believe that I can find the explanation of

that in the fact of my inability, now absolute, to love." Turgenev, indeed, had commenced to lose something of his power of evoking the concrete ghosts of his regrets, the ghosts that fluttered to him from the faint frou-frou of skirts, that were aroused from the long ago by chance footsteps, that were heard from beyond the winding of a road, from a whisper vibrating through shadows, from a perfumed handkerchief. And when these ghosts refused to come back to him he realised that he had never known that deep, quiet love which he so often interpreted in women but so very seldom in men. At the bottom of everything else there was always a lurking suspicion which made absolute surrender almost impossible to Turgenev. Nor could he, like Faust, search for Helen, deepening his experience through Marguerite on the way. It was not in his nature to search at all for strange experiences, but only to absorb them when they hovered close to him. After all he was at no time wholly divorced from that Sanin who had lived like a plant long ago in Frankfort.

And in these late years, when he could not even hope to believe in the political creed of Young Russia, he commenced to understand that he, the enchanter of so many realities of romance, had been always incapable of realising the meaning of his own enchantment. He had illuminated others by his magic, but his own heart had re-

mained dark. And now, instead of becoming absorbed by the suggestion of some woman whose soul he might interpret, he is absorbed by the soulless presence of death. For a long time he has been hurrying in front of it, snatching year after year from its blind gluttony. And in the good moments he had been able to laugh at it in spite of the warnings of his doctors. After all, he was a Slav, and he acknowledged that he appreciated that Slavonic mist. He understood, too, that warning not to think of the cold lest one should die of it.

And in the last works of all he reverts to two distinct themes—to this obsession of death, with the suggestion of a personal survival, and to that youth which now seemed to him but as yesterday. In "Clara Militch," the sub-title of which is "After Death," the great novelist takes up both these themes. Aratof is attracted by Clara Militch, but he misunderstands her sentiments for him. She has been an actress, and he believes that she has been acting in regard to himself. Suddenly, he learns through a newspaper of her death, and from that moment he becomes obsessed in a sense that he has never been obsessed by her when she was alive. Even though she is dead, and it is too late for earthly happiness, he will learn the soul of this woman. Obeying this impulse, he makes his way to the house in which she had died, and returns with a photograph of the dead

girl and a fragment from her private diary. Even now, he does not know whether he does or does not love Clara. But he waits for her, and he clings to these associations which seem to link his own earthly life with her mysterious survival. And in this ecstasy of anticipation wholly detached from the normal routine of life he continues until the day on which they find him dead in his bed. His cold fingers are clutching a lock of black hair which cannot be extricated from their grasp, while an untranslatable happiness is stamped upon the intent dead face.

But even in these last works the attitude of Turgenev is almost always sane and even a little cold. For, the suspicious Turgenev persisted to the very end, even when the novelist fringed upon the borders of the occult. Very charming is the sketch entitled "A Free Russian Village"; but in that very year he wrote a fragment describing a pursuing old woman which gives us the last grimace of an octopus-like human destiny. Typical, too, of the resultant, so to speak, of Turgenev's attitude towards life is that dialogue between the Jungfrau and the Finsteraarhorn in which the Alpine Mountains peer out at the world after intervening cycles of centuries during which the race of man dwindles and fades and dies. Then, in the opinion of these exponents of Nature's merciful philosophy, all is at last well with the world. In "The Dog" there is once more the obsessing motif of death;

and in " My Opponent " the ghost of a dead comrade returns, but, more enigmatic than even the Alpine Mountains, says nothing whatever concerning human fate. In " The Last Meeting " the note of reconciliation through death is sounded by the naïve serene Turgenev, but in " Love and Hunger " his other twin-self whispers mockingly, " Love and hunger—their aim is the same —preservation of life, of one's own life and the life of others—the life of all." In another beautiful prose poem he utters the mournful hopeless " Stop ! " to youth hurrying carelessly on to age and death.

In " The Beggar " we have a Russian touch of the kindly sort, when the mendicant is thankful for the clasp of a human hand. He is not the only one who is grateful, for Turgenev adds, " I felt that I, too, had received a gift from my brother." In the same little volume we have some comments on the line of a song—" How lovely and fresh those roses were ! " And in this song from long ago, ghosts seem to come rustling back to this psychologist of passion who could never wholly love. Russian scenes, scenes of his home and of those first breathless transports of youth's guess at love, became for the moment more real to him than the actuality of age and the nearing menace of Death. In such moments he is really Sanin again, living over once more that far-off romance with the Italian girl at Frankfort. For,

in moments such as these, the savour of life returns to him, so that in age itself he can renew without mockery the ecstasy of youth. But the bubble breaks only too swiftly, and in "The Labourer and the Man with the White Hand" bitter memories, also real enough, return to him. A useless idealist pleads for liberty, works after his fashion for liberty, and foolishly, uselessly, dies for liberty. And when he has paid this last price for the cause one of the genuine people exclaims to his comrade, "Don't you suppose we could get a bit of the rope he's hanged with?" The vision of "Spring Torrents" has faded into the acrid memory of Rudin.

Only three months before his death he was to become still more intimately personal in these final fragments. For in "Fire at Sea" he dictated in French a sketch of that incident on board the *Nicholas I.* which had made so deep an impression upon his memory. In this sketch he makes it quite clear that he, as a boy of nineteen, apart from his first not unnatural spasm of terror, had behaved exceedingly well. In the first moment of that terror it seems that he offered the sum of ten thousand roubles to a sailor to save him, but he denies implicitly that he used the words "I am the only son of a widow." Afterwards a sailor reproached him and reminded him about the ten thousand roubles: "But as I was not quite sure of his identity, and as besides he had

done nothing whatever for me, I offered him a thaler, which he accepted gratefully."

Turgenev had not himself been guilty of cowardice, but in this sketch, written so close to his death, he notes a pathetic incident observed with characteristic minuteness in spite of the horrors of a fire at sea: "I perceived in the middle of a group of passengers a general of tall stature, his clothes literally soaked with water, who stood motionless, leaning against a bench which he had just detached from a boat. I learned that in the first moment of terror he had brutally pushed back a woman who wanted to pass in front of him so as to leap from the vessel in one of the first embarkations which had foundered. Seized by a steward, who had flung him back on to the vessel, the old soldier became ashamed of his momentary cowardice, and took an oath that except the captain he would be the last to leave the ship. He was a tall man, pale, with a red scar on his forehead, and he kept casting around him contrite and resigned glances as though he were asking for pardon."

In no single one of his important works does Turgenev show more minuteness of observation than in this sketch which links his boyhood to the very end of his life. He noted, this boy of nineteen, all the variations of stupefying fear that paralysed so many around him. And again, after all these years of weary experience, there returned

to him as from yesterday the shrill dolorous cries of women as they leaped desperately for safety. Turgenev was admittedly Sanin, who "lived like a plant," but he was also some one else quite different. That extraordinary receptivity that made him, as it were, a plate for receiving the deepest and the most fugitive impressions was abnormally sensitive in youth, and never more so than on that exploited occasion when he was supposed to have cried out, "Save me! I am the only son of a widow: ten thousand roubles to him who will save me!"

CHAPTER VI

THE death of Flaubert was a turning-point in the old age of Ivan Turgenev; the Magny dinners were no longer the same; it was no longer possible for the Slavonic mist to conceal the ever-nearing phantom which was becoming imperceptibly the one reality. The great Russian himself was becoming a phantom at these "dinners of the hissed authors" which he had so often charmed with his genius.

"Le dîner," notes the Journal, "commence gaïement, mais voilà que Tourguénief parle d'une constriction du cœur, survenue de nuit, constriction mêlée à une grande tache brune sur le mur, en face de son lit, et qui, dans un cauchemar où il se trouvait moitié éveillé, moitié dormant, était la mort." His health grew worse and worse, and his doctors called his malady gouty angina pectoris. "It is the term that we use," said Charcot to Daudet, "when we do not know what to say." But even in the midst of the most acute pain Turgenev was careful to analyse the variations of suffering. "During the operation," he once observed to Daudet, "I thought of our

dinners, and I searched for words to convey a just impression of steel piercing my flesh as though it were a knife cutting a banana."

During even this last year his strength allowed him to work. He was busy with "Clara Militch," and last of all with "Fire at Sea." Towards the end of autumn he remained alone at Bougival, the Viardots having returned to Paris. In October he writes: "I live still, if living is being unable to stir or to stand upright . . . that is how oysters live! And there still remain for me distractions that they do not possess." But in spite of everything his creative energy was still productive, and a visitor to whom he narrated the troubling dreams that came to him at night, received the impression that the world of literature would be enriched by another volume of "Poems in Prose." Again, he was able to throw aside all purely personal distractions, even those of intense physical suffering, and from his deathbed he implored Tolstoy not to betray Russia by renouncing its literature.

To the very last he placed literature before all else, and as one glances back at the life of this complex cosmopolitan it is only possible to guess at his inner nature through this devotion to art. For the absorption in the analysis of temperament was as incarnate in Turgenev as the sense of duty itself. To him, as to Flaubert, external incidents were merely irritating disturbances, and it was

from the inner life of the ego that they drew, each after his fashion, the savour of an impression, the stab of a regret, sights, sounds, illusions, dreams, all the delicate contradictory fantasies that hearty well-meaning people would brush aside as the cobwebs of Progress. At once meditative and alert, serene and ironical, Turgenev considered the heroic antics of a hero in the Anglo-Saxon sense essentially uninteresting, essentially childish attempts to interfere with the slow monotonous undulations of Nature, that Juggernaut whom none can either hurry or evade.

Often, however, he rebelled against his own disinclination for the world of action. He, who was in so many ways so close to Hamlet, has openly avowed his preference for Hamlet's antithesis, Don Quixote. In book after book his irony played mockingly round that lethargy of the Slav, from which he knew that he himself was by no means emancipated. Steeped as he was in the culture of the West, he strove to persuade himself that he, too, was working for definite, practical aims. He rebelled even against his own inalienable distaste for rebellion. He tried to persuade himself that he liked the practical Solomin, and he tried to persuade the world that he was fascinated by Bazarof. The one Turgenev, indeed, did surrender himself naïvely to the glamour of a new type, but the other Turgenev watched him with ironical suspicion, analysed

him, cross-questioned him, tripped him up, ridiculed him even a little for opposing his puny personality with such confidence to that implacable scheme of things of which he was but one unconsidered atom. Turgenev has often been charged with being the romantic of the realists by one party, and of being the realist of the romantics by the other. His "method," as a matter of fact, was one of vision, indefinable, incapable of being explained even by himself. His lesson, if one may at all use such a word in relation to so profound an artist, is that Nature is eternally indifferent, even as that "calm strong angel" of Huxley, but that on the whole, in spite of endless inevitable antagonisms, endless reversions to atavism, and endless contradictions, poor human nature is most certainly kind. It is not Nature that, according to Turgenev, smiles and soothes the toil-worn children whom she has flung so carelessly into being. It is rather these children, the ordinary men and women, unheroic and undeserving in the ordinary sense, who, clustering humbly together, console each other in the face of their implacable Mother whose set smile ceases more and more to deceive.

Such was Turgenev's philosophy, and it survived all the querulous attacks that were made upon him. Perhaps it was reflected from his own unostentatious generosity, which, so often deceived, so often vilified, was never found wanting. His country-

men often reproached him for living in Paris; it was an axiom among needy Russians that looking for employment meant visiting Turgenev. But his kindness was almost always charged with a certain irony of experience. Once, for example, he heard of a Russian being ill in Paris. The young man had submitted a manuscript to a journal, and Turgenev, after his old familiar habit, wrote urgently to the editor on behalf of his unhappy compatriot. "But," he added, "if you do not think that you should publish it, leave the author under the impression that you will, and send him two hundred roubles, charged to my account." That attitude was thoroughly characteristic of this kindly and ironical weigher of human souls who, so often attacked, cared so little to defend himself. This pessimist who disbelieved in the mercifulness of Nature never lost sympathy with human nature. Nature, he had grasped long ago, in the garden of Spasskoë, is indifferent alike to tears of supplication or to tears of revolt, but supplication and revolt alike are evidence of man's idealism, which has projected the symbol of an all-merciful and bountiful Nature that will protect the least of her children. For this poor men and women should be revered, perhaps, a little; above all they should be pardoned. And the humble and the weak should never be crushed lower, particularly when they are willing to help those who are even humbler

and weaker than themselves. But as for those boisterous Titans who assert their little individualities in the face of the maelstrom of destiny, to them Turgenev is constitutionally antipathetic even when he tries hardest to believe in them.

Most of the great novelists have expressed in a single book what on the whole may be taken for their guess at the meaning of life. One novel may be the expression of one stage of intellectual and emotional experience, while another may be the expression of quite another stage. But in the works of many great authors one can find often a book which is also *the* book, and sometimes this volume of finality is also the book of youth. Dickens, for example, in "David Copperfield" has spelt out the scheme of things as it appeared to him in a book which recalls his youth as poignantly as any autobiography in the world. Here, youth and romance with all their fleeting and exquisite savour renew themselves for a brief spell, pass, and fade and die. And the meaning of life, at first so fantastically confused, takes to itself at last the worn-out line stamped by the experience of generations who in turn had dreamed and revolted and conformed. One after the other these childish companions of Dickens' boyhood come to the curb of life, accept the harness of destiny, learn to fit in, claiming tranquilly their just meed—no less, no more—of happiness and pain. As in a realised dream one learns

the meaning of the years in such a book of bitten-in experience as "David Copperfield," in spite of the fact that Dickens with his English traditions neither would nor could express nakedly and fearlessly that contorted destiny upon whose cornices so many delicate organisms are stupidly broken. But even Dickens, with all his hearty optimism and his broad sane confidence in the ultimate furtherance of the general good, even Dickens recognised that in the very nature of things, and quite independent of any good or ill desert, there are some who will be inevitably broken upon that bed of Procrustes that is so often called the "lap of Nature."

That is, of course, a mere commonplace. What makes a "David Copperfield" and all such personal records so significant is not that they relate mere personal experience, but because they suggest through the medium of such a record what life as a whole has really meant to the author. Steerforth, for instance, gives one the illusion of life lived with intensity. Steerforth, in spite of the very Victorian melodrama which surrounds him, in spite of little Em'ly's naïve tears and Rosa Dartle's hysterics, does stand for a human soul striving uselessly and arrogantly to live out its own will. And in dealing with Steerforth, Dickens, as though too steeped in personal memories for the indulgence of any mere censure, relates the life-story with a touch of reality that

pierces easily through the melodrama of habit. The world may forget a thousand oddities and humours which once wrung tears of laughter from age and youth alike, but the world will not wholly forget, in spite of the crude setting of the picture, that figure upon whom the English novelist flashed the very glamour of destiny. There is no moralising here, no juggling with known facts. At once destructive and self-destroying, as Steerforth the boy was, so the man will be. But one bad quality does not necessarily mar a good one, perhaps equally strong. A villain, except in melodrama, is not always a villain, and if one glances back steadily, one must realise that life is like that in its action upon character—that life, in fact, in its action on those who will not submit, is like an octopus whose tentacles fasten ever on the weakest part in its moment of lowest resistance. Dickens, glancing down into the remote recesses of his own heart, drew the core of the thing with naked truthfulness. For this book of youth is also the book of final experience, in which there is no whitewashing on the one hand nor declamatory judgment on the other. "David" may survive placidly, adapting himself willingly to the lowered tension that succeeds the storm. Steerforth will inevitably be engulfed in the whirlpool from which he will never emerge. It is not merely an external storm of the elements that dashes the corpse of the betrayer on to that

lonely coast. Without any such external punishment there was in Steerforth's own heart that which would have lashed him swiftly to the quietude of death.

That was a book of experience as well as of youth. In "Sapho" Alphonse Daudet has given us his book of experience as opposed to "Le Petit Chose," his book of youth. In the first book youth lives like Sanin, literally like a "plant" that one watches in its growth ; in the second youth falls away like a beautiful scarred thing, whose very memory is a torture. But just as in "David Copperfield" Dickens passes altogether beyond the range of personal experience, so Daudet, the adopted Parisian, gives us in "Sapho" not merely his own verdict upon existence, but something of universal human experience. He also, in these pages, like Dickens in that very different book, seems to say to us: "Here is life as I at least have found it. Such as it is I have written it down."

In the make-believe world of fiction, with its stereotyped tricks and conventions, one cannot be too grateful for these sombre memories of reality which genius throws suddenly into clear perspective. "Sapho" in one sense is written in those first few pages, when the young artist carries the beautiful, terrible woman up that universal flight of stairs. She is so light at first, a precious burden that one bears as easily as youth

itself; but presently the young man's breath comes more quickly, and a little later he is panting beneath the binding arms of Sapho. Already she is wound around him, the very octopus of life to which youth has offered its own naked throbbing heart. All illusions perish in this book by the creator of the joyous "Tartarin." Nowhere else, perhaps, in all literature are the wrappings of hope more ruthlessly stripped from the skeleton of destiny. There is nothing at all to be said, for who should blame even Sapho, the parasite, who consumes herself as well as others?

"Sapho" is a book written under the permission to write truthfully, a concession which has been accorded to no English book, as Thackeray reminds us, since "Tom Jones." In "Vanity Fair," however, his own book of experience, he has written, always with the English reserve, a genuine tablet of life. That, and no other, is the book of Thackeray's final experience, the book which, had none other survived, would have revealed what life meant to this English novelist who in his great moments was also a world novelist. That is how the play goes through Thackeray's opera glasses, and nobody can avoid the play, the play which dominates all the little private dramas of one's own heart. Perhaps no one but an Englishman could have been so unembarrassed by so alluring an heroine as Becky, but Thackeray was watching her over his mid-

Victorian spectacles, stabbing down into the nullity of her soul. She too, no less than Sapho, was one of these parasites flung into being by environment, fed upon human lives, whom it is perhaps idle to judge, but whom it is certainly death to cherish. "But one should not be so hard upon Becky," people have been chirping ever since the book was written; "one should be an artist and not a moralist." The borrowed cliché has become a tradition of English criticism, which is itself generally moralising only too thinly veiled. The great Victorian novelist, who was writing down what life as a whole meant to him, knew better than that. One after the other those characters of his, once so vital and now too quickly disparaged, may fade and perhaps even pass into nothingness, but there is something in "Vanity Fair" which assuredly will never perish. It is the actual register of life as it appeared at a particular time to an observer who had thoroughly absorbed his own environment and who occasionally rose to the Virgilian contemplation of affairs. It is perhaps a half-truth to say that what is really significant in a work of art is what is left over when the descriptive adjectives have been exhausted. When everything has been said about "Vanity Fair" there remains in it an aroma of human experience, a little acrid perhaps, but with its harshness softened by an incongruous mingling of the recognition that all things,

good and bad alike, pass to the same dolorous end.

Very different is another real English novel, another final book which is at once a record of experience and a memory of youth. George Eliot utters in "The Mill on the Floss" something of that sombre wisdom which became her ultimate philosophy of endurance, and at the same time narrates the story of her childhood in words that are charged with the wonder of life and art. In other books she was, seemingly, to search more restlessly into the recesses of the human heart, to reveal more complex secrets, to sound deeper plummets of life. But it is in "The Mill on the Floss" that all the wistful wonder of childhood and all the charmed regret of experience converge. One can never forget that undulating sweep of life that passes over the familiar landscape like a slowly gathering storm. The men and women are part of that quiet country setting beside the Floss. It is very peaceful outwardly, but none the less the phantoms of destiny are mockingly preoccupied with this drama of quiet people who cannot escape the storm. Undoubtedly "The Mill on the Floss" is one of the very few English novels in which a great writer has written down what may be accepted as the final comment. It closes upon youth cut off in the very moment of understanding, but none the less it gives utterance to the enigma of destiny and at the same

time expresses the great philosophy of human sympathy in the face of Nature's inscrutable indifference, which was essentially the secret of Turgenev's pessimism.

He too, apart from his book of youth, comprised in the two volumes "First Love" and "Spring Torrents," has written a single volume which in a very deep sense may be accepted as his last word on the comedy of life. In "Rudin" and "Liza" he expressed his point of view in regard to the national emancipation of his country. His more mature standpoint of the same problem found utterance in "Virgin Soil" and in "Fathers and Sons." All these books show that Turgenev's attitude towards the Russian people was in all essentials the same as in "The Annals of a Sportsman," the book which had revealed the moujik to the whole civilised world. In that book he has demonstrated his intimate knowledge of and sympathy with the Russian people in the normal endurance of their lot. In "On the Eve" he was to demonstrate more clearly than in any book before or after his want of faith in any phase of the contemporary struggle for freedom. In each one of these books something of the inner life of those two Turgenevs may be read, but in one book, "The Diary of a Superfluous Man," the introspective side of Turgenev's character is laid bare. In this, we have what is almost a disillusioned sequel to those earlier volumes of

youth which are actual autobiography. In one sense, indeed, the art of Turgenev hovers very close to the story of his soul, the actual record of which was burnt in the garden at Bougival. One remembers his advice to a friend to write down this or that emotional experience, even at the moment when the wound most festered. And remembering this, one understands how over and over again in apparently objective works there intervenes the subtle hint of personal recollection. In one book there is something of all the other works of Turgenev—his youth, his political aspirations, his cosmopolitan outlook, his mature conviction as to the liberty of Russia. All these are to be found in " Smoke," and with them, stamping the book with finality, the undisguised conviction of Turgenev's kindly but unalterable pessimism.

Apart altogether from the political dissatisfaction with " Smoke," critics have urged against it that its heroine is a woman of the world instead of an *ingénue*. It is claimed that through this *volte-face* of Turgenev much of the charm and freshness of his individual qualities are lost, and that he who so persistently declined to give the youth of his country what they wanted, has declined in this instance to give them what they expected. None the less in " Smoke " Turgenev gives as it were an unconscious résumé of his youth's first love, of his political dreams, of the long disillusion of maturity, and of that mournful

recognition of Nature's aloofness that chilled him as a boy in the garden of Spasskoë.

The book was published in 1867, while Turgenev was breathing the cosmopolitan atmosphere of Baden-Baden. Unlike "Fathers and Sons," "Virgin Soil," and "On the Eve," it has comparatively little political importance beyond that which attaches to caricature. Unlike Rudin, its hero ceases utterly to believe in phrases; unlike Lavretsky, he ceases to believe even in the quiet immediate duty that is close at hand to every one of us. Nor is its hero in any sense similar to the central figure of "The Diary of a Superfluous Man." But in the very deepest sense it is Turgenev uttering, without the faintest wish to conciliate, the very essence of what romance meant to him whose pulses were only stirred by the frou-frou of a mondaine's skirts, even while he worshipped those candid and clear-browed heroines to whom his genius was finally dedicated. Moreover, it is in this book also that the twin Turgenevs blend more inevitably than in any of the other novels. Personal and analytic, "Smoke" is at one and the same time a work that is subjective almost to the last limit of introspection and observantly objective. Never before or after did Turgenev peer more uncompromisingly into his own heart, and never before or after did those sad mocking eyes of his scrutinise more minutely the young patriots of Russia. Not for nothing

had he been watching in Baden all these emancipated exiles whose rhetoric was to galvanise all Europe through the sluggish arteries of their native Russia.

In other novels we are plunged at once into the atmosphere of Russia. A traveller has perhaps returned after a long absence, and easily, imperceptibly almost, the new ideas come into gentle contact with the old. But in "Smoke" the *point d'appui* is the Russian tree at Baden-Baden around which the gossip of liberty mingles easily and naturally with the gossip of gambling and chiffons. Litvinov is on his way back to Russia, where he is to marry his young cousin, Tatyana, whom he has known from childhood. She and her aunt, Kapitalina Markovna, are to meet him in Baden-Baden, then they will all three return to Russia and all will be well with them, as it seems. It is almost the position of Sanin at Frankfort years and years before, but that is only on the surface. Sanin had been like an open page awaiting this or that impression; Litvinov had already experienced the impress of a complex and dangerous personality.

Years before, as an insignificant young man, he had made the acquaintance of an impoverished but aristocratic family named Osini. There was a daughter named Irina Pavlona, with whom the student fell hopelessly in love. This story was as commonplace as possible so far as outward

incidents are concerned. Litvinov neglected his lectures and his university work in general in order to visit that shabby drawing-room and stare hopelessly into the eyes of this silent girl. Of course he considered his passion that of the moth for the star, but once, when he was about to steal out of the room without saying good-bye, she threw suddenly all the magic of youth and tenderness into the one word "Stay." To the young student it was like a whisper from heaven, a heaven that one has never dared to plead for, even in one's dreams. But she really loved him, and of course she would be faithful as young girls are faithful to first love. Still, there were other things for a girl of seventeen. Her dress, for example, the one that poverty compelled her to wear day after day—would he love her in that, always, always? She wished him to love her even in that, for at seventeen, as perhaps at every other age, that seems to be the ultimate test of fidelity.

But at seventeen other things do happen, and in this particular puff of smoke the something was the great annual ball in the Hall of Nobility. By some means or other Irina must go to this ball. After all, she had a white frock, and the poor student himself supplied a bunch of heliotrope.

And as she sets out on her first triumph Turgenev makes one realise everything—from the little thin cloak, much too short, that enfolded

the white frock, down to the poor student staring after the decrepit hired coach that was drawing her out of his life. At midnight Litvinov walked up and down outside the windows of the Hall of Nobility and listened to the mocking music of Strauss.

The next day as usual he called at the Osinin, but found no one at home except Irina's father, the Prince, who informed him that his daughter had a headache—not an unnatural thing after the excitement of her first ball. But Litvinov divined that everything had changed. The Prince himself wore a coat instead of his usual old dressing-gown. Things, it seemed, had been happening altogether out of the range of the poor student. Irina had had an immense success, and a cousin of the Princess Osinin, the Chamberlain Count Reisendach, had determined to adopt her and to take her to live with his wife and himself in St. Petersburg. A month later, her mother took her to the capital and placed her in the care of the Countess Reisendach, "a very kind-hearted woman, but with the brain of a hen and something of a hen's exterior."

Well, all that was long, long ago; the memory would seldom trouble Litvinov, who had arrived at the threshold of the sure sane life of mutual sympathy and trust. But as he returned to his hotel a familiar perfume greeted him, and he noticed a large bunch of heliotrope in a glass of

water. Dim things began to stir in his memory, and on making inquiries he was told that a very "grandly dressed" lady had brought the flowers. Already their perfume troubled in an inner sense the security of his repose. He found them oppressive in his bedroom and carried the bouquet into the next room, but even there it pursued him, persisting into his dreams, wooing him back with the most simple and the most subtle of all the associations of the sweet first love of youth. When he awoke in the morning he cried out aloud, "Can it be she? It can't be!"

And that very day he meets Irina again. She is the wife of a General Ratimov now, and a mondaine of no little importance. But in spite of this she asks Litvinov to forgive her for the desertion of years ago. Imperceptibly they begin again as though they had only just left off. With the quiet sympathy of long experience she draws from him the simple outline of his life during this long interval. But just as he is going away she reminds him that he has been concealing something from her all the time—"the chief thing": why has he not told her that? Litvinov blushes. It was such a little thing: why had he not told her of the young girl who was to be his wife? From that instant the beautiful worldly woman pervades him like a perfume, like that very heliotrope that had so swiftly evoked the pain of old-time memories. He cannot shake off the renewal of

the old influence. Once more she winds herself around his life, consuming it but adding no life-blood to her own. Like a moth fluttering feebly away from the light that lures it, he struggles against this obsession which has rendered meaningless all else in his life. For, Irina is still the same wonderful being, who in the little white frock and short cloak was swept carelessly away from him in the battered old coach years and years ago. Only now he has not to wander hopelessly outside the windows listening to the music of Strauss; that is not for him. Now he is near her, and in the zone of her withering magnetism he forgets the rights of love and honour and good faith.

The outside world becomes to him a veritable nightmare of chatterers, and whether he is visiting Irina's circle of society people or the circle of Russia's young liberators, his attitude is equally detached and preoccupied. He wants this one woman, and her only in all the world. He watches her in the atmosphere of pompous dullness with which her husband has surrounded her, and like Sanin and the hero of "First Love," notes accurately, in spite of his almost hypnotic obsession, the variations of absurdity in her different guests. And when he leaves her he allows himself to be dragged into an equally repulsive atmosphere of idle boastfulness, which he analyses as one who, even in a dream, preserves extreme lucidity.

Bambaev, the good-natured enthusiast, presents him to the different heroes of Russia, in each one of whom he reads something wonderful and new of which Litvinov cannot discern the slightest trace. It is all the mere splashing of worn-out words springing from nothing and leading to nothing—far, far less real than the scent of heliotrope which pursues him into this atmosphere of smoke.

Such is the inner life of Litvinov, while his acquaintances chatter confidently around the Russian tree. But at last Tatyana and her aunt arrive, and it is almost impossible for him to greet them now that this sweet restless poison has stolen into his life. The girl divines instantly that something baneful has come between them, and all soothing lies are frozen upon his lips, so truthfully do his eyes confess the secret that has shamed his honour. It is horrible to watch her suffering, but he must bear that too, for now it seems to him that the good, homely life that he had planned is wholly impossible. And so, like the hero of "Sapho" and the heroes of other books of experience, he decides to stake his life on the faith of a woman who has already broken faith with him; he will sacrifice everything to her—they will live out their destiny together. It is not for nothing that the scent of heliotrope stirred in his very blood that summer evening at Baden-Baden.

But at the last the woman hedges in the lottery of passion, as years before the girl had hedged in the lottery of love. After all, she cannot abandon everything for him; she cannot give up the world, because she is what she is only by reason of the world. He must not demand from her so monstrous a sacrifice. But she would like him to live near her and see her every day. He has become necessary to her again, and they two will love each other wisely and discreetly. But she must not be asked to burn her boats, for she is not strenuous enough for that. But Litvinov, who has already given up everything for her, is not prepared for this discreet sacrifice, and so he tells her abruptly that all is over between them, and that he is going away the next morning.

But as he is taking his seat in the railway carriage, some one whispers his name, and, turning round, he sees Irina wearing her maid's shawl and with her hair dishevelled as he had never seen it before. She pleads to him with her eyes, wooing him to her side, promising him the ultimate recesses of her heart—promising, promising, promising anything and everything if only he will stay! On his side the man utters no word, but points to the seat beside him with a gesture of challenge. Let her choose; it is not yet too late. And Irina understands. For a moment she hesitates, and then the train whistle sounds,

and Litvinov is carried out of her life just as, years before, she had been carried out of his.

And now the very coma of exhaustion has fallen upon Litvinov, and he can view life in perspective as one who has already lived. Now he can judge of people, as one for whom men and women have already become phantoms. All illusions have fallen from him as suddenly withered leaves from a stricken tree. All the old phases of experience come back to him only to be dismissed as foolish dreams. Every battle-cry of Russia's liberators seems to him in this beaten moment as so much smoke. Everywhere, whether among the young generals in Irina's drawing-room or among the young political enthusiasts, he had experienced nothing but idle smoke. The love of his early youth had been but smoke. The honourable love of his mature years, that too had passed away from him in smoke. Passion, also, had been tried and found wanting, and in its turn had coiled away from him in films of smoke.

And now the train is dashing past Rastadt and Carlsruhe ; Bruchsal has been left far behind. The train is almost at Heidelberg ; and here, suddenly, realities force themselves upon his morose reverie.

All the old Baden politicians have migrated to Heidelberg, and come rushing up to the railway

carriage to greet the sceptic who has so long refused to respond to the fire of their rhetoric. He is in no mood to respond now, and so they rage against him, mouthing their futile insults across the station platform. Never was the famous "À tout venant je crache" of Young Russia more vibrant, but Litvinov answers nothing. All this, too, is part of the universal smoke of life. Let them rage and fret for a little; they too, like so many smoke eddies, will be swept into the nothingness of distance. As Litvinov is whirled away from them there is but one word in his heart—smoke. All these feverish destinies are but phantoms of smoke, merely obscuring what they imagine themselves to reveal.

A little later he comes across Bambaev, the most enthusiastic and the most foolish of all the apostles of Russian emancipation. The poor fellow is employed in an obscure corner of Russia as a menial. He has turned Frenchman so far as his name is concerned, and is perpetually shouted at as "M'sieu Roston." Bambaev tells his old friend how one after the other his idols have fallen from their pedestals. But Bambaev, who had believed in each of them in turn, still believes in Russia. "Yes, yes," he admits, "hard times have come! but still I say Russia. . . . Ah! our Russia! Only look at those two geese: why, in the whole of Europe there is nothing like them!"

Litvinov passes on once more, but now the old coma has been lifted from his soul, as though from him alone in all Russia the smoke had risen, leaving the air around him clear and fresh. For, though every hope had seemed strangled in his heart, there remained for Litvinov that merciful renewal which Nature permits man to share with the other manifestations of life. And so for Litvinov the healing time comes with the sweet certainty of spring. His heart renews itself as the seasons themselves are renewed. For a little while yet he may linger, comforting himself and others as best he may in the zone of Nature's remote indifference. The old poison at least has fallen away from him, and he is able to return sane and healed to the faithful pity of the young girl to whom he has been so faithless. She at least in this world of smoke is beautiful and rare and real. But as for the rest, with their high hopes and their ambitions, their remedies and their revolts, nothing is left but films of smoke. Even Irina, who weighs so carefully the scales of her destiny in the balance, even Irina does not grasp the small practical certainty to which she had sacrificed the lover of her youth. In one of the most exclusive drawing-rooms in St. Petersburg the conversation turns upon Irina, and the hostess observes: "I feel so sorry for her . . . she has a satirical intellect . . . elle n'a pas . . . la foi." For Irina also there is nothing.

Her guess at happiness has been as meaningless as all the rest. Wisdom, it seemed, was itself only smoke.

Constantly Turgenev rebelled against the overwhelming conclusions which none the less pursued him to the inner depths of so many of his conceptions of Russian character. So far as his readers are concerned, so far as his autobiography itself is concerned, the last word of Ivan Turgenev is smoke. The very monotony of motif in the novels of Turgenev, which is the monotony of Nature herself, springs from this profound conviction. Turgenev did not make up little incidents which were sooner or later to happen in the exciting lives of clever dummies. Turgenev did not invent table-talk or even wonderful phrases to be spoken in heroic moments. Turgenev did not recognise the necessity for "curtains," or even for handy eccentric people who may be arranged easily enough to pat any sequence of incidents into an episode. Of all these things Turgenev took no heed. Life was his raw material, and his only "method" was that strange inner vision which detected instantly the significant and translated it into the language of art. His monotony is really the slow monotony of Nature, who at least plays no tricks for the further bewilderment of her progeny. In a novel of Turgenev you are not watching a kinetoscope, but the passing of the seasons, the passing of

generations, the sombre passing of human life itself.

But in "Smoke," his book of final experience, there is the merciful hint of escape which remained always such a solace to the Russian novelist. To the suspicious Turgenev, the man who suspected himself and others, the man who suspected life and death, there might indeed appear to be nothing in the world but smoke surging upward from the foolish holocaust of hopes and fears and passions and dreams. But that other Turgenev, the naïve, calm Slav, insensibly grasped that each fretful unit was but a part of the great whole, against which all rancour could avail nothing. That Turgenev believed in the final deliverance of the Russian soul, and that Turgenev expressed the faith that was in him, not through the lips of men but through the lips of his Russian women. They, these quiet, steadfast women, asking nothing for themselves, seeking only to give, they at least detect from the holocaust a white flame slowly piercing its way through all the concealing smoke. For them Turgenev has a reverence beyond mere words of praise.

One after the other they come to him, in Baden, in Paris, in Russia, these heroines who are like no others in any other literature, whispering to him the frozen secrets of his country. In their presence the cosmopolitan analyst of human

passion becomes once more a veritable giant of the steppes, filled with one knows not what shy reverence before these exquisite women, who are telling him what Russia means. In no one of his books has a heroine failed her lover in his hour of need. In no one of his books has it been the woman who has hesitated on the eve of action. Everything that Turgenev denied to his stricken heroes he granted abundantly to these blonde and candid daughters of the North, whose very love was inseparable from sacrifice. Even "Smoke," through the forgiving tenderness of Tatyana, is not a wholly sombre comment upon "the doubtful doom of human-kind."

To the very end Turgenev believed in the kindliness of human nature as opposed to the unseeing aloofness of Nature. Almost his last articulate words were: "Live and love others, as I have always loved them." He continued to suffer horribly, and at one of the Magny dinners Daudet stated his conviction that Turgenev had gone mad. He had confided, it seems, to Charcot his belief that he was "pursued by Assyrian soldiers, and even wished to hurl at him a fragment from the walls of Nineveh." But in spite of all his suffering he wrote that splendid and pathetic letter to Count Tolstoy, telling him to return to literature. That was the very kernel and anchorage of Ivan Turgenev, the bond of union between those twin-selves who claimed the

one great name. All his life his compatriots had been carping at him for not doing what he had no wish to do, for not interpreting what he had no wish to interpret. Turgenev loved literature, and his sacrifice was that of the artist to his art. That, too, he claimed came from the Source of all things, and his whole life was a proud self-dedication to its service.

Towards the very end his sufferings became so unendurable that he begged Maupassant to give him a revolver with which to end them. At another time he very nearly killed Madame Viardot by throwing an inkstand at her, so enraged was he at being ceaselessly watched. He died on December 3, 1883. "For two days," wrote Madame Viardot to an old friend of the Baden days, "he had lost consciousness. He suffered no more, his life ebbed out slowly, and after two convulsions he drew his last breath. We were all beside him. He became handsome again, as he had been always in the past. The first day after his death he had still, between his eyebrows, a deep wrinkle which had been formed under the pressure of convulsions; on the second day his normal expression of kindness reappeared on his face. One almost expected to see him smile."

Three days later his corpse was carried to the Gare de l'Est. It was accompanied by the greater

portion of the Russian colony in Paris; and several distinguished Frenchmen, among whom were Renan and About, paid him a last farewell in the name of literature and France. Four days later in the Russian capital the dead man's prophecy to Polonski was fulfilled. "Wait a little," he had said, "and then you will see how they will treat us." His funeral, like that of his enemy Dostoievsky, was a national pageant of mourning. Turgenev, who almost all his life had been neglected by his countrymen, was followed to the cemetery by two hundred and eighty-five deputations, and an enormous crowd. He had returned to Russia at last for good, and, very fittingly, he was buried close to the great Russian critic, Bielinski, who had understood him from the first.

CHRONOLOGY

1818. Born at Orel.
1835. Entered the University of St. Petersburg.
1838. Visited Europe for the first time.
1841. Returned to Russia.
1843. Met Bielinski and Pauline Garcia.
1847. Followed the Viardots to Europe.
1848. First visit to France.
1850. Death of Madame Turgenev.
1852. Published "Annals of a Sportsman."
1856. Left Russia to live in Europe.
1859. Published "Liza."
1859. Published "On the Eve."
1860. Published "Fathers and Sons."

1863. First appearance at Magny dinners.
1864. Settled in Baden-Baden.
1866. Met Flaubert.
1867. Published "Smoke."
1871. Commencement of Parisian period.
1877. Published "Virgin Soil."
1879. Visit to Moscow for the inauguration of the statue of Pushkin.
1882. Reconciled with Young Russia.
1883. Died in Paris.

HIS WORKS

The Annals of a Sportsman.
Rudin.
Liza.
On the Eve.
Fathers and Sons.
Smoke.
Virgin Soil.
Dream Tales and Prose Poems.
The Torrents of Spring.
First Love.
The Diary of a Superfluous Man.
A Lear of the Steppes.
Mumu, etc.
A Desperate Character, etc.
The Jew, etc.

TOLSTOY

CHAPTER I

SOME years ago Merezhkovsky, the Russian Hellenist, who has followed so many of his compatriots into the pursuit of mysticism, demonstrated that Count Leo Tolstoy, the Christian reformer, was and had always been essentially the pagan, as opposed to the Christian genius of Russia that was incarnate in Dostoievsky. The thesis was undoubtedly startling to many, particularly to those who saw in Turgenev's great rival two separate and distinct Tolstoys—Tolstoy the man and artist, and Tolstoy the ascetic and reformer. In reality there were at no time any such two Tolstoys as these of the popular belief, but, in a quite different sense from Ivan Turgenev, the author of "War and Peace" suggests a somewhat significant duality. This duality is not temperamental, as in the case of Turgenev, but springs rather from the external pressure of environment upon the natural ego. No profound suspicion of all things haunted Count Tolstoy from the beginning, a suspicion which denied the utility of searching for any answer at all to the enigma

of life. What haunted Tolstoy was something quite different, and in reality far less complex. It was the certainty of one endowed with a quite pagan capacity for enjoyment that the feast of life was too brief to have any meaning whatsoever. But there must be some meaning. From the very beginning Tolstoy perceived dimly that his pagan conception of life as a rich feast might be utterly wrong. From the very beginning the Christian's broodings over the future of the soul mingled with the pagan's certainty as to the future of the body. Had Merezhkovsky approached Count Tolstoy from a slightly different standpoint, his thesis would have been rather different, and possibly more profoundly true. He would have tracked the one individuality back to the beginning of articulate youth, and he would have seen at all times under all the pagan robustness and immense gusto for life "the hound of Heaven" in pursuit of Count Leo Tolstoy.

Be that as it may, there is at all events no line of demarcation between the artist and the reformer in Tolstoy. One does not begin at the point where the other has left off. That is only a myth fabricated by those who imagine that it is possible to renounce art by any verbal formula. In a sense, however, there are two Tolstoys, and they, like the two Turgenevs, have existed from the beginning side by side. The one has been unreservedly pagan, seeing in the flesh its own

justification, content with the first readings of life, grasping at happiness through pleasure, and—obtaining it. But the other had at once that melancholy of the pagans who hated so to lose the power of enjoyment, and, blended with it, that very different and even antagonistic melancholy of the Christians which has its origin, not in the triumph, but in the renunciation of the flesh. Tolstoy recognised very quickly that no one is strong enough to tear everything from the heart of life, that old age is very close to youth, and behind old age the end of the almost untasted banquet. But he could not accept this after the stoical fashion of the ancients; for him there must be some other explanation. And because of this realised antithesis between the immense capacity for happiness and the pettiness of actual life, Tolstoy sought, even in his boyhood, for some ruling principle of existence which might make life explicable and hence tolerable.

This search for an explanation does not begin with the moment of his world-famous conversion, but insinuates itself in some phase or other, consciously or subconsciously, through all his work. In the midst of scenes painted with an unequalled relish and gusto for life there enters almost always a seemingly quite alien spirit, restless, dissatisfied, self-tormenting. In the very childhood of Tolstoy this spirit appears to have

asserted itself. Very seldom in the whole literature of self-revelation has youth been portrayed with such matter-of-fact frankness as in "Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth," and we find it constantly in those pages.

In no other work does Tolstoy write with a greater delight in memory, that almost physical delight in recapturing physical pleasures which is so different from the small novelist's self-conscious desire to distribute his personality among mankind. With Turgenev the recalling of a single scent or sound is a communication with the past, as though some ghost had whispered to him or had stolen like a perfume into his room. With Tolstoy the effect of actuality is produced by quite different means, the most important of which, perhaps, is the cumulative effect of minutely realised physical details. If Turgenev may be described as a gourmet of life, Tolstoy may be described as a gourmand. Turgenev communicates the aroma of a half-forgotten scene; Tolstoy lives it over again, reproducing the actual physical delight or pain that he had experienced in it. The loves of Turgenev's youth emerge from the past like dim pervading presences assuming the masks of life; those of Tolstoy come to us as real people with every contour accentuated.

In the story of his youth Tolstoy confides in us with very much the same intimacy that

Turgenev showed in "First Love" and "Spring Torrents." The work of each of the great rivals betrays the most microscopic observation. The work of each betrays the habit, formed in early childhood, of methodically noting objective details in moments of excitement or danger. "You know," Turgenev once observed to Gorski, "that even in the most palpitating moments I cannot cease from observing other people." Tolstoy, too, has never been able to cease from observing other people. This curiosity of the intelligence is stamped upon the youth of each, and it made them realists in the Russian sense long before they knew the meaning of the word "realism." There exists also, in both these records of youth, the same honesty and the same avoidance, not only of arranging oneself before the world, but of even seeking to prove directly or indirectly that one is neither posing to oneself nor to other people. Different in so many things, different in their conception of art and to a certain extent in their conception of life, the two great Russian novelists were realists, and Tolstoy's realism in his record of youth is by far the more disconcerting of the two. For, while one only guesses here and there about the life of Turgenev, Tolstoy tells everything. Turgenev's autobiography is more conspicuous for its sudden lapses into reserve than for anything that it reveals; Tolstoy searches his memory so that he may omit nothing.

It is as though each had thrown into the story of his own life the innermost secret of his art. Turgenev allows us to peer into his soul through revealing here and there something significant; Tolstoy discloses his inner self by omitting no detail that may throw light upon his personality. Turgenev's intimate journal was burnt at his own request; Tolstoy has been publishing the most searching records of his spiritual and physical life since his early manhood. And yet it is undoubtedly the infinitely explanatory Tolstoy rather than the reserved and suspicious Turgenev who has appeared a complex and perplexing personality in the eyes of all Europe. This is at least partially due to the fact that he, unlike Turgenev, accentuated the realism which is the peculiar gift of Russian novelists.

It is a convention among the great majority of Anglo-Saxon writers that in any given scene of fiction somebody must be in the right and somebody else in the wrong. Whole libraries of closely-printed volumes are crowded with examples of this powerful tradition. Poor people have been almost always in the wrong in English fiction other than novels with a purpose; badly-dressed people and people of low origin have been in the wrong as a matter of course. All such people, and uncomfortable people of every kind, are punished more or less judiciously in English fiction. The tradition has repeated itself down the cen-

turies with a certain sluggish persistence; and even the French, if one substitutes the word *propre* for the "right" or "wrong" of English censure, will be found to maintain much the same attitude. The attitude, incidentally, is never more conspicuous than when an attempt is made to subvert it. Hugo, for example, placing Gavroche in the foreground, saluted him and presented him as being for once in the "right" and the whole world of the bourgeoisie in the "wrong." But this conscious change of perspective has no bearing upon the unconscious realisation of the Russian novelists that nobody is either in the right or the wrong, a conclusion at which they had arrived long before that much exploited formula of Ibsen that there is no formula at all for the guidance of mankind.

Tolstoy's realism illustrates this with amplitude of detail both in his early and in his later work. At neither stage of his development has he been censorious after the manner of the English, or logical in his judgments of humanity after the manner of the French. But because from first to last he has been groping after set rules of conduct this absence of the spirit of condemnation is certainly perplexing.

The more conspicuous facts in regard to Count Tolstoy's life are well known to everybody. All the world knows that he was born in 1828 at Yasnaya Polyana, that he was educated at Kazan

University, and that he served in the Crimean War from 1853 to 1856. All the world knows that he did a great deal for the organisation of peasant schools in the country, that he helped to disseminate cheap publications among the people, and that in 1891–92 he organised the relief of the starving moujiks throughout Middle Russia. Furthermore, it is well known that he renounced long ago all exclusive property in copyright, land, and money, and finally that in 1901 he was excommunicated by the Russian Synod. Still more familiar than any one of these bald facts is his religious crisis of 1878–79, from which date the second Tolstoy is supposed to have sprung into being.

But in reality no divorce exists between the so-called two Tolstoys, the one who interested the world by his art up to 1878, and the one who has sought to reform it ever since. From any standpoint there is but one Tolstoy, who appears struggling, hesitating, profoundly self-conscious in "Youth," and again emancipated, sure of himself, but in all inner qualities essentially the same in that book which may be accepted as his book of final experience, "Resurrection." From the beginning he is infinitely watchful with the same minuteness, both of introspection and of external observation, that Turgenev brings to bear upon life, only the author of "Smoke" never accumulates details, but allows a significant one

to stand for a hundred. With his rival the mass of details produces an impression of almost physical reality, and his method, differing as it does from the detachment of Turgenev, infuses something of his own individuality into the environment that he describes. He infuses, for example, his own zest for life into the description of a hunt, a country walk, a sledge-drive through the Russian snow. For the rest, he is objective, not only in his descriptions of others, but also in those of himself, and he is typically a Russian realist in his constitutional repugnance to making one set of people wholly in the right and another set wholly in the wrong. Typically Russian, too, is his avoidance of the very suggestion of a pedestal. From childhood he had searched his own heart too closely for any belief in that, and from the beginning he had questioned the desires of that heart as though the Christian that prompted him, as from outside, was already commencing to tear at his pagan arrogance of life.

In his record of youth he recalls his childish affection for Seriga, which reminds one of David Copperfield's admiration for Steerforth. Seriga, too, is something of a bully, and ill-treats the little Illinka exactly as Steerforth would have ill-treated him. Tolstoy remembers with minute accuracy his own inner feelings during this typical incident of childhood. "Where," he asks, "was the compassionate feeling which had formerly made

me sob at the sight of a young raven thrown out of its nest, or of a little dog which was to be thrown over a hedge, or of a hen caught by the cook in order to be roasted for dinner?" The torture of trifles which is so significant in childhood was intense in the childhood of Tolstoy. His father rebukes him for his clumsiness in dancing the Mazurka, and it seems to him that the whole light of his life has suddenly gone out. "My Lord!" he cries, "why dost thou punish me so awfully?"

Even at his mother's funeral this hero, who was at all events partially the exact counterpart of Tolstoy himself, is at once introspective and alert to every detail of the scene around him. "I wept during the Divine Service," he writes, "made the sign of the Cross and knelt out of decorum; but I did not pray from the bottom of my heart, and was phlegmatic. I was anxious about my new coat, which was too tight under my arms; thought about not dirtying my trousers when I knelt, and busied myself stealthily about observing those present." And he goes on to examine everybody around him, weighing as it were the individuality of each soul through all externals just as ruthlessly as he had pierced through his own outer mask. Child as he was, he realised the vanity which is so often subtly intermingled with grief, so that the mourner is unconsciously impelled to pose, to assume an

attitude. The old housekeeper had none of this vanity, and in spite of all her sorrow for her dead mistress she wrangled just as usual over the raids on her store-room for rice and sugar: "Grief had taken such a hold of her that she did not find it necessary to conceal that she was nevertheless able to attend to everyday matters; she would have even been quite unable to understand how such a strange idea as her being unable to do so could have come into anybody's mind."

Even then the two sides of Tolstoy's nature, each springing from the same concentration of analysis, were beginning to assert themselves. He who could examine others with so arrogant a scrutiny was impelled inevitably to turn his gaze inward upon the mysteries of his own heart. His very vitality and passion for life made him mournfully conscious, as it made the ancients mournfully conscious, that it could not last, that old age would come, that at the very best one could enjoy only for a little while. Turgenev's pessimism sprang from an inner conviction that Nature was profoundly indifferent to human prayers and human tears; Tolstoy's pessimism sprang from the realisation that this sweet ample life which he enjoyed must inevitably be cut short. Turgenev sought for no consolation, and detected mitigation for the oppression of life only in the natural kindliness of the human race. Tolstoy, on the other hand, permeated as he was

by the love of life, was, perhaps by reason of the very satiety of sensation, haunted by the sense of approaching loss. Unlike Turgenev, he sought for consolation not only in the period following 1878, but in his very earliest work. He sought it, indeed, in that narrative which, in many respects actual autobiography as it is, ends with the imaginary death of his mother.

As his youth developed, the contrast between the outward watchfulness of observation due to his interest in life and the inner absorption of introspection due to the sense of life's littleness in the face of the unknown deepened. This contrast is well illustrated by an insignificant incident which took place on a journey to town at the beginning of that "Boyhood" which is the second chapter of Tolstoy's youth. He had had no time to say his prayers at the inn, and so he determined to say them in the coach: "But thousands of different things divert my attention, and I absently repeat the same words of the prayer several times running." As that journey continues, it becomes symbolic of the whole life of Count Tolstoy. Already the seer is struggling with the Russian child of the Renaissance. He wishes to pray, but on all sides Nature calls to him to see with his own eyes that the world is good. His lips murmur, but upon that extraordinary retina of his a thousand impressions are stamping themselves. Nothing escapes him and everything

lives again under this vitalising touch of memory. Horses, post-boys, peasants, young girls and old women, all the sounds of the road and the fields and the villages are humming around the boy as he prays in the rattling old coach. At first glance Turgenev's treatment seems almost pale and lifeless beside this infinite activity of observation. Turgenev, perhaps equally minute in observation, selected only a few significant details, while from the very beginning Tolstoy's ample canvases swarm with clustering life. He could never be otherwise. He was so intensely interested in the outside world that he could not avoid being interesting, and this quality survived his famous renunciation of art. For Tolstoy at eighty-two is much as was that little boy in the family coach who, in spite of his prayers, could not help seeing the wonders of life with an artist's vision.

How that boy revelled in every vivid sensation, every fresh experience, every plunge into the riot of happiness! But only too often, even at that early period, the antagonistic habit of introspection would strike at him, chilling the flush of his youth. In the midst of a storm in which he detected "the wrath of God," a dirty ragged beggar approached the coach and asked for alms. "I cannot describe," he writes, "the feeling of cold dread which filled my heart at that minute. A shiver ran through my whole

body, while my eyes, stupefied with fear, were directed towards the beggar. . . ." This is absolutely typical of the whole attitude of Tolstoy towards life, "the cold dread," experienced even in childhood, chilling and withering suddenly the warm joy of life. Already he divines the "wrath of God," and he knows that in all the multitudinous world of life there is no nook or crevice in which he may hide from that. And this knowledge, blending with a certain sympathy of youth—far less spontaneous than that of Turgenev—breaks through the terrible egotism of the boy, and he becomes conscious of the existence of other people as entities in themselves and detached from their relations with his family and himself.

Passion comes to him in his early youth, just as it comes to Turgenev; but whereas Turgenev recaptures those early moments in which his pulse first quickened at the sound of a serf girl's whisper as though such moments were among his most exquisite memories, Tolstoy relates his boyish attraction towards Masha with as much matter-of-fact precision of detail as he gives to any other incident in that almost too clearly visualised youth. So, too, in relating Masha's courtship by Bassily, he gives us a picture infinitely more complete than that fugitive sketch of a peasant's wooing in "The Annals of a Sportsman," or the somewhat similar courtship in

COUNT LEO TOLSTOY.

" Mumu." Tolstoy raises the curtain and shows us the maidservants' room, just as on other occasions he raises the curtain and ushers us into this or that salon. He is as unconscious of Anglo-Saxon prudery as he is of French pruriency. But his eye fastens upon every detail, and he writes everything down, just because it is there. His manner of realism was never to alter, never to become modified. It was the same in dealing with the intricate manœuvres of vast masses of troops over great spaces as it was when outlining the details of the serf girl's room: " There is the lejanka, on which stand an iron, a pasteboard doll with a broken nose, a slop pail, a basin; there is the window, on which I can see a small piece of black wax, a skein of silk, a green cucumber, half of which has been bitten off, and an old pasteboard box which once contained bonbons; there is the large red table on which lies some unfinished work, pinned by one end to a bright pincushion, covered with cotton print; and at it Masha sits in her favourite pink gingham gown and in a blue kerchief which especially attracts my attention." Turgenev's own vision was microscopic, but he shrank from such merciless inspections as this.

In dealing with human beings Tolstoy's realism is equally minute. He describes a young girl point by point until we realise her physical

appearance as though she were sitting beside us in a drawing-room. The companions of Turgenev's boyhood trouble us like sombre enigmas of memory, compared with the robust realities of Katinka and Luvkatka. The loves of Turgenev rustle past us in a twilight that grows perceptibly fainter, but which remains permeated by the swift passing of mystery and beauty. The heroines of Tolstoy's boyhood can be seen exactly as they appear to a clear-eyed boy who sees them very much as they see each other. And in dealing with the undercurrents of intrigue the methods of the two great Russian realists are equally antipathetic. With Turgenev one notices the raising of an eyebrow, a chance word is overheard during an unexpected lull in general conversation, the low laugh of a girl stabs at some forgotten one through the darkness, a commonplace question is evaded, but a whole world of subterranean cross-currents has been revealed for the instant, only to be concealed immediately again. But for Tolstoy nothing can remain hidden if one has found it out. There are no open secrets for him; for him there is no troubling scent of corruption, scarcely perceptible among so many antagonistic sensations of what seems to be the most ordinary life. With Tolstoy the concealed nerve must be laid bare. "That is what goes on underneath," he seems to say. "I have probed into it, and it is just

like that." But, in spite of this extraordinary power of analysis, Tolstoy has never been censorious in the English manner, not even in his most intense moments of religious conviction.

Strange processes were already at work in the boy's heart. Without realising it in the least he had already become a moralist, from time to time, at all events, deeply preoccupied with the secrets of his own and other people's hearts. But this youthful introspection is naïve and healthy as compared, for example, with that of Turgenev's "Superfluous Man." Tolstoy narrates the intimate details of his own wounded self-love with an incongruous gusto which seems to be inseparable from his large truthfulness. No mournful irony veils the rage and hate of youth, beating its already bruised wings against the stupid, unrealised lid of life. He registers everything—the meditation of inertia, the need for action, moralising broodings, cravings to make the whole world better—and with it all the violent seething, the momentary madness of the Slav that so soon subsides into coma.

But he is as conscious of attitudes, his own and other people's, as the least objective of writers. In his castles in the air, his is always the grand rôle, and he has risen to the idea of unselfishness, the idea of sacrificing his immediate snatch at life to the well-being of others. That was much in the development of this boy, for he

lived in an atmosphere in which such sacrifices were scarcely taken seriously. In Turgenev's "First Love" one guesses dimly at the real nature of the silent, reserved father, whose inner life is becoming more and more complex. One suspects him. His influence permeates the atmosphere around us, as though we had unconsciously approached a suave but menacing individuality. And at last, when the boy waits in the garden to kill his rival, we know that he is waiting to kill his own father. There is no surprise, no "curtain" in the sense of the little tricks of the well-made feuilleton. None the less this intrigue of a father with the young girl whom the son loves is veiled by the decorous secrecy of art. But in his record of youth Tolstoy writes down the little intrigues of which his supposed father is the central figure with a matter-of-courseness that strips them of the last nuance of mystery. And, curiously enough, his very openness arrives at the same effect that with us is reached by our normal Anglo-Saxon method of suppression. If you tell everything to everybody, nobody need blush. All his life Tolstoy has been telling almost everything, at first subconsciously, but afterwards, most certainly, self-consciously. The same tendency to tear down all mystery, the Lucian-like insistence upon plucking off all padding from human souls, is at work in the story of Tolstoy's youth, just as it is at work in that

terrible indictment of human nature, the "Kreutzer Sonata." In these pages you are not studying a young man who may become anything; you are studying Count Tolstoy, the representative of the moral consciousness of Europe.

Already introspection was driving him to search for some actual escape from the trammels of the flesh. Already he was preoccupied by those abstract questions, the destiny of humanity and the survival of the soul. Already, too, he was perturbed by the idea of death, by the constantly returning remembrance that he can retain nothing of all these sweets of life in spite of all his pagan gluttony for physical enjoyment. The boy was already, in embryo as it were, the world-famed judge of humanity who commenced by condemning himself.

At this period, however, he fought against reflection as against the terror by which the joy of living is cowed. But the idea of Eternity persisted, and it was only his passion for external life that saved him then, as always, from morbidness. For, in this genuine reproduction of the emotions and illusions of youth, that preoccupation with death, which so often intrudes itself in Tolstoy's mature work, is over and over again expressed. The deaths of the mother and grandmother are watched with a minute intentness in which we may discern the germ, at least, of that extraordinary study of the end,

"The Death of Ivan Ilyitch." And this idea of the end pursues the youth of Tolstoy, thrusting itself between him and those physical pleasures which he realised more fully perhaps than any other artist who has at all revealed his intimate secrets to the world. But even in the difficult moments of first love he is saved from morbidness by the healthy pagan side of his nature, which insistently forces the brooding gaze outward. When Masha marries her fellow-servant, Vassilie, Irteniev is unperturbed: "When the newly-married couple came back to thank papa, bringing in a tray with various sweets upon it, and when Masha in a cap with blue ribbons thanks all of us, kissing each on his or her shoulder, I smell the scent of rose-oil pomatum which pervades her, but do not experience the least agitation." How alien is this matter-of-fact comment upon a worn-out dream from Turgenev's preservation of the fading aroma of each lost, half-remembered passion!

The idea of self-improvement, of self-perfecting, is already stirring within him, and Irteniev has commenced to detect in self-love the veritable core of evil. His intimate friend, however, admits that he has one very rare quality—frankness. Then, as always, he wished to utter the absolute truth in regard to the inner as well as the outer world. And already the need of confession, the need of revealing everything, including what is

habitually hidden even from oneself, is experienced, so that in this record of Tolstoy's youth there is the germ-idea of that more famous confession which years afterwards was to take the world by storm.

Interwoven with all these tentative experiments in perfection the boy experienced a dissatisfaction with his physical appearance which was wholly pagan in its desire for beauty: "There was nothing expressive in it—the most ordinary, gross, and unsightly features; and my small grey eyes, especially when I looked into the looking-glass, seemed rather stupid than clever: there was nothing manly about me; though I was not short of stature, and very strong for my age, all my features were soft, flat and meaningless." Very different is this savage self-condemnation—the self-condemnation of the Christian, and yet springing from a pagan origin—from that melancholy irony with which Turgenev looked back upon the "softness" of Sanin.

In recurring spasms of mental agitation the desire for purification returned to Irteniev, and he desired that his life might be saved from the endless entanglements that hung octopus-like in the atmosphere around him. Already he was aiming at that simplification, the desire for which lies at the bottom of the Russian character, and which, in "The Three Deaths," "The Cossacks," and so many other works, is the foundation of the

early as well as of the later teaching of Count Tolstoy. It was no sudden reformation that changed him. He was not an artist for so many years, and then a reformer for so many more. His development was neither a conjuring trick of genius nor a flash of mental aberration, but a quite normal and rational progression upon lines that are clearly laid down in this personal record of youth.

For here, on the very threshold of life, the two Tolstoys vie with one another in a far more obvious contest than that of the two Turgenevs. The one Tolstoy gloried in the pride of life, his pulses quivering with joyous contentment in the *hic et nunc* of his moment. But the other Tolstoy, penetrated by that melancholy of the ancients to which was added the later fear of the Christians, knew well that this pride of strength was as nothing before the menace of the years. This conflict did not cease with the so-called reformation of Count Tolstoy, and is to be found in the works that followed it just as clearly as in those which preceded it. We find it engraved on the pages of "Youth," and we find it surviving in the pages of "Resurrection." Tolstoy himself divined that this central antagonism was essential to his nature and would persist while life itself persisted. He knew—none better—that there is no divorce between one period and another, and that age can only make pallid the old conflicts of youth,

but neither ends them nor even whole-heartedly passes judgment upon them. " Let not any one reproach me," he writes, " saying that the illusions of my youth are as childish as were those of my childhood and of my boyhood. I am convinced that if it be my fate to live to a great age, and if my narrative keep up to my age, I shall be found, when I am an old man, to have just the same impossible childish illusions as at present." Youth, indeed, was already engaged with those eternal problems to which the whole literary life of Count Tolstoy, and not one portion of it, may be said to have been devoted : " This voice of a repentance and of passionate longing for perfection was a feeling that predominated in my mind at that period of my development, and it was the root of my new opinions concerning myself, other people, and all creation."

But Tolstoy cannot as yet continue very long in this mood of humility. His pride of life throbs in every vein of his body, calling him outward, wooing him to all the natural delights of open-air life, wooing him to view and to taste the wonders of the world. Long afterwards he was to write with the desire to convince, to instruct, to elaborate a thesis. But in the very midst of it he would become absorbed by some external detail, the old thrill of life would return to him, and, instead of substantiating a doctrine, he would insensibly revert to the study of the men and

women of external life. Passionately interested in the outer world, forced into introspection through the certainty that external existence must fail him in the end, Tolstoy, boy and man, was essentially a sybarite of life, who became an ascetic only because he read, haltingly at first and then with terrible lucidity, the handwriting on the wall from which others averted their eyes.

But as for the inner suspicion of life, masked only by profound irony, the mental attitude of Ivan Turgenev, Tolstoy knew nothing of that. If he grew weary of one set of external pleasures, there were many others still untried, and if one set of convictions failed him he would grope his way after more enduring ones. It is as though from the very beginning he were balanced between two forces—not necessarily either good or evil in themselves—the one centripetal and the other centrifugal. Of that final negation of his rival, modified only by belief in the general goodness of poor humanity, Tolstoy had not at any time the faintest comprehension. Turgenev himself has said that Tolstoy's great loss was that he was without spiritual freedom. At all events he could at no time have contented himself with the "Smoke" theory of human destiny. Life was too interesting for that, and if the oppression of coming death made life seem meaningless, then one must either find the solace of some meaning or else die from very despair.

But long before that conscious search after some meaning, Tolstoy had commenced to grope in spite of the fact that his good resolutions dissolved very quickly into emptiness. "Thus," he notes in recording one such psychical experience of boyhood, "my fine feelings all turned to smoke. When I began to dress for church in order to go and receive the Sacrament with all the others, I found that my suit of clothes had not been altered and was not fit to put on, upon which I committed a great many new sins. Putting on another suit, I went up to the Communion table with my thoughts all in a maze, and with an entire distrust in my excellent disposition." The comment is typical in its avoidance of exaggerated regret on the one hand and of self-complacency on the other. Continually he returned to the exigencies and the arrangements of conduct. Life must not be a mere confusion of discarded emotions. There must be even a programme entitled "Rules of Life." But as usual the joy of life insinuated itself mockingly between the copybook and the heart: "Though I liked the idea of drawing up rules for all circumstances of life, and taking them as my guide, and the idea of doing so seemed to me a very simple and at the same time a very grand one, and though I intended to apply these rules to my life, yet I again seemed to have forgotten that this had to be done at once: I kept putting it off."

Of course dreams came to him ; he would muse on the ideal woman, and in such moods the rustling of skirts outside in the corridor would perturb him. But even in the annotation of such facts as these Tolstoy is precise and definite, clothing, as it were, his very reveries with clearly realised human flesh. For, his judgment told him that this rustling of skirts came from no dream-woman at all, but from Gasha, his grandmother's old maid-servant. "'Yes,—but if it were *she*?' would flash across my mind. 'But if *it* has begun, and I miss it?' and I would rush into the passage and see that it was really Gasha ; but for a long time afterwards I would be unable to master my thoughts."

His boyish self-consciousness followed him across the threshold of manhood. On entering the large hall of the University Irteniev feels a little embarrassed by the finery of his apparel. "However," he continues, "no sooner did I enter the light, crowded hall, and see hundreds of young fellows come in school-uniforms and others in frock-coats, some of whom looked at me with indifference, and at the farther end of the hall several eminent professors, walking leisurely round the tables or sitting in large arm-chairs, than I immediately felt disappointed in my hopes of attracting general attention, and my face, which at home and in the entrance-hall had worn an expression of something like regret at looking

too grand and fine, now expressed nothing but shyness and confusion." The same consciousness of focussing the general interest of those around him continued in the presence of the examiners: "I moved closer to the table, but the professors kept on talking almost in whispers, as if none of them even suspected my presence. I was at that time quite convinced that all three professors were extraordinarily interested in the question whether I should undergo my examination, and whether I should undergo it well, and that it was only for form's sake that they pretended to be perfectly indifferent, and tried to look as if they had not noticed me."

Failure comes to him, and failure, not for the last time, intimately blended with injustice. But even in this bitter moment the habit of both sections, so to speak, of Tolstoy's mind reveals itself. Long afterwards he was to describe the movements, the counter-movements, the sallies, the skirmishes, the blunders, the retreats, of vast masses of troops, interpreting not merely the spirit of a company or a regiment or a corps, but the psychology of an army. And while doing this supremely difficult thing, he was also to note, with a Meissonier-like exactitude that Turgenev himself never excelled, the detailed physical life of a particular unit. Moreover, on the same ample canvas he was to reveal the inner vagaries of the human mind, face to face,

so to speak, with itself, honest with itself under the near menace of death. Here in this record of youth the whole method appears, in embryo certainly, but at the same time with unmistakable distinctness of outline: "At first I was worried by my disappointment at not being 'third,' then by the fear of not passing through at all, and finally came the perception that I was treated with injustice, of wounded self-love and undeserved degradation; besides this a feeling of contempt for the professor—who in my opinion was not a man *comme il faut*, as I discovered by looking at his short, round nails—excited and embittered me still more."

Even when Irteniev finds himself admitted to the status of a grown-up man the conflict between the capacity for human enjoyment and the vast, all-pervading mystery of destiny haunts him in the very moment of emancipation. Even now he is not sure that he is happy; and he continues to narrate the immemorial experiments of youth, but making them significant of all youth, producing the illusion of universal experience as opposed to mere personal narrative. Nor does he judge or, in the ordinary sense, sympathise with this hero of his youth. He is content with merely registering the truth, relating the observed fact in terms of his own individuality. And not only does he utter his own secrets, but he conveys the impression of revealing those of

the human race. Others, pre-eminently Rousseau, have endeavoured to tell the whole truth, concealing nothing from shame, extenuating nothing from self-pity. But in the record of Tolstoy there is a Slav tang of self-defiance which is wholly alien from the insidious communication of corrupt confidences. Like Turgenev, he utters the secret of youth, but in a very different fashion. For the author of "Smoke" the secret of youth is still an enigma, a question, while for Tolstoy it is the ever-open book of his own intense individuality. And just as he shrinks from acknowledging no phase of sin, so he is willing to write down every triviality, from the effects of his first pipe to those of half a bottle of champagne. And he goes on to narrate an incident which led up to a piece of introspection absolutely in key with all his later work. Irteniev, it seems, approached a table at which two gentlemen were seated, and lit a cigarette from a candle which was standing between them. One of them turned furiously upon this boy of sixteen, who was too bewildered to reply to him adequately. "When I pondered over the way I had acted in this affair," writes Tolstoy, "the awful thought suddenly struck me that I had acted like a coward. What right had he to insult me? Why did not he simply say that it annoyed him? Consequently he was in the wrong. Why then, when he called me rude, did I not say to him, 'A rude person, sir,

is one that takes a liberty to be impertinent,' or why did not I simply shout out, 'Hold your tongue!'? It would have been a very good thing. Why didn't I challenge him? No! I did nothing of the kind, but bore the insult like a mean coward." Thus he broods in his eager, puzzled boyhood; it is human nature in the raw. There will be many refinements under the influence of this or that phase of spiritual development, but Nicolai Irteniev is essentially the prototype of those more finished interpretations of Tolstoy's personality—Pierre in "War and Peace," and Levin in "Anna Karanina."

Nor has he, in this early book, which is admittedly a volume of memory, anything essential to learn in the art of realism. It was said of "War and Peace" when it first appeared that it was not so much lifelike as life itself. Almost the same may be said of any work bearing the impress of Count Tolstoy. Undoubtedly the book of "Youth" has that impress, but its very comedy is grave, as though Tolstoy were too profoundly preoccupied with the analysis of human nature to smile at its follies. Here, however, is a morsel of comedy which, in spite of its gravity, has in it the very zest of life and youth. Irteniev had been asked by some ladies if he had read "Rob Roy," which they had just been reading aloud. "Throwing a glance at my fashionable trousers and the shining buttons

of my coat, I said that I had not read 'Rob Roy,' but that I was much interested in listening, for I liked better to read books from the middle than from the beginning. 'It is twice as interesting. You have to guess what has gone on before and what is going to happen,' added I with a self-conceited smile. The princess laughed —a forced laugh as it seemed to me (I afterwards noticed that she always laughed thus). 'Very likely,' said she."

But beneath all these affectations, which after all are only the vagaries of human nature, Irteniev was already groping after the inner meaning of things. He had already commenced to analyse the idea of love, to which he applied the rationalising principle which is so alien from Turgenev's delicate fantasies of passion. Already, without knowing it, Tolstoy was seeking for that simplification of the emotions which he expressed on a small canvas in "My Husband and I," and on a large canvas in "War and Peace." As yet, however, he did not venture to try the same experiment with passion which he was to attempt on a small scale in the "Kreutzer Sonata" and on a large scale in "Anna Karanina." But already this healthy pagan has become sufficiently permeated by the desire for simplicity to pause even in the first glorious moments of youth's emancipation. This desire for simplicity is the very kernel of the reformer's faith.

As yet, however, he cannot live otherwise than intently and intensely. Nor can he help noting the people around him with those microscopic eyes that detect variations of character as ordinary eyes detect the primary colours. In this respect there is something Shakespearian about Tolstoy. To each of them a merely commonplace, colourless person is almost non-existent. Anybody and everybody flash into life under the vision of either pair of irradiating eyes. Each of them throws off a human character as ordinary people throw off a coat. Shakespeare's subordinate characters leap into being with the introduction of a few words. In the vital atmosphere of their creator they cannot be suppressed as the subordinate characters of Racine or even of Corneille are suppressed. Pistol has drunk of the same inexhaustible elixir as Henry V.: the same electricity vibrates through Goldenstein as through Hamlet. Though this is not at all the case with Tolstoy, so far as treatment is concerned, the result is to no small extent the same. Shakespeare apparently produces the illusion of infinite life unconsciously, unconcernedly even. As from the brain of Zeus, his children leap forth fully armed and gloriously complete. The magic of Tolstoy is not the magic of Shakespeare. But the Russian gains his almost equally extraordinary effects by his concentrated interest in himself and in the most obscure of his fellow-

beings. What others have written about until the flogged adjectives seem to grimace at one through the printer's ink, Tolstoy reproduces as though no one had ever mused upon it before. And his method is not at all the industrious notebook method of Zola. Tolstoy takes you into a room, and you see everything because he has told you everything, instead of insinuating the illusion as Turgenev insinuates it. But there is nothing of the mere catalogue in these descriptions. Every note is made because of his interest in the object, and so interested is he in everything around him that he communicates this interest to the most indifferent. He is interesting by accident, sometimes even against his will. For Turgenev the memory of youth was a perplexing secret which he could neither explain nor keep wholly to himself; for Tolstoy it was a problem of human experience which he wished to demonstrate to mankind.

For even in the very early days he was struggling to pierce beneath the surface of life, and to detect some meaning other than that menacing handwriting upon the wall. And, later, in his search for some hint of alleviation he returned, as Turgenev returned, to the enthralling sensations of youth. In "Life," for example, he writes on the subject of love: "Who among living people does not know that blissful sensation—even if but once experienced, and most

frequently of all in earliest childhood, before the soul is yet choked up with all that lie which stifles the life in us—that blessed feeling of emotion, during which one desires to love everybody, both those near to him, his father and mother and brothers, and wicked people, and his enemies, and his dog and his horse, and a blade of grass; he desires one thing—that it should be well with everybody, that all should be happy; and still more he desires that he himself may act so that it may be well with all, that he may give himself and his whole life to making others comfortable and happy. And this, this alone, is that love in which lies the life of man."

Turgenev returned to his youth to win back the savour of a remembered impression; Tolstoy in spite of his pagan enjoyment of life returned to it in order to live over again the earliest manifestations of spiritual experience. Turgenev viewed life as a sombre pageant of which he himself was an insignificant unit passing on like the rest, he knew not whither; Tolstoy, almost from the very beginning, almost in the first flushed days of childhood itself, viewed life as an enigma that might be read and that concealed in its apparent meaninglessness a deep spiritual truth. The youth of Turgenev is interesting as the autobiography of an artist whose first and last fidelity was to his art; the youth of Tolstoy is interesting as the autobiography of a moralist

who is at the same time endowed with an exceptional capacity for pleasure. Furthermore, it is the beginning of a register of moral conduct which, starting in that nursery of his old home, was to become the moral standard of the civilised world.

CHAPTER II

THE autobiography of Tolstoy is not written in one or two books, but in several. Irteniev, who had himself arrived at the germs of some of Tolstoy's most famous works, was to become Nekhliudov, who was at least a stage nearer to Pierre and Levin, both of whom are so intimately associated with the personality of their creator. But before arriving at these stages it is necessary to glance at Olenine, the hero of "The Cossacks," who in his turn was to become the hero of "Sebastopol Sketches." All four of these incarnations of Tolstoy, in spite of their gropings towards spirituality, were overwhelmingly attracted by the pagan happiness of life. Tolstoy was from childhood a keen sportsman, and his record of youth was written in the Caucasus, where he also wrote "The Caucasian Prisoner," the central adventure of which actually happened. That adventure is significant because it shows Tolstoy the soldier and sportsman, acting on impulse and forgetting to moralise in the swift necessity of action.

He had set out for the Caucasus in a travelling

coach in which he was accompanied by his brother and a single servant. They followed the left bank of the Volga, but wearying of this they chartered a huge barge, placed their coach on it and floated tranquilly down the river. It took them three weeks to reach Astrakhan, but the time was not lost for the future novelist at least; his eyes were drinking in impressions on every side which he was afterwards to reproduce. And sometimes, as they approached the shore on the lower flats of the Volga, the young Russians would catch glimpses of the fire-worshipping Calmucks grouped around blazing bonfires.

In the Caucasus, Count Tolstoy became a friend of a certain Sodó, of the tribe of the Tchetchenias, from whom he bought a horse. One day the young artillery officer set out with Sodó from the fortress where his detachment was posted. In spite of the fact that during the war with the mountain tribes all such excursions were forbidden, two other artillery officers joined them. None of them, with the exception of Sodó, was armed with anything more formidable than a Circassian sabre. They were all in excellent spirits; and Sodó, after trying his own horse, offered it to his friend and leaped on to the Count's horse, which was not nearly so fast. When they were some miles away from the fortress they were attacked by a band of some twenty Tchetchenias. Two of the Russian officers galloped back towards the

fortress, and of these one was hacked to pieces and the other taken prisoner. Sodó, followed by Tolstoy, had turned his horse in the direction of a Cossack picket which was stationed about a verst away. Their pursuers gained upon them, and though upon his faster horse Tolstoy could easily have made his escape, he remained with his friend. Sodó had brought a gun, and though it was unloaded, he pretended to fire, uttering a wild cry of defiance. For some reason or other, probably because they wished to torture Sodó, the tribesmen did not fire, and Tolstoy and his companion reached the picket in safety.

On another occasion Tolstoy was in despair about a large sum of money which he had lost at the card-table. In this despair he shut himself up alone and prayed to God to preserve him from the humiliation of leaving a debt of honour unpaid. While he was praying a letter from Sodó was brought to him, and on opening the envelope he found his own note of hand torn into fragments. His faithful friend having won a large sum of money at cards, had immediately used his winnings to save the Count's honour.

Tolstoy had gone to the Caucasus as a non-commissioned officer, and had quickly distinguished himself for gallantry. Through the personal grudge, however, of a superior officer, he was not recommended for the Cross of St. George. Later on in his career he was almost within reach of the

coveted distinction, and at last he was told that the Cross would actually be given to him, but that a private soldier also deserved it. As the Cross included a pension in the case of the private soldier, the Count consented to stand aside. Tolstoy's attitude towards physical courage, as C. Behrs notes, changed as early as the period of his active service in the Caucasus. Like every other high-spirited young soldier, he had at first considered those alone courageous who performed some showy act of gallantry upon the field. But in future novels he was to depict as the true heroes of war those modest and often anonymous company officers and private soldiers who perform their duties under fire as scrupulously as though they were on parade.

At Sebastopol Tolstoy was a frequent visitor at the house of his relative, Prince Gortschakoff, the commander-in-chief of the Russian forces, and he was offered an appointment on the staff, which he declined. The refusal was characteristic, and proves conclusively that his sympathy with the ranks in which he continued to serve was of a very early development. This sympathy with the private soldier and this prejudice against staff officers were alike expounded in his great work, "War and Peace."

In 1866 Behrs accompanied him to the field of Borodino in connection with the writing of this book: "For two days Leo Nicholaevitch

wandered over the spot where fifty years ago a hundred thousand men had been slaughtered, and where we were now confronted by a memorial statue with its golden tablets and inscriptions. . . . He made the minutest investigations, and drew a plan of the fight, which was afterwards published as a frontispiece to one of the volumes of 'War and Peace.'"

One cannot understand any period of Tolstoy's life unless one realises his passion for open-air life, his love of the excitement of war, his delight in every kind of sport. So far as his external life is concerned, the love of sport continued until the development of his spiritual convictions made him conscious of its underlying cruelty. Constantly this love of sport breaks out in all his earlier works. One can hear the swish of the wet underwood, the panting of dogs, the pounding of hoofs, in page after page of his works. He sketches dogs and horses with greater minuteness than other novelists apply to human beings. Tolstoy, indeed, notes the delights of sport, the delights of fatigue and even physical exhaustion, with a relish and abundance of detail compared with which Turgenev's sketches at first glance seem almost pale. The physical with Tolstoy is reproduced with all its flesh and blood and tissue and throbbing arteries. Merezhkovsky notes this enthusiasm for out-of-door exercise with a certain animus, but Behrs describes Tolstoy engaged in

shooting steppe grouse with a pleasure almost equal to his own: "The Count used to ride out to the strepets on a horse expressly trained for the purpose, and after riding at foot pace two or three times round the covey, taking care each time to narrow the circle till he was at a distance of from six to seven hundred feet, dashed forth at full gallop with loaded gun in readiness. The instant the birds rose he dropped the reins on the neck of the horse, and the animal, understanding the signal, pulled up sharp, and thus enabled him to shoot." Long afterwards he was to substitute for sport such natural forms of exercise as ploughing, felling trees, and making huts.

But in the period of "The Cossacks," that continuation of the record of youth, Tolstoy abandoned himself to an almost completely pagan revelry in the open air. Of all the pagan characters who are temperamentally sympathetic with him, none is more vitally real than the old sportsman, Uncle Eroshka. Many writers, particularly among Anglo-Saxons, have written on sport and sportsmen, but no one of them has given us a figure to compare for a moment with this master of woodcraft. Uncle Eroshka lives as naturally as the trees with which he is so familiar; he is as much in perspective as any of the landmarks which his wary eye so easily detects. The man lives as Falstaff lives, utterly independent of praise or blame. One can almost smell the powder

in his pockets ; one can almost read the whipped lines that seam the cunning old face. Tolstoy drew him with all his contours, just as he was, with no conscious benevolence of touch, but with a kinship that lay at the very roots of his being. All the moralising soliloquies of Olenine pale before the buoyant effrontery of the old man's non-moral wisdom. Uncle Eroshka, right or wrong, has learnt his lesson of life, and is too old for new ways. Years and years afterwards, when Count Tolstoy had travelled many a weary stage of the Via Dolorosa of human perfection, there remained something in his heart that responded to his mentor in the Caucasus.

But even in his youth, in the midst of this untrammelled life, surrounded as he was by primitive half-savage beings, Tolstoy was conscious of the pervading presence of a moral law that demanded from the human soul the very opposite of Uncle Eroshka's enthusiasm for life. Olenine had fled from cities to heal his soul through the simplification of the open-air life, but the idea of the moral law as opposed to the right of individual enjoyment pursued him into the silent places. In the Caucasus there were still rules of conduct, just as there had been years and years before in that childhood whose sensations he was even then recording with that completeness of memory which it was part of his genius to infuse into art. His method of presentation, in spite of his

youth, was strangely mature, and was, now as always, antagonistic to that of Turgenev. The author of "Smoke" evokes a memory as one recalls a lost echo of happiness with closed eyes; Tolstoy relates exactly what happened as though it were an accurately observed incident of yesterday. It was the art of Turgenev to woo this or that phantom back to him, and then quickly he or she would assume the delicate, always half-veiled tints of life. Tolstoy would recall, as from a short distance, his men and women as though they were old friends whose inner and outer lives he knew by heart. Turgenev avoided the ordinary by reason of his penetrating analysis, which struck always at the core of a character; Tolstoy avoided it by his amplitude of detail, by his sustained and amazing knowledge of life.

And this intellectual truthfulness is as conspicuous in the early stages as in his mature works. It pervades the "Sebastopol Sketches" no less certainly than "War and Peace." Irteniev had watched the life of his home, the life of his fellow-students and all the familiar environment of youth; Olenine had watched life in the open, life among the tribesmen, life as it appeared to Uncle Eroshka. At Sebastopol the young soldier who had refused a staff appointment was to watch the personnel of the Russian army as probably no one had ever watched it before. He never describes any of the military types as

they have been described by others. He will not arrange war into photographs of picturesque battle scenes. On the other hand he will not pose as a cynic, too blasé to interest himself even in war. He is interested in the clash of armies, and the whole meaning of war reveals itself suddenly as by magic beneath the realism of his touch. But at Sebastopol, as in the Caucasus, the young soldier is also a moralist. The rules of conduct have not been abandoned even here. He must be strictly truthful in dealing with himself as well as with those around him. He must register accurately, not merely the outer masks of men, but their inner feelings. He must learn what fear is and courage and egotism and self-sacrifice. And in dealing with all these emotions he is as pagan in his inflexibility of attitude, in his whole-hearted honesty, as he is pagan in describing the pleasures of a bear-hunt, or a sledge-drive through the snow-laden night. He is struggling half for truth and half against it, as it were, even as the pagans struggled against that Christian truth whose power they half divined, but which they knew well would destroy the very sap of their strength. Of that essential Christian pity and shrinking from violence, or even of that instinctive and spontaneous sympathy which was Turgenev's birthright, Tolstoy knew nothing. But he began dimly to realise that here at Sebastopol were good men

on both sides killing each other without any known motive. As for the idea of exploiting war from the standpoint of the theatre, Tolstoy was from the very first a pupil of Stendhal, whom he greatly admired. But though his thesis in this early volume, as later on in " War and Peace," may have been that war was essentially uninteresting, his own works remain the most vivid proofs to the contrary. For Tolstoy may start with the general idea of, let us say, the monotony of war. Little by little, however, he forgets his thesis. He becomes animated and interested; his wonderful eyes have long ago absorbed all the colour and detail. His insight reveals and communicates to others those vibrations of electricity that pass from a unit to a company, and then from a company to a regiment, and then from a regiment to an army corps, until a whole army quivers into life under this vitalising power of evocation. This strange power can be detected in " Sketches of Sebastopol," and it is the same in essence as that which was afterwards displayed on the magnificent canvas of " War and Peace."

In the same way the hero of " A Squire's Morning " has essentially the same desires for a sane and useful country life as were afterwards to be experienced by Levin in " Anna Karanina." The simple treatise on marriage entitled " My Husband and I " was seemingly to pass through

a more subtle transformation before emerging as "The Kreutzer Sonata." But in reality the same ruthless search for simplicity has been at work. What in the early volume had been merely a gentle satire on romanticism has passed into a savage attack upon the complexity and artificiality that are introduced into the relations between the sexes. In the same way that book of an even more remorseless reality, "The Death of Ivan Ilyitch," is a normal development of the germ idea contained in those sombre sketches "Three Deaths." And from the very beginning Tolstoy was absorbed by the great simple motifs of life, physical courage and the healthy natural activity evoked by it; delight in outdoor life, and the intelligent management of dependants; love, followed by rational domesticity; and, finally, the recognition of death, and the recognition that it, too, should harmonise with the general scheme of things. All these interests persisted in the work of Count Tolstoy, who in later years was to lay stress upon the purely spiritual side of each, was even to go so far in his apostate zeal as to deny to art any appeal beyond that which it can make to the very narrowest intelligence.

But in the early days he had no mission, or at all events no conscious mission. He left the army after the Crimean War with the rank of lieutenant in the artillery, and the period between

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his resignation and his marriage in 1862 was spent partly in the capital, partly in European travelling, and partly among the Bashkirs when he went to drink koumiss. It was in the steppes of Bashkir that Tolstoy renewed the old associations of Olenine in "The Cossacks." Here he was absolutely at home, and here he lived simply, a genuine comrade of Uncle Eroshka, who had no need of writing any thesis on simplification. His brother-in-law has described a visit which Tolstoy paid with him in 1870 to these steppes of Bashkir. All his life Tolstoy has detested railways, and in order to avoid them it used to be his habit to walk from Yasnaya Polyana to his winter quarters in Moscow. When he did travel by rail, the Count, like the hero of "Resurrection," travelled third class, and delighted in entering into conversation with the peasants. He had the faculty of making friends easily with strangers, and particularly with members of half-savage races, as he proved so conspicuously during his adventures in the Caucasus. Among the Bashkirs he was understood from the first, and was always spoken of as "the Count." His presence among the Russian koumiss drinkers acted like a charm. "A teacher at one of our seminaries," writes Behrs, "in spite of his age tried skipping-rope matches with him; an attorney's chief clerk liked to debate with him on questions of literature and philosophy;

and a young farmer from the Government of Samara became one of his devoted and attached followers." But his sociability allowed of no mistake in regard to his innate dignity, as a little incident at the Petrovsky Fair shows. The Fair was held at Boszoulouk, and frequented by a medley of nationalities including Russian moujiks, Euro-Cossacks, Bashkirs, and Kashigse. "Once," writes Behrs, "a drunken moujik inspired by a superfluous excess of affection wished to embrace him, but a stern look from the Count was sufficient to make him draw back, as he muttered a kind of apology: 'No, pardon me, I pray you.'"

Some eight years later Tolstoy and his brother-in-law spent another summer at Samara, and on this occasion the Count organised a great sporting festival on his own estate. All the Bashkirs, Cossacks and moujiks took the keenest interest in the competitions, and raced for such prizes as an ox, a horse, a gun, a clock, and even a dressing-gown. The races were witnessed by several thousand people, and the festival lasted for two whole days, no police of any kind being in attendance. "We ourselves," writes Tolstoy's son-in-law, "levelled and cleared the course, measured off a large circle five versts in length, and erected a starting-post. For the dinner that was to follow, huge joints of mutton and horse-flesh and other dainties were provided." It

was the complete apotheosis of the pagan side of Count Tolstoy, and one can almost hear him exclaiming, like a veritable Uncle Eroshka, "I am a merry fellow." That side of Tolstoy was not at all contaminated by the suggestion of death, by which Merezhkovsky maintains that Tolstoy has perturbed a generation. The pagans who loved life so well did not shrink from death, and at no time did Count Tolstoy shrink from it. Nor was it this preoccupation with death that drove him towards spirituality, forcing him thus to become what so many have called the second Tolstoy. It was not at all this that "converted" Count Tolstoy.

For this very festival, with all its Homeric accessories, was held in the year of the so-called "conversion." And in this year (1878), so far as the *gaudium vitæ* and the healthy pagan delight in the outside world are concerned, it is precisely the same Tolstoy as he who had changed horses with Sodó and fraternised with the old Uncle in the Caucasus nearly thirty years before.

It is this essential interest in life, this content with the world as it is, that have always continued to fight against the brooder that lurks in Count Tolstoy, the man who drew up rules of conduct, the man who recalled in crowds or in solitude the fact that each of us must die. His pagan objectivity, which survived all intellectual and

emotional changes, certainly overshadowed the brooding tendency in the early years; and though he gave up the army and settled down to authorship in St. Petersburg, he had no definite idea of becoming the propagandist that he afterwards became. But even at this period he was interested in the study of education, and was at times profoundly dissatisfied with his own teachings and that of his fellow-authors. For, at no time in his career could he altogether separate the art of literature from the morality of instruction. During his visits to various European countries he studied the different methods of education, so that he might improve the conditions of Russian schools. He had commenced to grope already after that larger meaning of life, that meaning which not merely included himself and his own particular family group, but the Russian people. He was afterwards to extend that meaning to the whole of suffering humanity.

St. Petersburg even then was antipathetic to him, just as it had been when he fled from it to the Caucasus; and on his return from abroad he settled down at Yasnaya Polyana, where he devoted himself to the establishment of his famous school, and to literature. From that moment he may be said to have become the representative of the Russian consciousness in his own country.

His development from that moment seems to

have been normal, for with the advancing years it was inevitable that the brooding inquirer in Tolstoy should encroach more and more upon the robust pagan who stood for the joy of youth. This gradual and normal encroachment which can be traced through all his works, including even the earliest, accounts quite reasonably for that second Tolstoy who is supposed to have sprung into being after a sudden, almost inexplicable, "conversion." There is no divorce—one cannot repeat it too often—between the author of "Anna Karanina" and the author of "Resurrection."

Yet, apart altogether from this question as to whether his "conversion" did or did not change his artistic work, the different impressions that have been formed of this enigmatic figure become more and more perplexing with the years. Constantly we obtain alien glimpses of him through the most incongruous and antagonistic spectacles. Viewed in the light of our own nonconformist conscience, for example, Tolstoy appears to be a good man, almost a good Englishman in fact, trying to do good in the practical English fashion, earning heaven, indeed, according to the English standard, by doing an adequate measure of good upon earth.

Then again a German dreamer sees in him a teacher in the old almost forgotten sense of a visionary emancipator of the world, a Faust of the soul, as it were, rather than of the intelligence.

And we see him enshrined in that simple Russian country house, a strange figure to whom pilgrims throng from every quarter of the globe. All sorts and conditions of men crowd in upon him, but even though the rest of his family are perhaps a little disconcerted by some of them, Tolstoy is kindly and welcoming to the most timid of all these enthusiasts. Year after year the European wave of worshippers sweeps over the steppes to Yasnaya Polyana, and year after year Count Tolstoy emits to them the spiritual light that is in him. Glib people come to him chattering their facile griefs, comforting themselves by their own voices. Some Americans have even been known to go away contented that they have been asked to do so by Count Tolstoy! But all have come to him with or without the credentials of intellectual and emotional sincerity, as though to the very fountain source of all human guidance. They have sought strength from his spiritual vitality, hope from his reasoned faith, and when they have been honest to themselves they have found consolation in this pilgrimage. For, whatever Count Tolstoy may appear to his critics, he is the very touchstone of other people's sincerity.

Insincerity withers under that brooding glance, and one need pay but little heed to that quite other picture of this seer at which Merezhkovsky has more than hinted in that too brilliant essay of his. He pictures Tolstoy jumping a ditch

hurriedly in order to avoid the importunities of a moujik, who having learnt of the Count's creed of giving all things to all men, is asking for a foal. "F-o-a-l," repeats the peasant—"F-o-a-l"; and Tolstoy, whose creed it is to sell all that he has and give it to the poor, has no better answer to give than a hurried scamper across a ditch.

It is not, however, within the scope of this sketch to dwell upon that endlessly discussed antithesis between the Tolstoy of the Tolstoyan creed and the Tolstoy who submits to the inevitable compromise demanded by life among normal people. It is as idle to dwell on this antithesis as to deny it, but any one who has read Tolstoy's works must realise that he has been searching for this simplification of existence almost from the dawn of consciousness. It is of no mushroom origin, but has been growing in his heart from those puzzled nursery days when, from his crib, he weighed old Karl Ivanovitch and found him wanting, found him even disgusting in that old morning gown and tasselled skull-cap! Tolstoy is honest with others and with himself in the same sense that Irteniev and Olenine and Nekhliudov were honest, as Pierre and Levin were honest, and, to probe deeper into the pressure of life, as the central figures of the "Kreutzer Sonata" and "The Death of Ivan Ilyitch," victims rather than heroes, are honest. It is of course also true that Tolstoy has not been what he has wished to be,

has not done even what he has wished to do, any more than any of these. But the gulf between the will and the deed is something very different from that inner falsehood which is suggested by that story of Tolstoy dodging the peasant who pestered him for a foal. In view of the known facts one refuses to allow that small incident to explain a great man.

From the time that he settled down in Yasnaya Polyana Tolstoy became more and more the typical representative of Russian literature among his own people. Like Turgenev, but unlike Dostoievsky, his appeal was to the world and not merely to the Russians. Turgenev stood for Russia in the West, but Tolstoy attracted Europe to the East. Turgenev became a citizen of the world in Paris; Tolstoy remained one in Yasnaya Polyana. Tolstoy was in a sense the Russian host of Europe, just as in a similar sense Turgenev was its guest.

CHAPTER III

TOLSTOY has recorded minutely his impressions and experiences as a child, as a student, and as a soldier. He has been even more explicit in recording his life as a landed proprietor and head of a family. It is in these experiences and in those of his work as an educational reformer that the idea of simplification emerged from a subconscious desire to a conscious aim. Long before his "conversion" he turned to the moujik for guidance. Often in the course of his novels he describes minutely the men at work in the fields and reproduces with actual physical delight the swish and rhythm of the scythes as they cut through the long dry grass. These country scenes are taken from the very routine of his own life. "If," writes his brother-in-law, "as sometimes happened in our walk, we came across a group of mowers, he liked to take the scythe from the labourer who seemed to be most tired, and would let him rest whilst he himself worked. On such occasions he has more than once asked me how it comes that, in spite of our well-developed muscles, we cannot mow for six

days running, whilst a common peasant, who sleeps on damp ground and lives on black bread, can easily do it. And he generally wound up the subject by exclaiming 'You just try it and see!' And as he left the meadow he would pluck from the ricks a tuft of hay and literally revel in its fragrant smell."

That is exactly the attitude of Levin, and Behrs tells us that the wooing of Tolstoy and his sister was exactly that of Levin and Kate, and that they even used the initial letters in which they sought to express their mutual love just as the lovers are made to do in that chapter in "Anna Karanina." Levin, indeed, may be accepted as Tolstoy himself in the same sense that Irteniev and Olenine may each be accepted as Tolstoy, that is to say, so far as externals are concerned, only up to a certain point. But so far as *la vie intérieure* is concerned there can be little doubt that each of these characters represented the particular phase of spiritual development through which Tolstoy was then passing.

But before the phase of Levin had been reached, it must be remembered that Tolstoy had uttered the strange inward gropings of his heart in the incoherent, typically Russian musings of Pierre in "War and Peace." Tolstoy married Miss Behrs on September 23, 1863, and the great book was commenced almost immediately. It occupied eight years of Tolstoy's literary life, and his wife

copied out the manuscript seven times. In this book, more persistently even than in "Anna Karanina," the love of family life finds expression. Family life became for a long time the passion of Count Tolstoy's life, and he was so dominated by it that he disliked leaving his home for however brief a period. "When it was absolutely necessary for him," writes Behrs, "to go to Moscow, either to superintend the publication of his newest work or to engage a tutor for his children, he used to grumble long and terribly over his hard fate. And when he came within sight of his home, as he returned from a journey or from shooting, he would often express his anxiety by exclaiming 'I only hope all is well at home!' On such occasions he never failed to amuse and interest us with long accounts of what he had seen and heard."

But just as he was to pass beyond his conception of the duty of the soldier to that more universal duty which underlies the whole conception of Christianity, so he was to pass beyond the ideal of family life to that admittedly impossible ideal which also underlies the doctrine of Christianity, and which Tolstoy himself interprets to the last limit of ruthless logic in that terrible indictment of the average man, "The Kreutzer Sonata."

In the meantime the Tolstoy of "War and Peace" remained in all essentials the Tolstoy of

"A Landed Proprietor," "Sketches of Sebastopol," "The Cossacks," and even "Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth." He is still steadfastly examining men and things for himself, prowling restlessly, as it were, round the zone of light into whose white depths he was eventually to penetrate. And from the beginning his central idea can be expressed in the single word—simplification. For he grasped intuitively the fact that if life is ever to even appear reasonable, there must be first that ruthless stripping-off of alleged virtues and alleged vices alike which Lucian's Charon demanded of those wavering ghosts beside the Styx. That is what the latent moralist in Tolstoy always demanded, in spite of those imperiously pagan claims of the flesh. That he demanded from the first, in his record of youth as well as in his ultimate record of experience, though he has laid emphasis on the change of the ego being as manifest in the spiritual life as the change of tissue in the bodily life. "Of my birth," he has written, "my childhood, my period of youth, of middle age, of times not very far past, I often remember nothing at all. But if I do recall anything, or if I am reminded of something in my past, then I remember—and remember it almost exactly as those things which are told me about others. On what foundation, therefore, do I affirm that, during the whole course of my existence, I have been but the *one* I?"

All through his life, and not from any particular date, Tolstoy scrutinised the consciousness of this ego, probing it, judging it, condemning it. He divined at last what has remained for him the central light because from the very beginning he had been groping towards it. And when he believed that the clear perspective had come to him at last, he renounced without stint or limit. But he remained one and the same Tolstoy, the Tolstoy who had clutched longingly at all the gracious promise of the world. He realised the ideal of justice to man, and so he gave up the narrower ideal of an aristocracy. He realised the ideal of justice to woman, so he gave the narrower ideal of family life. He realised the ideal of justice to animals, and so he gave up the narrower ideal of self-preservation and refused to use them as food. Finally, he realised the ideal of the life of the spirit, and so he gave up the narrower ideal of the cult of the body. His famous and pursuing "Rules of Conduct" were neither eliminated nor changed, but merely precisely defined. They are three in number: "That we should not oppose evil with force; that we should not consume more than we ourselves produce; that men and women should equally practise and aspire towards purity and chastity."

Such was the final result of that groping after simplification by which Tolstoy was haunted from

childhood, the simplification that shows itself in "The Three Deaths," which illustrates three phases of leaving this life—the death of a lady, the death of a peasant, and the death of a tree. This idea of simplification, indeed, was almost as conspicuous on the pagan side of his character as on the Christian; it reveals itself no less certainly in the study of Uncle Eroshka in "The Cossacks" than in the portraiture of the hero of "Resurrection." For this idea pervaded not only the personal, but also the artistic life of Tolstoy, for whom at all times, and not after a particular date, art and life were admittedly an organic unity. All through the broodings of Pierre in "War and Peace" one finds that persistent, subconscious search for some inner solace beneath the surface of life. It has been always an instinct with Tolstoy to penetrate through the trappings of the outer pageant, however magnificent, in search of that simplicity which is the kernel of truth. An aristocrat by birth and by training, he was to find in war the soul of the army, not among the generals and staff-officers, but among the common soldiers. That was the lesson he had learnt in Sebastopol, and he was to interpret it again in "War and Peace."

Afterwards, in his second and yet more sombre masterpiece, he had already commenced to search humbly for wisdom from the lips of the moujik. At that time he was in everybody's opinion Count

Tolstoy the novelist and citizen of the world, but he was none the less essentially the man who would one day realise that education in the ordinary sense was useless and even negative, and who would thrust scornfully aside even art itself as a hindrance to the soul's growth. Levin would inevitably become the Tolstoy who, on being consulted by his son as to what career he should adopt, advised him to go into the fields and work side by side with the moujik. In charity, and particularly in that actual though often ridiculed generosity of doing something for one's neighbour with one's own hands, Levin was the veritable prototype of the as yet unacknowledged reformer. "The Count," writes Behrs, "invited me to go with him into the forest, and we two having taken our axes with us, cut down some trees, lopped off the branches, and piled the logs in order on the peasant's cart. I must confess I worked with a hearty good will, and experienced a pleasure in the work I had never known before. This may have been because I was so completely under the influence of my brother-in-law, or simply because I was working for a sick, broken-down fellow-creature. All the time we worked the poor peasant's face wore an expression of quiet gratitude. Leo Nicholaevitch, noting my frame of mind, purposely rewarded my zeal by allotting to me the harder share of the work. And when we had finished and sent the moujik away rejoicing

he turned to me and said: 'Is it possible to doubt the necessity of helping our neighbour in distress, or the joy such help brings with it?'" Levin might have uttered these words, and most certainly Levin would have felled the tree for his brother the moujik without bothering his head about the fact that from the practical standpoint he was rendering him but a small and fugitive service.

The change to definite Christianity, however, involved certain definite renunciations in his outer life. For example, he gave up smoking, wine, and sport, to name only a few of the ordinary distractions of the early days. His brother-in-law comments upon this outward change: "Only a genial nature could submit to a change so complete as that undergone by Leo Nicholaevitch in obedience to the creed he has finally accepted. The change that has taken place in his entire personality within these last ten years is in the true sense of the word a full and radical change. Not only has his life and his relation to men and creatures changed, but we remark a similar change in his sphere and mode of thought. And if he still remains faithful to some of his earlier views, such as his antagonism to progress and civilisation, these views have no longer the same basis and foundation." The goal of Count Tolstoy, his brother-in-law notes, has become the ideal of love for one's fellow-man. But it is the same Tolstoy,

and he cannot wholly abandon vehement censure, censure which is not in conformity with his later views, but in deep conformity with his unalterable character. "And if I may be pardoned the paradox," comments Behrs, "I should say that his error consists in thinking it to be a departure from his views, though he does it for the sake of the idea itself, when he sharply condemns another for his ill deeds." This is of course true, but only a part of the truth. Had Merezhkovsky in reviewing Count Tolstoy, instead of searching always for the pagan note, searched for the note of simplification, to be found equally on the pagan as on the Christian side, he would have found the real link between the Tolstoy of "Resurrection" and the Tolstoy of "Childhood, Boyhood and Youth."

As one surveys Tolstoy's contribution to the world of thought, one realises how this process of stripping off first one idle accessory and then another encroached upon all other ideas. It is possible to sustain life without feeding upon one's fellow-animals. It is possible to sustain bodily health without slaughtering them for amusement. It is possible to live reasonably without dissociating oneself from the great mass of one's fellowmen. It is possible to feed the mind without priding oneself upon the enjoyment of artistic pleasures which are meaningless to the great majority of mankind. Above all, it is possible to

maintain the dignity of human life without the organised and systematic deception of women. "In nearly every romance," says Posdnieschefff in the "Kreutzer Sonata," "the feelings of the hero are portrayed in detail, the ponds and copses round which he walks in pensive thought are described; but whilst dwelling on his great love for the heroine, the novelist tells us nothing about the life he led before, nor is there a word said of his visits to certain disreputable houses or his gay adventures with ladies' maids, cooks, and strange women. Or if there be such indelicate novels where we are told all this, the greatest care is taken to keep them out of the hands of those to whom such knowledge is most necessary—unmarried girls. And they are so well trained in this hypocrisy, that at last, like the English, they begin actually to believe that we are all moral people and that we live in a moral world."

Nothing illustrates better the profound difference between the realism of Russian literature and the methods of either French or English fiction than this powerful book. A typical French realist would have described minutely every detail of this *crime passionnel*. And he would have shown, as under X-rays, the elemental human motives at work, revealing the action as inevitable from the first, imperceptibly led up to by a long series of infinitesimal causes, every one of which had its

roots in the essentials of human nature. If he were a man of genius there would be even life in the picture, and the murderer would remain a man and the adulteress a woman. But his tendency would inevitably be to accentuate the forbidden and to throw limelight on the illicit, not merely because these are integral portions of the picture, but to no small extent because they are, from the English standpoint, forbidden and illicit.

The tendency in this country, however, would be wholly in the opposite direction. It is almost inconceivable that an English writer should produce such a story without somebody being labelled definitely in the right and somebody else labelled definitely in the wrong. So far as the great bulk of our fiction deals at all with the problems of life as opposed to the idiosyncrasies of the island, what Voltaire said about English puddings is still more true about English fiction. And the one sauce of our fiction is that of arranged propriety. While the Frenchman perhaps too persistently ignores any lesson whatever in a work of art, his English confrère teaches as naturally as he draws breath. And he would arrange this story of crime and passion so clearly that in the end we should realise the precise number of years of penal servitude that should be inflicted upon this victim of human nature.

But the Russian psychologist is indebted to

neither French nor English methods. He does not accentuate anything merely because conventionality would exclude it, nor does he exclude anything through English *mauvaise honte*. He draws his picture such as it is, and if he is primarily an artist, like Turgenev, he will leave it to present its own appeal. But if he is primarily a moralist, like Tolstoy, he will produce not only a more powerful and earnest picture than the Frenchman, but an incomparably deeper lesson than any of those priggish little *obiter dicta* with which English fiction is saturated. It is the Frenchman's mission to strip life of the decorous with a too obvious grin at the nudity that he reveals. It is the Englishman's privilege to swathe and bandage further the drapery of life so as to add to the comfort of his own make-belief. But it is for the Russian to examine truth steadfastly as it seems to him, neither with the Frenchman's cynical grin nor the Englishman's sheepish smile. The late Mr. Leckie alluded to a certain section of the community as the preservers of our wives and daughters, a point of view which may be accepted as symbolic of that whole gospel of comfort which for centuries Anglo-Saxons have confused with piety. "It cannot be right," urges Count Tolstoy, "that certain people should be allowed, on the plea that it is necessary for their health, to destroy others body and soul, any more than we should think of allowing a privileged class to drink the

blood of their poorer neighbours on the pretext that it was necessary for their health."

In reality the "Kreutzer Sonata" is a normal development of "My Husband and I," just as "War and Peace" is a normal development of "Sketches of Sebastopol" and "The Death of Ivan Ilyitch" is a normal development of "Three Deaths." Even in childhood Tolstoy had desired to peer beneath the surface of things, and in his records of youth he wrote down fearlessly life as it had seemed to him in those early years of illusion. But he was to go deeper than that and farther. His scrutiny, from the beginning searching and alert, was to become menacing and terrible. He was to reveal war as no one had ever realised it; he was to reveal death as no one had ever dared to think of it, and in the "Kreutzer Sonata" he was to unveil in all its skeleton nakedness the fear of life. All these effects were gained not by adding accessories, but by stripping from manhood the last deception, from life its last vestige of glamour, and from death its last covering of dignity. Tolstoy was a moralist certainly, but he was none the less a Russian realist, and from his first book to his last there has not been and could never be any line of demarcation. For, besides Tolstoy the artist and Tolstoy the moralist, there is also Tolstoy the man who has remained unchanged and unchangeable. And in Tolstoy the man the old pagan vigour persists even in his

latest works no less surely than the brooding spirit of Christianity can be found lurking in every page of his early books. This pagan vigour, in fact, reveals itself in that very "Confession" in which the great Russian artist renounces his former life and all its works.

CHAPTER IV

IN "My Confession" Tolstoy treats specifically upon that pause in his life during which he weighed all human knowledge and found it wanting. In this book too, with a deeper consciousness than in his record of "Youth," he confesses to the ordinary failings of youth, its facile mockery, its devastating vanity, its easily swayed emotion. But even in this volume, perhaps the most honest revelation of the human heart ever penned by man, Tolstoy, in the very midst of his self-condemnation, bears witness to his early gropings after some meaning in the shifting panorama of life: "I honestly desired to make myself a good and virtuous man, but I was young, I had passions, and I stood alone, altogether alone in my search after virtue. Every time I tried to express the longings of my heart for a truly virtuous life, I was met with contempt and derisive laughter; but directly I gave way to the lowest of my passions I was praised and encouraged. I found ambition, love of power, love of gain, lechery, pride, anger, vengeance, held in high esteem. I gave way to these passions,

and becoming like unto my elders I felt that the place which I filled in the world satisfied those around me." He was surrounded by worldly people. Even his aunt, a kind-hearted woman of the world who was devoted to him, used to say to him, as she honestly believed for his own good, "Rien ne forme un jeune homme, comme une liaison avec une femme comme il faut." She would urge him to become an adjutant, to the Emperor if possible, and would often express the hope that her favourite nephew might capture an heiress. English commentators have shown the whites of their eyes with a quite exceptional relish over these worldly but quite ordinary views, which, incidentally, are by no means confined to Russia or to the youth of Count Tolstoy. They have shuddered, too, with sanctimonious curiosity at the fierce indictment which follows: "I cannot now recall those years without a painful feeling of horror and loathing. I put men to death in war, I fought duels to slay others, I lost at cards, wasted my substance wrung from the sweat of the peasants, punished the latter cruelly, rioted with loose women and deceived men. Lying, robbery, adultery of all kinds, drunkenness, violence, and murder all committed by me, not one crime omitted, and yet I was not less considered by my equals a comparatively moral man. Such was my life during ten years." Thus Count Tolstoy writes on himself in brief concentrated state-

ment of fact, utterly devoid of the unction which Rousseau so often mingles with the self-abasement of confession.

And when success came to Tolstoy as an author he was as little deceived by that phase as by any other phase of his earlier life, though at the beginning he seems to have believed himself to be what from the first he aimed at being, a teacher. "In the second, however, and especially in the third year," he writes, "of this way of life, I began to doubt the infallibility of the doctrine, and to examine it more closely." This close merciless examination of himself was inevitable with Tolstoy at every period of his life. When he was abroad he witnessed an execution at Paris, and in his record of his impressions of that incident there lies the whole secret of his habit of thought: "When I saw the head divided from the body, and heard the sound with which they fell separately into the box, I understood, not with my reason, but with my whole being, that no theory of the wisdom of all established things, nor of progress, could justify such an act; and that if all the men in the world from the day of creation, by whatever theory, had found this thing necessary, it was not so; it was a bad thing, and that therefore I must judge of what was right and necessary, not by what men said and did, not by progress, but what I felt to be true in my heart." That is the very core of Tolstoy, and at no period

of his life, not even in the facile period of youth, could he ever accept the dictated point of view which comes so naturally to Anglo-Saxons. And so, not at a particular crisis of his life, but almost at the very dawn of his reasoning concerning life's enigma, he came to distrust the theory of progress or at least the surface values of progress with which the people around him were so content. "Everything develops, and I myself develop as well; and why this is so will one day become apparent," became his formula. Profoundly distrustful of the literary teaching of his confrères as well as of his own, he applied himself to the education of the peasants on the broadest and simplest lines.

But neither in this pursuit nor in any other could Tolstoy discover any underlying meaning of life. How then could he teach others when he had failed to learn anything of any value himself? The sense of want became more and more an obsession, until he realised that life had no meaning for him whatever. Then, having discovered that life was meaningless, he realised that it should end: "I was unwilling to act hastily, only because I had determined first to clear away the confusion of my thoughts, and that once done, I could always kill myself; I was happy, yet I hid away a cord to avoid being tempted to hang myself by it to one of the pegs between the cupboards of my study, where I undressed

alone every evening, and ceased carrying a gun because it offered too easy a way of getting rid of life. I knew not what I wanted ; I was afraid of life, I shrank from it, and yet there *was* something I hoped for from it." He realised now, before he had reached his fiftieth year, now when he was surrounded by a devoted wife and loving children, now when he was rich and respected and successful, that life was valueless and without meaning. He realised that it was only bearable under the intoxication of youth's illusions. He had aroused himself from this intoxication at last, and now he knew ; never again could he be deceived. And he goes on to cite that terrible Eastern fable of the traveller in the steppes who, in order to avoid a wild beast that has attacked him, lets himself down into a dried-up well. At the bottom of the well there is a dragon, for fear of which he dares not descend any farther, and so he clings to a branch of a wild plant that is growing along the wall. Then suddenly, as he clings desperately between the two dangers, he sees two mice ceaselessly nibbling at the trunk of the tree on which he depends. Nothing can save him now, but still he clings and still he looks around in search of some faint hope. And, gazing around, he detects on the leaves near him a few drops of honey, and stretches out his tongue avidly to lick them. "Thus do I cling to the branch of life, knowing that the dragon of death inevitably

awaits me, ready to tear me to pieces, and I cannot understand why such tortures have fallen to my lot. I strive also to suck honey which once comforted me, but it palls on my palate, while the white mouse and the black, day and night, gnaw through the branch to which I cling. I see the dragon too plainly, and the honey is no longer sweet. I see the dragon from whom there is no escape, and the mice, and I cannot turn my eyes away from them. It is no fable, but a living undeniable truth to be understood of all men. The former delusion of happiness in life which hid from me the horror of the dragon no longer deceives me."

In his hour of need he turned from one source of theoretical knowledge to the other, but each in turn failed him. Appearances can never more deceive the ruthless scrutiny of this man who is no longer self-deceived: "Thus, however I examine and twist the theoretical replies of philosophy, I never receive an answer to my question; and that, not as the sphere of experimental knowledge, because the answer does not relate to the question, but because here, although great mental labour has been applied directly to the question, there *is* no answer, and instead of one I get back my own question repeated in a more complicated form." The dilemma became more and more oppressive, as more and more clearly this honest intelligence realised that from

the knowledge implanted in man by reason he could obtain nothing but the denial of life, and from the unreasoning knowledge of faith nothing but the denial of reason.

But little by little it dawned upon him that in this unreasoning knowledge of faith alone was a possibility of continuing to live, and he grasped his vital formula, "Without Faith there is no Life." It had become clear to him that the wisdom of all men, from Solomon to Schopenhauer, was futile because it led logically to the denial of life, and yet they who had acquired it themselves continued to live. He had arrived at last at a recognition of the clearly-defined limitations of human reasoning: "I understood that all our arguments turned in a charmed circle, like a cogwheel the teeth of which no longer catch in one another. However much and however well we reason, we get no answer to our question; it will always be $0 = 0$, and consequently our method is probably wrong."

Others beside Tolstoy sought remorselessly for the meaning of life; others have realised the truth of that Eastern fable, and have detected the mice gnawing at the very roots of what alone preserved them from the dragon's jaws. Others, too, have experienced that hypnotism of the fear of life which spoils the momentary sweetness of its honey. But it was for Count Tolstoy to write these things down as though they had never been

written before, to state the sinister equation $0 = 0$ as though it had never been arrived at before, to clutch at Faith as though throughout the centuries no other despairing human soul had ever clutched at it. And because Tolstoy remained a powerful artist, even in the very act of renouncing art he has given to his "Confession" a far wider significance than that of individual conviction. It is not merely a human document of faith, but a work of art produced by a profound moralist who, from the very beginning, had brought intellectual truthfulness to bear upon his interpretation of life.

He had found at last what he had been groping for since childhood. From a darkened room he had stumbled suddenly into the white light. But he had remained the same Tolstoy who long ago, in the midst of robust physical enjoyment, had detected the chilling nearness of death, and in the midst of the ordinary daily routine the secretive fear of life. Certainly the ship has come into the harbour at last, but it is the same ship.

It is true that in the work of Tolstoy one can see the encroachment of the inner life upon the outer. But that outer life has been from the beginning so vitally realised that it can never be, in his most consciously didactic work, even partially suppressed. He has lived to condemn his own masterpieces, but in that very condemnation there vibrates the old pagan power that had given

life to that which he now condemns. Art is greater than the individual, greater even than the moralist, and it may be that that supreme artist, Turgenev, was wrong when on his deathbed he implored Tolstoy to return to literature. For, at no time did the author of "Anna Karanina" abandon literature in spite of his verbal renunciation.

What Tolstoy contributes to literature with almost Shakespearian abundance and amplitude of power is the quality of intellectual truthfulness, such truthfulness as is almost alien from Anglo-Saxon habits of thought. He has contributed this quality in his early works; he has contributed it in his masterpieces; and he has continued to contribute it in the very least of his tracts for the service of the Russian people. It was not in the nature of things that he should ever be content to infuse into art that sad perfume of life which Turgenev distilled from the very ashes of regret. It was not in the nature of things that this groping and yet trustful intelligence should be ever contented with that attitude of ironical suspicion with which Turgenev defended the isolation of his soul. Nor could he, like his older rival, accept civilisation as at least a solace, thankful, as Turgenev was thankful, for the very croupier as its lowest symbol. For Tolstoy a meaning of life was as necessary in one sense as oxygen in another. It would have been impossible for him

to continue to live with that deep-rooted suspicion of an all-merciful Providence which had permeated and, in a sense, withered the very youth of Turgenev.

But though Tolstoy had arrived at the necessity of faith, he was in reality little beyond the stage of Pierre in " War and Peace " or Levin in " Anna Karanina." He was willing to embrace any form of faith that was not an absolute denial of human reason, but his heart was admittedly none the lighter. From the leaders of science and thought he had turned to the leaders of religion and faith, but from them he learned little, beyond their innumerable contradictions of each other. And then, at last, just as Pierre had done, just as Levin had done, and not at all in obedience to any strange and sudden inspiration, he turned to the Russian people for an answer to the enigma of human existence. Then, indeed, a great change, which was in reality only the maturity of a long doubtful growth, came consciously at last ; it was the fruition of all those moralising broodings of Irteniev, Olenine, Nezhdinhov, Pierre, Levin and so many others, those broodings which from the very first are inseparable from the artistic work of Tolstoy, who, now definitely abandoning the philosophers, had, like his own heroes, humbly approached the moujiks : " I began to grow attached to these men. The more I learned of their lives, the lives of the living and of the dead

TOLSTOY AT WORK.

of whom I read and heard, the more I liked them, and the easier I felt it so to live. I lived in this way during two years, and then—symptoms of which I had always dimly felt—the life of my own circle of rich and learned men not only became repulsive, but lost all meaning whatever. All actions, our reasoning, our science and art, all appeared to me in a new light. I understood that it was all child's play, that it was useless to seek a meaning in it. The life of the working classes of the whole of mankind, of those that create life, appeared to me in its true significance. I understood that this was life itself, and that the meaning given to this life was a true one, and I accepted it."

And when the change came and was accepted as a new and complete transformation of everything that had gone before, Tolstoy, even in this book which is the accepted demarcation between the old life and the new, admits, even in regard to the exhilaration of spiritual discovery, that the sensation produced upon him was not wholly unfamiliar : " It was strange, but this feeling of the glow of life was no new sensation ; it was old enough, for I had been led away by it in the earlier part of my life. I returned, as it were, to the past, to childhood, and to my youth."

What he had accepted unconsciously then, he accepted consciously now, and there was in reality no inner difference between the Tolstoy

who had groped dimly and the Tolstoy who now saw with clear eyes. He had only traversed the path to which in every one of his works he persistently reverts, and the ultimate lesson is only the logical conclusion of Pierre's gropings and Levin's meditations. Tolstoy returned to the simplicity of the moujik because he believed that civilisation, far from being a development in spiritual life, was in reality a hindrance. And it is this distrust of civilisation, the one gift in which the suspicious Turgenev really did believe, that has permeated the whole of Tolstoy's work, from that first book written in the Caucasus down to this world-known renunciation of the pride of life which made so many exclaim in every capital of Europe, "There is no more Tolstoy."

In reality there is no mystery at all. In reality Count Tolstoy has survived by reason of the same qualities that made an obscure young artillery soldier famous in a moment. Turgenev, who was to no small extent a mystery, even to himself, has been carelessly labelled as a man who did this but refused to do that, a man who grasped this side of Russian life but remained always a stranger to new types and new ideas of his country. In brief, they have explained the really enigmatic Turgenev who said very little about himself, while they have insisted upon regarding as a mystery Count Tolstoy who has been explaining himself all his life.

CHAPTER V

TOLSTOY wrote "The Death of Ivan Ilyitch" in 1884-86 and the "Kreutzer Sonata" in 1890. In each of these works the old power is displayed with all the old ruthless honesty and that combination of observation and introspection which had been peculiar to the novelist's early work. But in the so-called second period of Tolstoy's literary life there is only one book which even suggests the vast scale of "War and Peace" or "Anna Karanina." Written in 1899-1900, "Resurrection" is an unconscious résumé not only of the literary art but of the spiritual life of its author. Everything is in these pages, which are, however, permeated by the consciousness of a changed perspective, the consciousness of looking backward instead of forward. Youth itself, viewed from this changed perspective, lives again in Nekhlúdoff's visit to his aunts on that wet Good Friday on which his spiritual manhood weakened before the insistent claims of the flesh. All through those Easter days the sinister allurement hovers about that quiet country house, even when the young officer kisses Katúsha under the

sanction of "Christ is risen." And then, when the evil, seemingly inevitable, thing has happened, Nekhlúdoff asks himself, just as any one of those earlier impersonations of Tolstoy would have asked himself—"What was the meaning of it all? Was it a great joy, or a great misfortune, that had befallen him?" and he adds that perennial generality of optimistic youth: "It happens to everybody—everybody does it."

So the young officer goes off to join his regiment, and though he does not as yet realise the evil that he has done so carelessly, the glamour of passion perishes almost at once. From War also every nuance of glamour is very soon stripped. Nekhlúdoff had joined the army just as war had been declared against the Turks, and he plunged immediately into those youthful excesses which Tolstoy had always condemned even while he took part in them. Now, there is no question of palliation: "This kind of life acts on military men even more depravingly than on others, because if any other than a military man leads such a life he cannot help being ashamed of it in the depth of his heart. A military man is, on the contrary, proud of a life of this kind, especially at war time, and Nekhlúdoff had entered the army just after war with the Turks had been declared. 'We are prepared to sacrifice our life at the wars, and therefore gay, reckless lives are not only pardonable, but absolutely necessary for us, and so we

lead them.' Such were Nekhlúdoff's confused thoughts at this period of his existence, and he felt all the time the delight of being free of the moral barriers he had formerly set himself. And the state he lived in was that of a chronic mania of selfishness."

This mania of selfishness robs every phase of existence of all youthful illusion. Nekhlúdoff approaches his duties as a landlord without a spark of that enthusiasm for humanity which is the essence of Tolstoy's faith. And afterwards, when confronted by the idea of domesticity, he weighs the for and against of a marriage with "Missy" without a gleam of Levin's naïve exaltation. The whole theory of marriage is summed up from the purely pagan standpoint of the Christian man of the world: "In favour of marriage in general, besides the comforts of hearth and home, was that it made a moral life possible, and chiefly that a family would, so thought Nekhlúdoff, give him an aim to his now empty life. Against marriage in general was the fear, common to bachelors past their first youth, of losing freedom, and an unconscious awe before that mysterious creature, a woman."

Youth and passion, war and glory, landlordism and justice, domesticity and comfort, Tolstoy has in "Resurrection" stamped his renunciation of them all. But as Nekhlúdoff takes his place on that jury, before which his own conscience is on

trial, we are forced into recognition of profounder depths of human consciousness than have ever been probed by any of the earlier impersonations of Count Tolstoy, each one of whom had snatched thankfully from the confusion of all human affairs some meaning of life, however insignificant. All certitudes slip away from Nekhlúdoff as he sees in the dock that same Katúsha, the former protégée of his aunt whose life he had played hideously with that Easter, after she had kissed him in the name of "Christ." He is one of her judges now, one of the representatives of that Society which, in order to protect itself, must crush out the victims that it has made dangerous.

The former guardsman listens to the sordid story which implicates the pretty, harmless Katúsha of years ago in a murder in a brothel. There is no sensationalism in the scene of recognition, no theatrical denunciation from the dock, no fugitive spasm of the romancer's remorse, no exploitation of atonement in the betrayer's heart. But from that instant in which he recognises Máslova, Nekhlúdoff begins dimly to recognise himself. Slowly, dully, he begins to detect the crude falsity of that arranged comedy which is called honourable life. It is no longer for him a question of settling down in comfortable domesticity, to hand on strong protected children, who in their turn will piously arrange the burden of life so that it falls always upon the shoulders of the

weak. It is no longer a question of the retired officer becoming the good squire who does his orderly best for the dependants who feed him. The ideal can be no longer the apotheosis of the good simple man who acts faithfully according to the light that is in him. Nekhlúdoff realises that it is necessary to understand, that the safe comfort of ignorance can be his no longer. In spite of all the traditions of comfortable goodness, he begins to grasp something of that under-world of injustice which keeps the earth clean and wholesome for the just. He himself, in this one particular instance, had cast a young life into this under-world, and somehow or other he must redeem it. And in redeeming it he must also somehow or other redeem himself.

Never has Tolstoy been more faithful in his interpretation of the slow, often contradictory, always illogical, workings of human consciousness. There are no sudden transformations here, no facile confessions, no pathetic pardons easily granted. Χαλεπὰ τὰ καλά: the Greek phrase repeats itself in this narrative of the evolution of two souls. Slow and tortuous and difficult as the road to Siberia itself is the full self-realisation of this man of the world who has been forced to read his own soul. Equally slow, tortuous and difficult is the self-realisation of that broken plaything of Society, upon which Society has passed judgment. The ex-guardsman and the

prostitute are on a common footing at the lowly beginning of wisdom. Both of them are learning the ultimate lesson of life, the lesson that never changes, the lesson that Count Tolstoy was groping after when he framed those rules of conduct in the old nursery days.

It is a hard lesson at which Tolstoy arrives in this Via Dolorosa of atonement whose Gethsemane is Siberia. Never was his treatment more remorseless and more faithful. With him confession and atonement come with difficulty, and without that sudden rapture of abasement which is so conspicuous in the works of Dostoievsky. There is nothing in "Resurrection" comparable, for instance, with that scene in "Crime and Punishment" in which the stainless unfortunate pleads to the murderer to save his soul through the punishment of his body. For Tolstoy's characters, like Turgenev's, are for the most part strangers to the sudden aberrations of Dostoievsky's heroes. He has depicted, indeed, very few of those exasperated people upon whose revolts against conventionality modern Russian writers dwell so constantly: "La plupart," writes M. de Vogüé, "de ces natures peuvent se ramener à un type commun; l'excès d'impulsion l'*otchaianié,* cet état de cœur et d'esprit pour lequel je m'efforce vainement de trouver un équivalent dans notre langue." In the analysis of Dostoievsky himself, "This is the sensation of a man who, from the

summit of a high tower, leans over the yawning abyss and experiences a shudder of pleasure at the idea that he may hurl himself from it headlong. ‘Faster, and let us end it!’ he says to himself. Sometimes the people who think like this are very peaceable, very ordinary individuals. . . . The man finds a delight in the horror that he inspires in others. . . . He strains his whole soul in frantic hopelessness, and in his desperation calls out for punishment as a solution, as something which will decide for him.” In all Russian fiction one meets with the recognition of this type, which is the very antithesis of the logically evolved character of French novelists or our own conventionalised and graduated heroes. It is the natural result of that lack of crystallisation in the Russian character to which Turgenev referred at the Parisian restaurant. Both he and Tolstoy understood this indefinable national attribute, experienced it even to a certain extent, undoubtedly sympathised with it, but, unlike Dostoievsky, allowed it but little influence in their art. And for this reason they, unlike Dostoievsky, appealed to Europe hardly less than to their own people. The lesson of “Resurrection,” then, is for the world which listens to so very few living voices.

And such world-voices as there are either resume falteringly the old pæan of the pride of life, or else mockingly challenge, as Turgenev himself had mournfully challenged, the wisdom of the

whole scheme of things. Is there any nepenthe whatsoever for the stricken race of mortals, or must it dwindle and die, commented on by Alpine mountains, as Turgenev had made it dwindle and die? One turns to him who has added to the sad gaiety of modern Paris the very irony of Virgil's large sense of destiny. Anatole France, almost alone in Europe, in spite of his gibes and scoffs and every other phase of Gallic effrontery, writes with the old Greek feeling of 'Ανάγκη, that sense of something impenetrable and implacable hovering beyond the little radius of human lives, a necessity making weak and puerile the satisfied gestures of gods and kings. And writing under this sense by which all the great Russian writers seem to have been obsessed, Anatole France knows well that there is no answer to the repeated questions of the generations of man. In that book, in which, like another Gulliver, he has weighed the little claims to happiness of poor mankind, he has shown only too clearly that he is the dupe of no formula, no creed, no faith, no hope. For the old follies repeat themselves, and tyranny changes only its masks: "Puis, au cours des âges, les villages remplis de biens, les champs lourds de blé furent pillés, ravagés par des envahisseurs barbares. Le pays changea plusieurs fois de maîtres. Les conquérants élevèrent des châteaux sur les collines; les cultures se multiplièrent; des moulins, des forges, des tanneries, des tissages s'éta-

blirent ; des routes s'ouvrirent à travers les bois et les marais ; le fleuve se courit de bateaux. Les villages devinrent de gros bourgs et, réunis les uns aux autres, formèrent une ville qui se protégea par des fosses profondes et de hautes murailles. Plus tard, capitale d'un grand état, elle se trouva à l'étroit dans ses remparts désormais inutiles et dont elle fit de vertes promenades. Elle s'enrichit et s'accrut démesurément; on ne trouvait jamais les maisons assez hautes; on les surélevait sans cesse, et l'on en construisait de trente à quarante étages, où se superposaient bureaux, magasins, comptoirs de banques, sièges de sociétés, et l'on creusait dans le sol toujours plus profondément des caves et des tunnels. Quinze millions d'hommes travaillaient dans la ville géante." That seems to the author of "L'Ile des Pingouins" the fate of mankind ; but the idea of Nietzsche's Superman has not wholly faded into this mocking acquiescence in the meaninglessness of human destiny, as though life were indeed symbolised by the empty sockets of the Egyptian Sphinx.

Gabriel d'Annunzio at least reminds our generation of the old pride of existence, of a conception of life irradiated by the flame of genius. He who has celebrated the triumph of life as well as the triumph of death has given us in Lucio Settala a living contrast to those stricken Hamlets of Russian literature. It is a conception of life wholly pagan, a conception of life which presents

the sculptor pleading for art in modern Italy as Pericles might have pleaded for it in ancient Athens. Lucio sees in Gioconda Dianti his salvation through art: "Te l' ho detto! mille statue, non una. La sua bellezza vive in tutti i marmi. Questo sentii, con un' ansietà fatta di rammarico e di fervore, un giorno a Carrera, mentre ella m' era accanto e guardavamo discendere dall' alpe quei grandi buoi aggiogati che trascinano giù le carra dei marmi. Un aspetto della sua perfezione era chiuso per me in ciascuno di quei massi informi." And when Cosimo Dalbo reminds him that this woman thought of keeping the clay moist at the very moment when he was dying, Lucio Setalla replies by asking if that was not also a way of fighting death, and in itself an admirable act of faith! The sculptor's wife had preserved his life, but Gioconda Dianti had preserved his art, which for him at least was the meaning of life.

But she herself is not at all the self-goveining inspiration of life through art. She is not the terrible implacable one, but rather a puppet like all the others, struggling blindly in invisible meshes. She acknowledges as much to her rival, who fears her: "Non v' è nulla d' implacabile in lei; ma ella stessa obbedise a una potenza che può essere implacabile." So the old 'Ανάγκη weighs upon the individual as well as upon the race. Not even Gioconda can escape from that nebula of destiny pervading the dim centuries, even as that cloud of

reddish dust which, in "La Città Morta," penetrates the blood of those who search for the sin-laden relics of the Atrides.

And to turn from this fashioner of Titans crushed by their own strength to that great writer of our own race who perhaps most of all is burdened by the ever-present sense of necessity —what has he to say of the theory of justice in that profound study, "A Pure Woman faithfully presented by Thomas Hardy"? "Sorrow," exclaims the sorrow-stricken girl-mother, "I baptise thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." "Sorrow" escaped, and after many wanderings Justice sent the mother to join her child: "Justice was done, and the President of the Immortals (in Æschylean phrase) had ended his sport with Tess. And the D'Urberville knights slept on in their tombs unknowing. The two speechless gazers bent themselves down to the earth as if in prayer, and remained thus a long time, absolutely motionless; the flag continued to wave silently. As soon as they had strength they arose, joined hands again, and went on."

Such are the voices that vibrate through the Europe of to-day. On the one hand nothing is predicted except the enslavement of the greater part of the human race by a handful of tyrants, who are themselves driven puppets consumed by a meaningless passion for power. On the

other side there is nothing beyond the self-consuming passion of the individual, demanding from art a deliverance from life. From either point of view there is nothing beyond the saddest pessimism, reasoned on the one side, temperamental and instinctive on the other. Lucio Settala claiming with the pride of art the flame-woman to inspire his genius, and Tess of the D'Urbervilles seeking humbly for a little meed of happiness, are travelling the same universal road. It is the sombre road of mankind as it appears to the fashioner of the law-making Penguins. In answer to this all-pervading doubt of any ultimate justice scarcely a voice is heard that claims for mankind anything at all beyond a problematical amelioration of its material ills.

But in the midst of this bloodless apathy of the soul by which even our few writers of genius are permeated there is one man who believes. The voice of Tolstoy vibrates with the very genius of belief. He at least has searched for and faced his own soul. For while on all sides people have been clamouring for this or that panacea to save them from a knowledge of themselves, Tolstoy has continued to repeat that fearless Greek challenge *γνῶθι σεαυτόν*. Amid the crumbling up of old faiths and old ambitions this one man has preserved the ideal of examining the soul and seeing in its life an explanation which can alone give any meaning to that material existence which has left

nothing but ashes on the lips of the sybarites of art and the apostles of progress, on the lips even of the new Fausts, the new emancipators, the new humanitarians.

Alone in that remote country house the aged and revered figure lingers, a challenge in his own person alike to the tyrants of Russian orthodoxy and to the tyrants of the world's materialism. He who has stripped from himself all claims to praise or homage or fame, who has turned his back upon the allurements of science and art, remains still the central figure to whom all listen, however they may shirk following him. Experience of life and the knowledge of its fugitive littleness is stamped upon that seamed face, from which the very curiosity in regard to the approaching end has been burnt out. He, alone in the whirlpool of exultant modern progress, stands aside claiming for himself nothing except the right of speaking what he believes to be the truth. Like a veritable Faust, of moral as opposed to intellectual experience, he receives the students who one after the other throng to him with the eternal questions upon their lips.

But he has remained a man amongst men, as P. A. Sergyeenko notes in his description of a dispute between the reformer and one of these students. It is the same Tolstoy, and in that moment of animation the imaginary abyss between the reformer and the artist vanishes into smoke.

"I looked at Lyeff Nikolaevitch," writes M. Sergyeenko, "and I seemed to see spread out before me those stormy scenes in Nekrasoff's lodgings, which took place in the 50's, when young, impetuous Count L. Tolstoy, presenting a living embodiment of Tchatsky (the hero of Griboydeff's famous comedy, 'The Misfortune of Wit'), played in St. Petersburg literary circles the part of Gadfly, and in the harshest form expressed his protests against everything which seemed to him conventional and false." "You cannot imagine what scenes these were,' relates D. B. Grigororitch. "'Oh, Heavens!' Turgeneff would squeak and squeak, clutch his throat with his hand, and, with the eyes of a dying gazelle, would whisper, 'I can endure no more. I have bronchitis.'"

"Bronchitis," Tolstoy would growl out immediately, "bronchitis is an imaginary malady—bronchitis is a mental!" Nekrasoff in the interests of the *Contemporary*, of which he was editor, naturally did his best to conciliate his two most famous contributors. It was no easy task: "Tolstoy is lying in the middle of the room which serves as corridor, on a morocco-covered divan, and sulking, while Turgeneff, parting the skirts of his short pea-jacket, with hands thrust into his pockets, continues to stride back and forth through all three rooms. With the object of averting a catastrophe, D. Grigororitch approaches Tolstoy.

' My dear Tolstoy, do not be vexed. You do not know how he values and loves you.' 'I will not permit him to do anything to harm me,' says Tolstoy, with swelling nostrils. 'Here he is marching to and fro past me and wagging his democratic haunches.'"

And as M. Sergyeenko looks on at the aged Tolstoy disputing with the eager student, he sees before him again an angry young man sulking on a morocco-covered divan, and furiously contradicting any expression of opinion with which at the moment he happens to disagree. It is a small picture, perhaps, of a great man, but it illustrates admirably the great central fact of Tolstoy's old age, the fact that he has preserved in all its freshness his youthful interest in men and things. In old age as in youth he clings to illusions and resists passionately those who would dispel them. The greatest of these illusions is that he, the creator of masterpieces, has long ago abandoned art. He, from whose splendid brain so many living beings have sprung into life, would make a holocaust of many of his best creations. But he would be wrong to do so, wrong from the standpoint of his own moral earnestness, wrong from the standpoint of his belief in the love of one's fellow-beings as the one atonement.

For, the structure of this incongruous but compelling moral force is of normal growth and development. It has risen like a cone, broad at

the base and narrowing gradually to its isolated summit. But its foundation was laid upon the generous lines of the great central truths, and in that very nursery of young Irteniev, amid all those conflicting sensations and purblind scramblings after the joy of life, the gradual pressing upward had most surely commenced. And this process of growth on the part of Irteniev, Olenine, and the others, was at no time concerned with the acquisition of material welfare, nor even with that of mental or artistic power. To Tolstoy the idea of simplification came as naturally as the ideal of complexity to others. To this magnificent intelligence it seemed natural from the very first to attach oneself to the mass of one's fellow-beings, just as it seems to many noisy little Titans of to-day natural to detach themselves from the mass and to become supermen, arrogantly trampling down the very sustenance of their full-gorged life.

Irteniev, with all his boyish egotism, realises the larger family beyond his nursery. Olenine, sated with the sophisticated vices of the city, seeks in the Pan-like sagacity of Uncle Eroshka a simplicity of existence that seems to him at least more natural than the convoluted perplexities of civilisation. The hero of the "Sebastopol Sketches" realises that the heart of an army is to be found, not among the generals and staff officers, but in the ranks. Pierre, in "War and Peace," was to advance still further on the road

of simplicity, and from all that vast canvas was to choose as his instructor Platon, the common soldier. Again, Levin in "Anna Karanina," still more simplified, was to learn his final lesson of life from the lips of a Russian moujik, who was simpler even than Platon. Domesticity, with its daily round of joys and cares, had long been accepted by Count Tolstoy as a gracious substitute for all the larger excitements of either war or peace. An orderly, well-conducted routine of living, implying as it did strict attention to the education and general amelioration of the peasants, had seemed for a long time a safe simplification of all the complexities of life. It was the goal of Prince Dimitri Nekhliudov in "The Squire's Morning," and it remained, approximately, the point of view of Levin. But from this stage too Tolstoy was slowly to escape—upwards, towards that unguessed-at summit of the cone.

He was to examine life under the microscope as no artist perhaps had ever examined it before. He was to reproduce the illusion of a whole lifetime from the infinitely close observation of its last few days. He was to do this with such intensity that one realises the movement of death already in progress long before the last breath. The study of Ivan Ilyitch is not the study of one dying man, but the study of human consciousness approaching its final flicker. Life and death are

here integral portions of one and the same process. The life of man is weighed in the balance in an inner and an external sense, and found wanting. Tolstoy's study of Professor Metchnikoff's dying brother is the last word on the analysis of death as it concerns the individual.

But he was to go yet further in his profound examination of the whole scheme of things as viewed from the standpoint of Ivan Ilyitch and all other ordinary men of the world. That study was finished in 1886, and four years later, in an equally powerful study of even more general scope, Tolstoy approached once more the old question of whether life without spiritual insight is or is not tolerable upon this earth. In the earlier book he had as it were condemned to death the individual who sought for the goal of all things in the immediate pleasures of the senses. In the "Kreutzer Sonata" he was as it were to condemn to death the whole race of man rather than see it prolonged under such easily discoverable bondage. If man cannot survive in any nobler atmosphere than this, he warns us, let him at least avoid handing on to succeeding generations any further acts of the revolting comedy.

Both of these books are filled with the sombre lesson of the denial of life; but in "Resurrection" Tolstoy, with all his old vitality and power, was to utter a message of hope and life. The essence of this final book of experience is atonement, but

Nekhlúdoff does not leap into any sudden transformation any more than Tolstoy himself had done. Animalism falls away from him slowly, but from that first moment of recognition of his fellow-sinner in the dock, the old comfortable ignorance had disappeared. And what is true for him is true for every human being on the earth: "And just as on this northern summer night there was no restful darkness on the earth, but only a dismal dull light coming from an invisible source, so in Nekhlúdoff's soul there was no longer the restful darkness, ignorance. Everything seemed clear. It was clear that everything considered important and good was insignificant and repulsive, and that all glamour and luxury hid the old well-known crimes which not only remained unpunished but were adorned with all splendour which men were capable of inventing."

Slowly Nekhlúdoff groped on in the increasing light until he arrived at the idea of the ultimate surrender—that he must not only renounce the pleasures of youth, but the éclat of an officer, the satisfaction of a good and just landlord, the dignity of a contented head of a family, but, having stripped himself of all these things, that he must claim from the very dregs of Society the woman whom he and no other had hounded into the underworld. And so he follows Máslova to Siberia, not as a hero of Dostoievsky would have followed her, that is to say passionately grateful for being

permitted to share her suffering at last, but in a quite different manner. Nekhlúdoff takes each difficult step of that journey, which is as long morally as it is physically, without any such exaltation, and with his eyes wide open. He is conscious of every repellent association; no step of the sombre journey leaves him unscarred. But he goes on. His atonement does not wear itself out; he will pay the ultimate price in deeds, not in words. And because of the sincerity of his soul-struggle, the woman herself begins gradually to believe in something beyond that comedy of brutality which had been called her life. Her outlook widens to meet the contraction of his. In this poor bruised being there springs up the same desire for sacrifice. The man who has everything thinks only of giving; she who has nothing is equally desirous to give. And slowly, and as though in conscious sympathy with the movements of Nature, which are so close to the moral movements of the human soul, these two stricken beings, united by a common sense of sin, drag themselves wearily into the sanctuary of "Resurrection."

But to the very end all fine phrases, all rhetorical outbursts are ruthlessly suppressed; never were the eyes of Tolstoy turned more alertly towards external life. Judges, guards, prisoners, peasants, petitioners, lawyers, jurymen—one sees them all filing before us, in this terrible comedy of punish-

ment. One sees the reeking prisons as though one had been pushed suddenly behind doors that are instantly closed again. One sees the horrible crowds of prisoners wrangling with each other, punishing each other as though there were not enough punishment already in their lives. Nekhlúdoff does not go to his atonement accompanied by slow music. No hint of romance throws its hectic glamour over this ugly and useless suffering by which he is surrounded on all sides. Everything is stamped by the Russian touch, and Nekhlúdoff on his way to Siberia mixes easily and naturally with the peasants in the railway carriage, just as Tolstoy himself used to mix with them when he found it necessary to enter a train. There is, indeed, no consciousness on his part of a great surrender, of a great renunciation. And at the very end, when we are led into that last prison in which the Englishman distributes Bibles with all the matter-of-factness of a district visitor at home, Tolstoy preserves the unimpassioned attitude of an observer of mankind. This foreigner has not been introduced into the book at the very end in order to "convert" Nekhlúdoff in any sudden, hysterical sense. He is not at all an apostle, but a quite ordinary Englishman, who speaks atrocious French very confidently, and whose rosy face is puffy with well-being. He has seen the cathedral and the factory in this desolate corner of Siberia, now he would like to visit the

famous transportation prison if that, too, is in order. It is in order, and the Englishman starts out with Nekhlúdoff to see what is to be seen. He is a sight-seer with Bibles in his pocket for distribution, a good man according to his light, but one from whom there emanates no single spark of that enthusiasm which engenders faith. But he will do the business in hand practically after the English fashion—so many bound Testaments to each fetid cell, no less, no more—a set speech, cut and dried and definite. He is a man whose last word, before Nekhlúdoff turns away from him without saying "Good-bye," is the traditional "Oh." None the less it is this man, who through his chance gift to his companion of a New Testament, finishes the work of regeneration which had commenced in Nekhlúdoff's heart when he recognised Máslova in the dock.

That is the manner of Tolstoy, who works always without sudden surprises and without passionate appeals. Nekhlúdoff is a new man when he has returned to the old faith, but it is the same Nekhlúdoff who has run the full gamut of the world's passions and discords. In precisely the same sense the great Count Tolstoy became a new man when he returned to the old faith, but remained the same Tolstoy who had loved, none better, the honey of life. The cone has narrowed gradually up to its remote summit, but its structure is essentially one and the same, and

the Tolstoy of "Resurrection" is essentially the Tolstoy of "Childhood, Boyhood, and Youth."

CHRONOLOGICAL RECORD

1828. Born at Yasnaya Polyana.
1843. Entered Kazan University.
1851. Enlisted in the Artillery.
1852. Published "Childhood," "A Squire's Morning," and "The Cossacks."
1854. Published "Boyhood."
1854–6. Published "Sketches of Sevastopol."
1855. Published "Youth."
1857. Visited Europe. Published "Memoirs of Prince Nekliudoff."
1862. Married Miss Behrs.
1864–9. Published "War and Peace."
1869. Published "A Prisoner in the Caucasus."
1870. Visited the Bashkir Steppes.
1873–6. Published "Anna Karanina."
1879–82. Published "My Confession."
1884. Published "My Religion."
1886. Published "The Death of Ivan Ilyitch."
1887. Published "Life."
1889. Published "The Kreutzer Sonata."
1898. Published "What is Art?"
1902. Became dangerously ill at Yalta.

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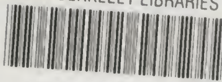

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