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Victor Fink

The Foreign Legion [1]

Emile Van den Berge's Bad Luck

My predecessor in the post of company orderly was called Count Nikita, although he was only a poor Montenegrin peasant. We buried him headless after he had gone in to Versenet one day for wine and met a shell on the way. Emile and I inherited Count Nikita's things—a kettle, boots, trousers and rifle grease, and this made us closer friends.

All the time the battalion was stationed near Rheims at Brimont fort, Emile and I slept side by side.

Emile Van den Berge was a Fleming, a lean delicate looking lad of about twenty-four, with fair hair. I do not remember when and where he joined the company. He had colorless, good-natured eyes and was always laughing. He had rather a hoarse laugh that seemed to come from the pit of his throat. Van den Berge was fond of telling stories about himself to which no one listened because they were very dull. One was how he had fooled a foreman at Namur, leaving work an hour too early; another how, somewhere else, he had kept company with a cook; but, not being able to give him meals at her mistress' expense because her mistress was stingy, he had given her up.

Poverty and unemployment, Emile told me, had driven him from Flanders.

"Do you understand?!" he said. "It's damned funny! Only idlers had work there while workers wandered round the country, their arms folded. Funny, isn't it! There was a gentleman's son in our town, the same age as I, and also called Emile, Emile Van de Meer. Now I declare—are you listening, Samovar?" (My nickname) "—I swear by Jesus Christ that that Emile Van de Meer knew as much about a trade as a dry cow. But he was busy all day. He was either playing ball with his hands or playing ball with his feet or else he was in the swimming pool playing water polo. This lad had not a moment's rest all day, while I, do you understand—I'm a carpenter and a cabinet maker, and I understand a plasterer's job and I can mend boots, in fact there is nothing I can't turn my hand to—I was jobless and wandered through Flanders like a mad dog not knowing what to do with myself. Funny, Samovar, isn't it?"

He was driven by unemployment from Belgium to France, finding work in the mines near Lille. However, the war broke out before he had earned enough to buy a pair of trousers. Emile enlisted and being a foreigner found himself in the Legion.

"What have you accomplished anyway?" put in Beilin, who had a knack of asking venomous questions. "That's what I want to know. In Belgium you went hungry; under your French employer you had no trousers to wear; and now you have come here to let the Germans perforate your hide."

Emile showed his green teeth and laughed.

"You *would* say that now! All you, Russians. . . ."

"What about us Russians?"

"Though of course that's a joke, isn't it, Samovar, your Beilin is always joking."

One evening the orderlies who went to fetch dinner came back with the news that there was a new company commander. That night a wizened, flat-chested individual in an officer's cloak appeared in the trenches. The new

[1] See note on page 109.

captain passed through the trenches and inspected the pickets. Emile van den Berge was asleep standing, with his rifle in his hand. It was the sixth night we had spent in the rain without sleep. The captain struck Emile under the chin with the butt of his revolver and passed on without a word. Five minutes later we were relieved and Emile and I crept into our dug-out. I couldn't see Emile's face; it was too dark. But his voice trembled. His hands were shaking so, he dropped his rifle.

For a long time he couldn't speak. His teeth chattered. Some minutes passed before the faculty of speech returned to him. Then poured forth a stream of the choicest oaths in Flemish and French. Emile was cursing the captain.

I wanted to sleep so I asked him to put it off till next day but Emile did not slacken. He said he had not offered to sacrifice his skin for France in order that France might knock his face as though it were a box.

"Have a look at my bayonet in the morning," he cried. "It'll be sticking in the captain's guts! I'll notch my bayonet and wind the captain's guts round it and lead him round the trenches that way—as true as I was baptized in the church of St. Medare in Bruges."

Two hours later we were relieved in the front line trench by another battalion. We went into a small wood about a kilometer and a half away to recuperate. In the morning we were drawn up for the usual report which was read by Urcade. Suddenly the lean captain appeared, with his grey face and prominent veins. He came up and without a word of greeting said :

"I woke up one man last night. The next will be shot."

His lips scarcely moved. You could barely see the moustache twich. He turned on his heels and left. Even Urcade was crestfallen. He gave the command to dismiss. Lum Lum leant against a tree and started stroking his whiskers. That was a sign that he was roused.

"Ah, my little children," he growled. "I know the coco. The dirty coco! He'll give us a lousy time. That's Persier! From the Zouaves."

We gathered around Lum Lum, Emile closest of all.

"I'll tell you a story, my little wolf cubs," said Lum Lum. "Once the climate got bad at Abu Regreg. In other words the natives got tired of France, her tradesmen, her soldiers and her governor, and even of her wenches after whom your nose begins to rot. And so they started throwing the crockery around."

Lum Lum then went on to tell how a battalion of our regiment and a company of Zouaves were sent to put down the rebellion. In a certain oasi the Zouaves were bathing one day without a guard being posted, which the officer considered an unnecessary precaution. While they were in the water, enemy horsemen came up, firing at them. No one saw where they had come from and they were gone before the legionaries could start after them.

"We were just left to bury dead meat," said Lum Lum, still stroking his whiskers and twisting them up again.

The new captain appeared in the distance.

"There he is. Have a good look at him! He was then thrown out of the Zouave regiment and transferred to us in the Legion where meat is cheap."

The captain disappeared behind some trees.

"Have you noticed, boys, how he always wears red trousers and a red cap," said Emile. "Why doesn't he wear khaki?"

"Probably wants to show how brave he is!" said Lum Lum.

"Perhaps he feels lonely without his Zouaves?" Emile stammered. "But if we were to help him? Eh? If during an attack . . ."

"I don't like moralists of your type, Dutchman," said Lum Lum, laughing.

"You're all rotters. You'd like to do your fighting in convents, and have the companies of the Legion commanded by midwives. You'd like to be fed beef steak every day and have a lady colonel wipc your mouth with a lace napkin. You'd like to have the trenches filled with pretty girls instead of with mud and lice. You think, in war, people ought not to kill you but ought to go on hanging medals, one by one, on your chest. Then you'd think war was a nice trade."

Having said this Lum Lum drew Emile aside and added in a low voice:

"Old man, what you mentioned can be done, but one does not speak about such things."

The new captain established himself in our company. At times when he was least expected his flat-chested figure rose up as though out of the earth. No sooner did the guns start firing than he would come to see that we were all at our posts. When anyone fell wounded he did not allow much time to be wasted on him. When anyone went off his head and was led away, he turned on his heel without saying a word. When he saw grief in anyone's face at the loss of a friend he put on a sneering look. Never once did he have a word with any of us. It was beneath him to talk to the men in the ranks. He spoke only to the sergeants, and through his teeth with the faintest motion of the lips. He thought we had not a sufficiently military bearing, that we were not Legionaries but the Lord knew what, that we did not know how to wear ous scarves *à l'Africaine,* that if we were to go to Annam half Saigon would think that we were a troupe of comedians.

And it must be admitted that we didn't make much of a show at the time. Our cloaks were caked with mud; our belts and shoulder straps were frayed, buttons were missing on our uniforms and our boots were torn. We ourselves were pretty washed out. Those of us who had survived the crazy weeks without sleep and under the open sky, those of us who had been spared death, mutilation and outright insanity, went about with swollen faces and eyes that had a half insane stare. We scarcely heard or understood what was said to us or what we answered.

The sergeants used to come out of Captain Percier's dugout, their foreheads beaded with sweat. In the front line trenches in the midst of bursting shrapnel, the rumble of the guns and the groans of the wounded, Captain Percier maintained the discipline of the Bel Abes garrison. At every step faults noted and punishments meted out.

In the village of Quèvres the captain was walking across the yard of a large farm where we were billeted. A shot rang out from the sentry box. The bullet passed over the captain's head.

The captain stopped and whistled for the senior in command.

"Your soldiers don't know how to shoot," he said. "You are under ten day's arrest."

He put his hands in his pockets and left, the loop of his cane was dangling over his shoulder.

"What do you want, my little one? That's the Legion," Lum Lum said to me one day when my friend Emile, by the captain's orders, was given fatigue drill for some small misdemeanor.

"We'll have a little gentle exercise in the open air," said Urcade, smiling. "Now look sharp there, Van den Berge; put on your equipment, marching order!"

He brought Emile to attention and as is customary in such cases gave commands in rapid succession:

"Right turn! Left turn! Right turn! Left turn! Left turn! Left turn! Right turn! Right turn! Right turn! Right turn!"

Emile turned as fast as he could. After about ten minutes of it his eyes filled with tears. After about twenty minutes he shrieked and fell to the ground sobbing.

Lum Lum made a sign to Urcade to leave the wretch in peace. Beilin and I who had just arrived in the distance with flasks of wine invited Urcade by signs to come and have a drink we owed him, so as to make him leave Emile. But just at that moment a familiar lean figure appeared among the trees. Captain Percier had arrived, as though quite by accident. He went up to Urcade, asked him for a match, lit a cigarette and returning the box said:

"What are you waiting for? To splash him with cold water?"

Then he left. Urcade lifted Emile to his feet but Van den Berge looked so bad that the sergeant commanded:

"Take your carcass off," and Emile slowly staggered into the dugout.

For a week he went about like one insane, cried and could not eat or sleep.

Soon everyone in the compnay knew that Emile would stick his bayonet into the captain at the first favorable opportunity.

No man's land was scattered with corpses. War had gorged itself well in these parts and its leavings remained all through the autumn and winter. The bodies of French and German soldiers lay tumbled together. The rains soaked them and the winds dried them. We became quite familiar with them. At night, while out scouting we crept among the dead as though they were our boon companions. We trafficked in small articles with them—soldiers' trifles such as belts, trench spades, rifles and so forth. From the uniforms of the Würtemburg guards we cut off the buttons and set their crowns in aluminum rings made out of the noses of German shells.

Occasionally there, one would come across odd arms and legs and heads. We even found some who had died of starvation: beside them were tinned meat containers. Apparently these men had been wounded, went on living where they fell, ate while there was anything to eat and died before help arrived. Wherever you looked you saw corpses.

A forgotten corn stack stood in the middle of the field with four trees, twisted and bare, beside it. There was a patch of unreaped corn nearby like bristle on an ill-shaven cheek; the whole accursed field had something about it strangely reminiscent of the puffed-up face of a dead body in an advanced stage of putrefaction.

Spring came.

With spring the field began to show green patches.

With spring the larks began to hover in the sky.

With spring the wind began to waft a stifling odor from the fields.

Omar—a black child of Senegal, nicknamed by us Beni-Buf-Tu (Son of Beef Tea) on account of his enormous appetite—said the odor came only from the German soldiers whose souls had been refused admittance into heaven.

In May lime was brought. During the night we went out beyond the barbed wire entanglements and buried the corpses, or spread lime over them.

Emile and I were on the look-out. We lay under a bush in the thick of the Würtemburg platoon. In order to clear a place for me, Emile tried to pull aside one of the guardsmen by the leg, but the leg came away and was left in Emile's hand. Emile kicked the body aside and we lay down. It was damp and the ground was wet. It was very dark all around us. The company was working quietly and rapidly. Captain Percier was there poking with his cane and showing the ambulance men where to scatter lime. He prodded Emile and said:

"And now this one!"

Emile whispered:

"Not yet, Sir, I'm still alive!"

Percier turned and went on. He walked perfectly erect even when rockets flared up. We saw his thin, straight silhouette. Emile whispered to me:

"My bayonet is going rusty. I want to stick the captain tonight."

"He's looking for death as it is," I said.

"He's looking for his own, but he'll find ours. Look at the rate they're sending up rockets! The field is a blaze of light but that turkey cock won't bend down. He'll give our position away."

And indeed we had been sighted. Suddenly we heard the sound of a shell. Boring through the air it obstinately forced a passage for itself through the tough leagues of atmosphere. When it struck it was as though the field had been struck by a huge mallet.

Cries would be heard in the distance. Then there was silence. A rocket flared up and then another heavy shell, causing long minutes of suspense as it approached, fell close to us but did not explode. Then about a hundred yards to the left we heard shrapnel.

"They're beginning to stoke up," whispered Lum Lum as he crawled up from god knows where. "It's going to be hot, my friends!"

Then a shell burst behind us.

"I think we'll stay where we are," said Lum Lum. "Anyone who feels like it may hang up their coat and hat."

The cannonade got fiercer and fiercer. In the flare of a rocket we caught sight of the captain. He stood erect as before.

"He's bringing it all down on us," whispered Emile. "It's the story of the Zouaves all over again. My time will soon come! I swear to you, Samovar, by the immaculate Virgin Mary. . . ."

Then a shell struck the ground, flinging up a cloud of earth, stones and putrid Würtemburg flesh. When we looked up Captain Percier had disappeared.

Van den Berge jumped to his feet and with an inarticulate cry rushed towards the spot where Captain Percier had been. As soon as we had recovered from our astonishment Lum Lum and I ran after him. We found him by the shell hole.

Emile was digging away the earth with hands and feet. He had completely lost his wits.

"Oh, Sir! Oh, Sir! Oh, Sir!" he cried in a hoarse voice.

The captain's legs appeared from under the earth. Emile was wild with excitement. He dug up his enemy's body to wreak his last vengeance on it, gasping and spluttering in the darkness.

"Stay where you are, Lum Lum! Don't interfere, I'll do it myself. I want to be the first. Don't touch him, Samovar. It's my bag. I want my bayonet, my bayonet. . . ."

Then the captain's head appeared. Emile took him by the ears and pulled him towards him with a supreme effort, then he let him fall again and jumped to his feet:

"Where's my rifle?" he shouted and started groping in the darkness.

Meanwhile Lum Lum had put his ear to the captain's chest and satisfied himself that he was breathing.

"Alive," he said. "He can yet be saved. But it seems to me that your friend has more serious intentions with regard to the captain! Isn't that so, Samovar?"

"I think it is," I murmured.

"Well, what about it? I don't think we'll interfere. Come along, Samovar, it's damp here."

He pulled me aside. In the light of the rockets we saw what followed.

Emile crawled up to the captain, his bayonet between his teeth. When he reached him he threw down his bayonet and seizing the captain by the throat he began to pull him about and shake him. The captain groaned and snorted.

"Just wait a minute, Sir, just wait a minute," Emile stammered.

"What's the matter with him?" said Lum Lum in a puzzled tone. "What the hell is he up to? Is he celebrating his first communion or what? Can you explain to me?"

"I'm afraid I can't," I answered.

"There's nothing to be seen here," said Lum Lum after a minute or so. "He can't do it. Come along, Samovar, I don't like that sort."

At that moment the captain came to. He opened his eyes and said:

"Tell Urcade to bring the company back."

He tried to rise. Emile jumped to his feet and stood stock still.

"What are you waiting for, Legionary Van den Berge? Why don't you carry out my command?"

He began to rise from the ground. We saw how Emile helped him up. For a minute he supported the captain by the elbow. The latter stood unsteadily on his feet. Emile gave him his rifle. Using the rifle as a stick Percier drew himself up, sighed and took a step forward. Emile brushed the earth from his cloak.

"You're still here, are you?"

Emile ran off in search of Urcade.

"Look here, Samovar, you've made friends with an arse syringe and not a Legionary. That's a fact," whispered Lum Lum and took himself off.

Returning to the trenches, led by Urcade, I found myself next to Lum Lum. He went on grumbling all the way back.

"He comes along, if you please, and brags: 'I'll break the sergeant-major's jaw for him,' 'I'll stab the captain,' 'I'll cut the company commander's throat.' He crosses himself and swears by the wooden arm of Captain Danjou who was killed in the Cameroon. And our boys believe him! But when the critical moment comes his knees shake like the landlady's daughter the first time she has a baby by the shepherd. I warn you, Samovar, there are too many of that sort in the Legion. Beware of them!"

We had never seen Van den Berge as he was after that night. He began scarcely to understand anything that was said to him.

Quite unexpectedly he was recommended in company despatches for an Order of Merit for saving the company commander's life. The despatch, in the usual official terms, mentioned the bravery and the self-sacrificing loyalty of Van den Berge, Emile, Legionary of the Second Class. Emile was thrown into a fit of black depression.

It was with difficulty that I persuaded Lum Lum not to rag him. I gave Lum Lum my share of rum merely to prevent him from calling Emile an arse syringe, a 'cello bow, a broom stick, a Virgin Mary, a latrine brush and other unusual terms that came into his head when he was over sober.

One day Emile came up to me with a peculiar expression on his face. He had something he wanted to say to me. Awkwardly he began:

"The thing is, you see. . . well you know I'm a Catholic! That's what puts me out. . . ."

We had not noticed that Lum Lum was sitting close to us. He cut Emile short:

"Ha, a Catholic! He's a Catholic if you please! Why everyone in the world is a Catholic! It's for killing Catholics that Catholics pay us a sou a day and give us our grub."

"Why do you insist that it's I who must kill the captain?" cried Emile with unwonted heat. "Kill him yourself."

"If I considered that it was necessary," answered Lum Lum, "I should count three and do it. But I have no cause to do it. It is you who were his sworn enemy and weren't able to do the job when you had him in your hands. And I say—mark my words, Samovar—I say that the man who can't kill his enemy will betray his friend. Remember that! Beware of friends, Samovar, who are not able to kill. Those are the words of Pierre Blanchare whom they call Lum Lum." And he went off.

Emile never returned to the subject. He became more and more depressed. He began to avoid us. His condition alarmed me.

However, I could not get the company doctor to have Emile discharged on account of mental derangement.

"He's not ready yet," said the doctor. Only raving lunatics were discharged.

The staff formalities were carried out with remarkably little delay. Emile was called into the office and presented with a medal on a red and green ribbon together with five francs. Emile went straight into the village and brought back ten liters of wine.

At that time we were in Champagne and were quartered in the tower of a ruined castle. The regiments who had been there before us had carried off all the furniture and drapery. We had to live between bare walls. We had been left nothing but owls' nests and the glass of broken bottles.

Emile put down his ten liters on the plank bed and, with forced joviality, clinked his medal against the bottles.

"We'll drink to the captain's carcass!" he said looking at us ingratiatingly and trying to force his face into a smile. "Who'd like to drink to Captain Percier's carcass!"

No one moved.

It was the hour after dinner, the rest hour, when the older Legionaries would begin swapping stories, florid and grim, about their florid and grim lives. Lum Lum's would be about his African campaigns. Delcours' would be about his girl chases in Tonkin. Cuens would swear and growl out his stories about rows in the Saigon saloons. When Emile was offering his wine, Adrien was talking about a mulatto woman in Hongkong. It was very hot. The Legionaries were lying, half undressed, on their plank beds, stomach upwards, laughing and digesting their food and thinking. I'm sure, that a drink would be a good thing. But when I said: "Yes, let's drink," supporting Emile, no one responded. No one wanted Emile's wine.

Emile sat beside his bottles and waited. He did not drink himself. His colorless eyes were concentrating on a single point: his pals would not drink his wine. That was the last thing that he comprehended. A minute passed. Adrien went on with his story.

Suddenly a bottle flew into the air and broke against the wall. Another followed it.

Emile was standing in the middle of the room looking ashy pale. Saliva

was dribbling from his mouth. He tore his jacket with his left hand and with his right waved a liter bottle in the air. I snatched the bottle from him, but he knocked me down and seized another, with a snarl.

"He'll spill all the wine," said Cuens. "Get the bottles away from him."

Emile rushed round, snarling and snorting and howling. We caught him for a moment, Lum Lum, Beilin and I, but even the three of us together could not hold him. He tore himself free and bounded from bed to bed. Omar struck him on the head and knocked him down but he was up again like a rubber ball. Then he pulled a bayonet from its scabbard and went for me with a yell:

"You won't escape me this time, Sir! Oh, Sir! Oh, my dear captain!"

I succeeded in jumping out of the window when Emile's bayonet was about two inches from me. As I ran across the courtyard I could still hear Emile's yells and groans.

The doctor was playing cards. He guessed immediately what was happening in the tower.

"Van den Berge?" he asked.

"Yes."

"He's ready, is he?"

"Apparently."

"Splendid! Have they bound him?"

"I don't know."

"All right, come along!"

He slowly lit his pipe and rang for the ambulance man.

Post No. 6

We took up our new position at the hour when night is just fading into dawn.

At the spot where a footpath left the mainroad to join the communication trenches, the sun shone on a short post with a board nailed to it. On the board was written:

"Neurological sanatorium. Open air hotel. Darkened rooms for persons of delicate constitution. Exquisite cuisine. Picturesque views. Delightful excursions."

"Very nice," observed Franchy, "but all the same I should prefer to go home. That would also be a delightful excursion."

The communication trenches were full of rainwater; it was difficult to make one's way through them. The sides had fallen in; the paths were blocked. One had to pass almost in the open.

The men swore under their breath. But when the sun rose and the sky became blue as though it were painted we took no notice of the sergeants, who demanded silence and threatened arrest, but began swearing loudly to our heart's content, each in his own language.

We made our way slowly. The position seemed to us worse than any we had seen or occupied since the war began. It nearly always seemed like that in a new place.

Between our trenches and the German trenches, almost in the middle, about fifty paces from each, and separated by a small space of about five or six meters, there were two deep ditches. The earth heaped up on either side of these ditches hid the two trenches from each other. These ditches, which neither side would yield, were filled almost to the top with corpses.

The land around was pitted with shell holes. Judging from the tree stumps

the place must have been covered with a wood formerly, or an orchard; but every sod had since been turned and there was now not even a blade of grass left. The air was heavy with corpse smell.

"A rotten place! As rotten as they make 'em," grumbled our temporary company commander, Lieutenant Reinalle.

In front of the lines a number of deep pits had been dug. They were called posts. Our platoon was glad to be sent into these pits; in the trenches we were too close to Major André.

Lum Lum, I, Carmensite, Peppino Antonelli, nicknamed Prickly Macaroni, Nezametdinov and Franchy, alias Bladder, found ourselves in Post No. 6. The days passed tediously. There was no shooting. We played cards desperately.

On the third day our bomb-throwers, our "frogs" as we called them in the army, placed three bombs in the German positions.

The German bomb throwers immediately delivered three in our direction. One of them burst on the very edge of the ditch filled with corpses. A human head rolled into our pit.

After that there was shooting every morning. The gunners took the infantrymen as their target.

It became a daily ritual. In the morning we were brought a bucket of coffee and bread. The coffee was quite cold when it reached us and gritty with the earth scraped from the walls of the trenches. At exactly nine o'clock each morning three shells burst from either side.

"It's struck nine," we used to say.

"Nothing is so beneficial to the organism as regular habits," explained Lum Lum. "They are greatly recommended by doctors."

While the shooting was going on we sat in sickening expectation of death and cursed the artillery men for making shooting galleries out of our trenches.

"The artichokes may rest assured that the first one I meet I'll break his jaw," swore Lum Lum.

The German sentries at the far side of no man's ditches came quite close to us at one point.

Once we heard singing.

"The Boches are singing for all they're worth while we're as dumb as sandbags," Nezametdinov said to me sullenly. Straining all the veins on his neck he sang out in Russian:

Tula dula perevernula
Nazad kozyryom poshla

Suddenly Russian oaths were heard from the German posts. Not many—two altogether, and with a strong accent; but those of us who understood immediately recognized our native language.

Nezametdinov was thunderstruck.

"What's the matter?" asked Lum Lum. "What's he got the wind up about?"

Nezametdinov was overcome with joy. With extraordinary zest he stuck a rat with his bayonet as it ran past and giving it a swing sent it flying in the direction of the Germans. At the same time with a vivacity most uncommon with him, he accompanied it with a many-storyed, complex and somewhat ornate Russian oath.

Nezametdinov was extraordinarily elated when his greetings were returned by his neighbors in the form of a decomposing rat accompanied by a well spiced curse. Nezametdinov felt quite at home as though he was back in his own village.

"The boys are having a bit of fun," he said.

"Psya krev!"[1] a thin small voice called out from the trench. "Cholera!"

There were Poles in the German trenches. This discovery brought great variety into our life. Afterwards, whenever we got tired of playing cards or retelling our stale stories, we had a swearing match with the men in the German pit.

Lum Lum and Bladder and José Ayala and Prickly Macaroni learnt how to swear in Russian from Nezametdinov and me. Each of them, distorting the language according to his own particular accent, exchanged curses with the Germans in the "maternal" form. This caused great amusement.

Hats were thrown back from the German trenches and the curses were chiefly in Polish.

So time passed from relief to relief, from week to week. This was war.

II

In the village behind the lines where our company went to rest, our fellows made the acquaintance of a certain redhaired woman who kept a kitchen garden. Her husband had been kicked about from front to front for three years. Madame Zuelma, a not very young but sturdy and fresh looking woman, was in a bad way: her garden was cut up by shells and the allowance from the municipality was not enough for her to live on.

Madame Zuelma spent her time writing letters. She bombarded the mayor, the prefect, her husband's company commander with the letters demanding a rise in her allowance. But she got no answer.

The last letter, which I wrote to her dictation, was addressed to the War Minister.

"And it's quite enough," Madame Zuelma dictated, "that my husband, Alois Vassuan, is forty years old and is away from home. I consider that it is high time to make an end of it. If I do not get satisfaction within a month I'll write to my husband, Alois Vassuan, in his regiment, and I'll fetch him home, come what may. That's what I've decided, Monsieur *Ministre*. They say that in munition factories they pay women from ten to twelve francs for making shells. But my husband, Alois Vassuan, is now given five sous a day for catching shells on his dome. I consider that the difference is too high. Yesterday when I was at church I officially put myself under the protection of St. Medare and I also officially put my husband, Alois Vassuan, under the protection of St. Medare. This letter, Monsieur *Ministre*, I am confiding to St. Barbara, as tomorrow is her day, and I hope you will understand, Monsieur *Ministre*, that I only have one word to say, but that I say it quite firmly—if my allowance is not raised I'll fetch my husband, Alois Vassuan, home from his regiment, come what may."

Madame Zuelma inscribed her signature at the foot of the letter and this cost her no little pains.

Receiving no answer, Madame Zuelma was beside herself with rage. She railed against the government and parliament which, as she expressed it, "were only good for bringing misfortune on a body but incapable of putting an end to their misfortunes." She gathered groups of women around her and told them that women should stop bearing children, as their children

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[1] Equivalent to the English "son of a bitch!"

no longer belonged to them, their mothers, but belonged to the devil knew who, who poked them into the fire.

"They've already started taking boys of seventeen. Their fathers have been chased out to the front; now, no sooner have they taken their first communion, than they have to go. Far better breed rats than children. I throw rats into the fire myself but these people throw children into it."

Madame Zuelma proclaimed that war is only good for people whose rank is not under that of a general and who live not less than thirty kilometers from the front.

"Soldiers and market gardeners," she said, "don't need war! All my life I have dreamt about having earrings with blue stones in them, but I never got them and I've done without them. And I'll do without Alsace Lorraine too."

Madame Zuelma began to attract attention. But one day when she was visited by Van der Waast and Van der Neest, by courtesy Belgian customs officers, but actually secret police agents, she gave them such a reception that both of them beat a hasty retreat accompanied by hoots of laughter from the children and women and a group of Turkos who were sunning themselves in Madame Zuelma's garden.

In order to straighten her affairs, Madame Zuelma started to sell wine.

To the honor of the Legion be it said that we of our company and especially the garrison of Post No. 6 stood particularly high in Madame Zuelma's favor.

"You men of the Legion," she used to say, "are bigger fools than all the rest. In my view there was no call even for Frenchmen to poke their noses into this war unless they were something better than market gardeners. But that foreigners should join in, and as volunteers into the bargain, is quite beyond me! Now you for instance, Monsieur Samovar! You're a Russian and a student! Can it really be that you've come into the firing line as a volunteer? Your mother could have earned big money by showing such a fool at the circus!"

Madame Zuelma used to make the most remarkable soups for us out of onions and cheese. She had her meals with us. We drank wine together, sang songs, kissed her and took turns going into the little bedroom with her.

It soon became known. The men learnt that a certain Madame Zuelma lived in the third house to the right past the church, and that she made soldiers welcome. People began to spread evil reports about her, but she stood her ground.

"I don't deny it!" she cried. "I *am* becoming a whore! And all women should do the same! Let the poor soldiers have a bit of pleasure before they're deprived of all further chance of it. Leave shame to those who sit in Paris in the palaces and turn the hurdy-gurdy. Let *them* be ashamed of themselves ! They've turned the husbands into cannon fodder and the wives into bed fodder. Let them know that I, madame Zuelma Vassuan, who never thought of misbehaving myself except with my husband, Alois Vassuan, have now become a whore! That's what poor France is coming to."

Lum Lum established himself particularly intimately in Madame Zuelma's house. At first he worked in the garden; then he did small carpentry jobs inside and eventually he was there in his shirt sleeves and receiving guests as though he were the host.

One morning he came from Madame Zuelma's and after spitting in the straw beside me whispered:

"Samovar, are you asleep? I've brought you something to read."

He handed me a leaflet.

"Read it! They say all soldiers should read it."

The leaflet ran:

"Comrades! There is a revolution in Russia. The soldiers are laying down their arms and saying to their generals: 'Fight yourselves, we don't need war.' Comrades! Follow the example of your Russian comrades. This is not your war, you have no need of it. The time for talking has passed. It is time to act. Throw down your arms. Cry: 'Down with war; let there be peace forever!' "

Underneath was: "Workers' and soldiers' committee for peace."

"Where did you get that, Lum Lum?"

"Some gunner or other came to see Zuelma. He had just arrived from Paris where he had been in hospital. He said that they were being distributed at the railway station in Paris to soldiers on their way to the front. There were leaflets of the same kind pasted up in the railway carriages but the police tear them down immediately. Tell me now, what does it all mean? More eyewash or what? What is this about a workers' and soldiers' committee? Generals and missionaries again, or who is it? But the thing I want to know is this. I want you to tell me the truth about the Russian revolution. What sort of a revolution is it? Why do they say: 'Follow the example of your Russian comrades'? What example? It seems to me these leaflets are being distributed by German spies who ought to be shot."

The next day we were in the trenches again. Lum Lum made me read from the German newspaper used to wrap up the last rat sent over by our neighbors.

It was a paper published for the soldiers. It said the Russian army had gone to pieces : there were mass desertions; the Russias retreating before the victorious German troops had attempted to fraternize but the Germans had answered with their bayonets.

The paper exultingly described the complete chaos reigning in the Russian army and how near Germany was to final victory.

I translated with reluctance. The others listened in silence. We all felt awkward. When I had finished we sat without saying anything for some time, our brows knit.

"They're surrendering, the buggers!" said Nezametdinov, who was the first to speak. "No wonder the tsar refused to have anything more to do with them! What the hell can he do in a war like this if Russia herself surrenders. Ekh! Without a tsar it's no fun fighting, is it!"

The great soldierly achievement that had been effected in Russia then seemed to us like a breach of faith, like treachery.

"But perhaps the German papers are lying," said Bladder. "Our papers give quite a different story."

The French papers came out every day with reports to the effect that the great Russian people, having thrown off the yoke of tsarism, were fighting with redoubled vigor for the victory of right and justice.

"The Russian revolution is the first and most decisive victory over Germany," wrote Clémenceau.

We were skeptical. We were no children. For three years the papers had described our happy life at the front, our heroic spirit, our crushing victories over the enemy. We knew the real story.

"The question is, which is the biggest liar," remarked Lum Lum, "that German paper or ours? Everything has been turned upside down in Russia.

But these leaflets advise us to 'follow the Russian example'! It looks to me like the work of German spies. No wonder it's a gunner who's distributing the leaflets. If I come across Zuelma's young man I'll break his jaw for him. What does he want to be putting soldiers off the track for."

The next time we met Van der Waast he shook hands with us very warmly, asked after our health, about things in general and whether we Russians got letters from home.

Van der Waast was a Fleming and had a strong Flemish accent. When he spoke French he seemed to have his mouth stuffed with peas.

"Well, my dear friend?" he said, addressing me. "Do you get any news from home? What do your people write? They are probably proud of their young hero son? What is happening in your great country?"

"Samovar has the advantage," interrupted Lum Lum, "of not knowing anything about Russia and never talking about Russia. But there appear to be some people going about who are advising our soldiers to follow the Russian example and to lay down their arms."

"Who's that?" asked Van der Waast, pricking up his ears.

"Who do you think? The gunners of course. Wherever there is dirty work it's always the gunners. A handsome young fellow from the Third Heavy! Just arrived from Paris, from hospital! What are you pulling my coat for, Samovar? I'm telling the truth, and I'll break his jaw for him."

"And quite right too," said Van der Waast. "From the Third Heavy, you say? So long, boys!"

"What were you pulling my coat for?" asked Lum Lum.

"Because you're a damned idiot. You can break the artichokes' necks for them but that's no reason for delivering them into the hands of the army dicks."

"But if the artichoke's a spy? I don't see how he can be anything else. The Boches must pay pretty well for that kind of work."

That evening I witnessed a most inexplicable scene at Madame Zuelma's. She was smacking Lum Lum on the cheeks.

I thought at first it was a joke. But Zuelma was standing there, red faced and thoroughly roused, doing her job with a will. She unclenched her teeth with an effort in order to hiss out words that were by no means complimentary to my friend.

"You idiot! You—you fool!"

As she shook Lum Lum his medals clinked on his chest. The old soldier was so taken aback that he made no effort to defend himself.

"Take her away. Samovar, she's killing me," he cried as he caught sight of me, "take her away, she's gone off her head!"

With great difficulty I wrenched him free from Zuelma. Both breathed heavily. Zuelma continued her abuse.

"To think that I've had such an idiot palmed off on me who doesn't know the difference between a bladder and a lamp! Look at it now and admire it! It wears all kinds of ribbons and medals! It's been all over the world! It's fought in the colonies! It's been rotting for three years in the trenches! And it's as stupid as a sheep! Oh, poor France! What a lot of sheep there are!"

"What's the matter, Zuelma, what's happened?"

"What's happened? I've smashed in his face."

"So I see! But what for?"

"Because he's a cop's man, because he's an informer."

Again she flew at Lum Lum but I held her back.

"But the worst of all is that he's a stupid sheep. He comes in here and shouts at the doorway: 'Zuelma, I've bashed in the face of that fellow from the Third Heavy who's been spouting at your place.' I ask him: 'What for?' 'I bashed his face in,' he goes on, 'but Van der Waast arrested him.' 'Arrested?' I cry. 'What for?' And then the idiot grins from ear to ear and announces: 'For those leaflets.' 'How did Van der Waast know about them?' I ask. 'Why,' says he, 'I told him about them this morning.'

"Samovar, my blood boiled and I hit him in the jaw. Good Lord! A fellow comes from Paris and tells how a merry-go-round has been started in all the factories and barracks! That they're sick of the war at home and at the front! That the rich have become richer and the poor poorer! That the war is going on because the rich have ministers and generals who keep it up so as to enable the rich to get richer still! But the poor have no ministers or generals; they only have their skins, and *they're* not worth much. The fellow says that the people in Paris are dissatisfied, that the people in the provinces are grumbling, that everywhere committees are being formed against this war in which you, yes, you idiots are rotting like crawling meat. I began to feel glad about my poor Alois, although I don't know whether he'll forgive me my goings on with you people. Yes, I tell you, I began to feel glad in my heart. And then this idiot takes it into his head to inform the police. Have you ever heard anything like it in your life before?"

Lum Lum sat sulking.

"To hell with it all!" he blurted out. "That's all eyewash. That's not what interests me. I biffed his jaw for being a gunner. We're fed up with the artichokes, they're always on top of us! Aren't they, Samovar? I had nothing to do with it. I hit him and he hit me. At that moment Van der Waast came up, put his hand on his shoulder and said: 'You're arrested.' "

Lum Lum did not look very easy. He was beginning to realize that he had acted foolishly.

"But if the artichoke's a spy?" he ventured, trying to reassure himself.

"It's you that's the spy and not he, you sheep! Oh Holy Mother of God! How easy it is to carry on a war when the army is made up of such sheep who break your hand when you try to open their eyes!"

We left late in the evening. Lum Lum was gloomy and silent.

He asked me not to tell the others that he had been beaten by a woman. He had nothing to be proud of. But it was not only shame that troubled him, he also felt remorse. He was beginning to see that there was a living bond between our stagnant life and the proclamation of the workers' committee brought by the gunner.

"Why was it signed 'Workers' committee,' Samovar? What have the workers to do with it?"

III

A thunderstorm broke out in the evening. It started unexpectedly like artillery fire. At first isolated, heavy, well defined drops fell down like shells, then the drops became rapid, like quick-firing field artillery, and finally the storm broke out like a hurricane of firing where one can no longer distinguish beginning or end and everything merges into a single, uninterrupted din.

It began in the evening and continued all night. Post No. 6 began to fill with water. The water rose higher and higher.

Two niches had been cut out in our hole for sleeping—two narrow excava-

tions in the sides. They were scarcely a meter high and we could only crawl in on all fours. It was dirty and stuffy there. The rotten straw was swarming with lice. All the same we managed to get some sort of rest there.

Now both niches were under water.

In the middle of the night Lieutenant Reinalle came to see us.

"My dear children," he said, "on such a night not even raving lunatics set out on an attack. But this weather is excellent for mushrooms. I just came to warn you that you may find a mushroom growing up here."

Leading me aside he added:

"Major André, who is as you know the father of the battalion, is wandering about in the most out-of-the-way corners. He is trying to find whether anyone is hiding from the rain. Do you understand? It is an extremely poisonous kind of mushroom. Do as you like but I advise you to have a man on duty at the parapet."

In the infantry regiment in which Lieutenant Reinalle began the war in the ranks, and was promoted for bravery, he was friendly with the men and was therefore looked upon with suspicion by the command. They exiled him into the Foreign Legion, considering that in that ignorant and multilingual rabble he would be less dangerous than elsewhere. The battalion commander hated him. He contemptuously referred to him as a "civilian," although Reinalle had his chest covered with decorations.

The Lieutenant gave us some tobacco and left. His warning proved opportune. Soon after he had left the short beam from a pocket electric torch appeared in our hole; the major had arrived. This was his first visit to us. The water reached almost to our knees. Taking no notice of this he went to where the sentry was standing. Seeing a figure standing against the side with a rifle in his hand he turned back and disappeared as silently as he had come. The sentry immediately left and we all went off to get beams and boards from the large ditches for protection against the rainwater.

It was dark. The storm did not abate. It was difficult to find the needed materials. We kept stumbling over corpses. It was unpleasant having to walk on them, crushing them under our boots. With great difficulty we managed to raise from under them a number of broken boards which we brought back with us to make a floor in our hole.

As we climbed out of the ditch we heard a noise of puffing and straining. We thought it was some of our men from the other post.

"Nothing like rainwater to make the hair grow," shouted Lum Lum into the darkness. But the answer came back in German.

"What?" someone exclaimed. "It's raining with you too, is it?"

We were overjoyed at this unexpected meeting. We stopped to help the Germans pull up a board that was embedded in the earth. When this was done the Germans politely said: "*Merci*" and went back with their board, while we also returned with our booty.

We went out to the ditch to get boarding several times that night and each time we met Germans. Everyone was busy at the same job.

The storm which had broken out like a bombardment ended as suddenly as it had begun.

"The enemy's artillery has been reduced to silence," observed Bladder in the style of the official despatches.

When the sun rose we saw the state we were in. We were, up to our knees in water. Our clothes, which were soaked through, were smeared with mud and the evil smelling slime of rotting flesh.

All our faces were swollen and there was an insane, wandering expression in our eyes.

"Well, that's that," said José.

Nobody answered.

The water did not subside.

"Hey there, crabs!" Jafar's voice rang out from the far end of the trench. The Turk had brought the coffee. "Who's for a cup of dish water? Who wants dish water?" he shouted.

We began to pull our tin mugs out of our pockets.

A minute or so passed, however, and Jafar did not appear.

"Hey zebras," he shouted, "take away the sentries for God's sake, take them away, they won't let me pass."

"He's had a good sleep in the kitchen, the beggar," somebody remarked.

Jafar continued to shout.

"Remove the gatekeepers, will you! They won't let me pass with the dish water."

"Who wants to punch his mug?" asked Lum Lum in a tired voice.

Three men moved from the wall.

"It doesn't want three, one's enough. You go, Samovar."

About forty paces in a straight line from our hole the pasage made a turn. About ten paces beyond this turn Jafar was standing with a bucket in his hands. He was confronted with an obstacle. This was formed by the semi-decomposed mud-caked corpses of two Hanoverian riflemen. They had fallen out of their graves in the walls of the trench and were again doing their bit by blocking our food supplies.

"Take these guys away, Russko," said Jafar. "What induced you to put them there? Where did you get them from? What are they *for,* anyway?"

Jafar tried to pass me the bucket of coffee and the bread, but the corpses, which were stretched out between us, were longer than our arms. Jafar suggested removing the dead men.

"We'll give them a heave and send them over the top," he said.

It wasn't easy to lift them, however: they slipped out of our hands. I got sick of the work.

"Damn your eyes," I said to Jafar. "Are you the waiter or am I? Manage as best you can, but for God's sake give us our coffee."

Jafar then started walking over the bodies. His feet sank deep into the friable, rotten flesh.

"Now boys, here's the dish water! Who'll have a cup of dish water?" he cried cheerily, hurrying towards our picket.

The coffee was already cold. It was not sweet enough.

Jafar, babbling as usual, spoke about those "guys" who had "fallen down into the trench with the sole object of preventing the Legionaries from getting their morning dish water."

It then suddenly struck me what it was that prevented the water from flowing out of our hole. We went up to the Hanoverian riflemen. As soon as we had succeeded in heaving them out, the water at once subsided. Only a sticky mud remained.

Very soon our artillery placed their usual three shells in the German positions. The German guns then fired three charges at us. We were splashed with an evil smelling mud.

"It's struck nine," somebody said.

The day had begun.

IV

This day proved an eventful one.

"Go to company headquarters and ask for relief, Macaroni. Go as you are, in your wet things. Let them see the state we're in," ordered Lum Lum.

A dense, unpleasant cloud of steam rose from his trousers and puttees. Macaroni was shivering.

"What post do you come from? No. 6?"

Sergeant Urcade went straight to the Major to report Macaroni's message and came out smiling.

"Ten days for senior in command, Blanchare. As a reminder."

The news made a great impression on us.

"Ten days?" said Lum Lum. "So he spits in our faces. All right then."

Under front line conditions it is difficult to put soldiers under arrest. But while their punishment lasts their pay is confiscated.

"So I'm to work ten days for the sake of the princess' beautiful eyes?" said Lum Lum. "Well, if that's the case, turn the other way princess, I'm going to take off my trousers, they're wet, I'll have to dry them."

Lum Lum slipped off his trousers, coat and underclothing and throwing them on to the parapet to air them in the sunshine remained in the state in which his mother had brought him into the world.

We all followed his example. Our change of underclothing had been flooded out. Post No. 6 now consisted of six men without a stitch on. Our rifles were caked with mud.

Our outpost was one of the most distant and the communication trench leading to it was awkward to negotiate. Owing to this circumstance, and to the fact that it was occupied by defaulters, it was not often visited by the officers. The Germans did not bother themselves about us either.

"Look, Fritz has also taken off his jacket," shouted Nezametdinov and swore lustily.

The Germans were, in fact, also drying their gear on the parapet. We were delighted. And our delight was not of that malicious kind such as is experienced by men who are glad to know that their enemy are also having a bad time of it. No, it was genuine delight. These men were called our enemies but here they were, naked like ourselves, trustingly drying their things in front of us. When a dead rat was thrown into our hole we all laughed heartily. A weight seemed to have been lifted off our minds. Our seniors had injured us, but what did we care? We were jolly fellows and lived on good terms with one another, we were even on good terms with the enemy, that is to say with the enemy of our officers.

"And now," began Lum Lum, "the Carrion Crow thinks to himself: 'There's that Legionary of mine, Blanchare, nicknamed Lum Lum. A person who's been seen with beard and rifle in Morocco, Gabon and Timbuctoo. Although I've given him ten days he's still standing at Post No. 6 and if Kaiser Wilhelm took it into his head to plant a foot in Post No. 6 he'd have to step over Legionary Blanchare's dead body and get entangled in his beard.' That's what he thinks, the Carrion Crow. But Legionary Blanchare is standing here without *his* trousers on! Now, now princess, have a good look! It'll cost more later. Legionary Blanchare doesn't care a damn for his officers and their hatred of the Boches. He has never seen the Boches and he very much doubts, holy cardinals, whether one ought to kill people one doesn't know. He thinks it is good to kill only certain people whom one knows very well indeed."

When Lum Lum once got going he would often go on indefinitely. But

this time he broke off abruptly and with one bound jumped onto the parapet.

We all sprang from where we were standing. An unarmed, German soldier in a peakless cap was coming towards us. We did not know what were his intentions. Lum Lum rushed towards him. When a completely naked and extremely hairy man, tatooed from top to toe, jumped out of our pit, the German nearly collapsed. Lum Lum ran up to him and laughing and swearing in Arabic, dragged him towards us.

The German sprawled into the pit, dumb with astonishment. Had he fallen among lunatics? Why were they all naked?

"Tell him, Samovar, that we have undressed to spite the commanding officer."

"Yes, that's amusing," said the German. "You're good sorts. We are also dead sick of sitting in a manhole!"

The German offered us cigars and asked us for bread.

"We must think of some plan about the dead men and the gunners," he began. "This is a good position and if it were not for the corpses and the gunners we could get on splendidly. The French and German infantry are the right sort, but the gunners are dogs. They fire from a distance, never exposing themselves, you may be sure. The dead men are also a nuisance, they stink so."

"Fritz is right," said Bladder. "If it wasn't for those rotters of artichokes life here would be quite pleasant, since the officers very seldom show themselves."

The German explained that their latrines had been flooded out and they were thinking of digging new ones on sandy ground. The only thing was that the place was unprotected, and what they wanted to know was, would we shoot at them or not when they went to relieve themselves.

The diplomatic conference dealt rapidly with all the questions raised. I communicated to the German a verbal note containing three points. Point one: in view of the fact that dead bodies are making themselves very objectionable and with the advent of summer heat will make themselves still more objectionable: in view also of the fact that the command will not bury them because neither side will ask the consent of the other side: that is to say from purely officerial considerations, and also because ditches full of corpses form an interesting natural obstacle between the opposing forces, which again is required only by the officers—we, soldiers, resolve that we shall fill in the ditches together at night without the knowledge of the command. Point two: let the latrines be built. We shall not fire. On their side the Germans agree not to fire at us when we are sunning ourselves. Point three: re. artillery: on returning behind the lines both sides agree to break the gunners's jaws for them as they are dirty swine and infantrymen have no quarrel with infantrymen.

The German agreed to all three points, gave us each a friendly handshake, and went back to his post.

"Now boys, on with your clothes," commanded Lum Lum.

We dressed hurriedly. What would happen if Fritz were to tell his pals that our post was unprotected and that the men were sitting naked with their rifles out of action? If it entered anyone's head over there to embark on any heroic exploit they would stick us all like a lot of rats.

Our underclothing had dried somewhat and so had our uniforms, but our overcoats were still steaming. After dressing ourselves we began to clean our rifles. But our fears proved unfounded. The Fritzes did not attack.

"They're a decent lot," said Bladder. "That's the sort I like, they're the sort one can get on with."

When the Germans went out with their spades onto the sandy ground and made a new pit we did not shoot. As they left the Germans called out something in a friendly tone and waved their caps.

That evening we began clearing away the corpses. The work was not pleasant, God knows. Our spades were too short. The Germans brought with them improvized hooks and ropes. We raked up the corpses with the hooks and slung the ropes round them, but the putrefied bodies fell to pieces. The work took a long time, but the main thing was that it was carried out, unknown to our officers, and moreover in cooperation with the Fritzes. It gave us great satisfaction to think that we had our own relations with the enemy, the very opposite to those on which our officers counted.

We had called the Germans Fritzes but now we began to feel awkward using that term. Fritz was a nickname. It contained contempt and challenge. We began to use another word which we seemed to be hearing for the first time. It was introduced by the Germans. They called us *"Kamerad."* This word slipped into use quite naturally.

"It's really funny," said Lum Lum one day, "that we should have to meet the enemy before remembering that there is such a word as 'comrade.' The enemy are just the same balmy arses as we are."

"Poor arses," said Bladder. "They also want to go home and hunt fleas on their old women. It's their officers who've planted them in these holes."

A new conception began to form in our minds. We began to have an inkling that there was a third party in the war besides ourselves and the Fritzes.

At the conference of the naked it had been settled that each side, on going behind the lines, would inform the men relieving them of the agreement and would pledge them to maintain the *status quo*.

This was duly observed. We went behind and returned several times, usually finding a different lot in the German trenches, but the arrangement was faithfully adhered to.

It was a hot summer. The sky in these parts is a deep blue. There it was above us, perfectly peaceful, unmolested, as though there were no war.

We dried the rotting straw, warmed ourselves in the sun and cracked lice. No one fired on us. Going over the top was no longer a test of a soldier's courage. But in this life we were worse off than before. The whole point of our being there was gone; there was no longer the only justification of our miseries—hatred of the enemy.

The absence of enmity poisoned our life. We ceased to be soldiers. Lum Lum began to brood and became irritable. When two Germans who paid us a visit told us that the German people were starving, that the army was exhausted and that the men did not know what they were fighing for, Lum Lum burst out.

"I saw a bull fight once, in Orana! Did you ever see a bull fight, man? They send a young bull with large eyes out into the arena. Then they let loose a number of idiots. And these idiots begin to bait the bull until he flies into a fury. And when he has been well worked up they start going at him. Then they kill him and strike heroic attitudes as much as to say: 'We've conquered the enemy.' But what was the enemy? Just a young bull!"

"That's the *corrida*," put in José Ayala, "the *corrida*. The boss pays them for it."

"I know," answered Lum Lum irritably. "The bulls belong to the boss and so do the idiots. Just like us! Like us and the Fritzes. They've let us out into the arena—bulls and idiots—and now they shout: 'At 'em, at 'em, kill your enemy.' They tell *us* that they are the bulls and they tell *them* that we are

the bulls. But as a matter of fact we are both idiots. The boss just pockets the money."

"He's right," said one of the Germans. "The bosses shout Fatherland and grow fat on it. For them patriotism is a faster way of making money."

The conversation somehow did not hold together.

"If only people could stop wanting to make money," said Lum Lum with an effort.

"People always want to make money," said Bladder, "or rather they always want other people to make it for them."

V

We were drinking wine one morning at Zuelma's. The Georgians from the fourth company were celebrating their nineteenth funeral. The Georgians had joined the company as a firmly welded group of twenty-two men. They had held nineteen funerals on different parts of the front from the sea to Alsace. The last, in honor of Luasarp Ninoshvili, who had been killed by a shell the day before, was being celebrated now.

There was a big crowd. The last three Georgians gathered together all the people they could.

Shalva Gamsakurdia went about like a drunken man and said nothing. Luasarp had been his best friend.

Egnate Chubabria, whom the war office clerks had nicknamed Abracadabra, sang a mournful song. Vano Tskhovrebashvili accompanied him on the drum. It was an old English drum. Vano had pulled off the top membrane and made it into a Georgian *doli*. He struck it with three fingers of his right hand and kept time with his head to Egnate's lugubrious air. They both wore long faces and rolled their eyes:

Luasarp was tall and slim
He loved his mother.
All the girls loved Luasarp
And now the brave panther is dead.

Vano laid his head on his right hand and wept. Egnate stopped singing. All were silent. Gaston Bak, ex-soldier of the 63rd Line Regiment, whimpered.

The deaf and dumb Gaston was an invalid and the village idiot.

Gaston had been condemned to be shot at the front. He had been chosen by lot to die at the post. His company had mutinied; they had refused to eat high mutton. The insubordination was reported by the lower commands upwards. The divisional commander ordered the company to be marched in front of a machine-gun. After an appeal he consented to shoot one man from each platoon. The platoon commanders were ordered to produce the culprits. In Gaston's platoon the soldiers drew lots among themselves. The lot fell on Gaston. After three had been shot and Gaston had already had his eyes bandaged a reprieve arrived for him. It had been proved that he had joined the company after the mutiny. Gaston had his eyes unbandaged and his hands freed, but he remained standing at the post. He understood nothing of what had happened. He was sent to his company. On the way he got concussion from a high explosive shell and became deaf and dumb. Since then he had lived at home. Gaston spent his days in the taverns where people stood him drinks and he acted out with gesticulations, grimaces and grunts the scene of the mutiny, the drawing of the lots and the firing party.

Today Gaston contorted himself with particular zeal. He wanted to cheer

up these folk who were feeling melancholy. Suddenly everyone rushed to the window.

Something strange was happening outside. Two lorries passed by with soldiers of the 236th Infantry Regiment. The soldiers were standing upright; they looked wildly excited; they clenched their fists and were singing something out of tune. Over the first lorry a red flag was flying. Some of the soldiers jumped down and attacked the police. They also beat Van de Neest. He cried out that he was not a stool pigeon, only a customs' officer from Belgium. Two Annamites were brought to the ground in blood, with their arms and legs flying. "Down with war! Death to the war mongers!" cried the soldiers.

We were greatly excited. No bombardment or bayonet charge or explosion or air raid had ever made such an impression on us as those cries of "Down with war!" and the lorries with their red flags. We could not have said for how long we were silent. Gaston was the first to break the silence. He danced for joy, he was delighted at the soldiers bowling over the stool pigeons.

Loud voices, singing and shouting could be heard now from the side streets and we were just going to make for that direction when Lum Lum arrived.

Since his quarrel with Zuelma he had never come to see her and he was angry with me for not breaking with her. He had got himself another woman. All the same I suspected that he would be glad of an opportunity to make up with Zuelma.

Lum Lum came in like a thunderstorm.

"Did you see that? The lads of the 236th. Did you see them pass by? Like Niggers off for a wedding! I heard that they lammed the stool pigeons and Annamites, Holy Mother of God!"

"And what are you doing here, old Leg-of-Mutton?" asked Zuelma with affected ill-humor. She too longed to make up with Lum. Lum. She was always asking me what that "idiot," that "cretin" or that "swine" was doing. She was very glad to see him but did not want to show it.

Lum Lum told the story but he was vague about the details. He had been walking along the street and had seen a certain soldier ("it's true, he was a gunner," he said, "but that don't matter") on the steps making a speech saying that only the rich have anything to gain by war; that it does us no good.

Just what I have always said," cried Zuelma.

"You're only a fool, so hold your tongue," answered Lum Lum.

She stopped and cast down her eyes. I realized that their reconciliation had taken place at that very moment.

"In Russia," continued Lum Lum, "the soldiers refuse to fight for the rich. Everything there is being run by a certain civilian. I can't remember his name. I'm damned if I can ever remember those cursed names of yours, Samovar."

"What happened afterwards?" I asked.

"Lorries arrived with boys from the 236th with red flags. You must explain to me afterwards, Samovar, why red flags."

"All right, and what then?"

"The lorries have all driven off. There's not one left now. They took the main road. Only a few men stayed behind to beat up the stool pigeons. The way those customs men's got it in the neck! When you see Van der Waast he'll tell you all about it."

"And then, what then?"

"What then? I want a drink. My insides are rattling like tin cans, I've gone dry."

Zuelma as quick as lightening placed a liter of wine in front of him. He pulled out his mug from his trouser pocket and took a long draught. The Georgian funeral became unexpectedly jovial. Gamsakurdia clapped his hands loudly and uttered a long drawn out "Va-a-ai."

Tskhovrebashvili seized his drum, Egnate started singing a *menakhshiri* and then Shalva went out into the middle of the room. Turning his cap round back to front and holding his right hand up with the palm perpendicular to his chin and his left hand behind his back, he started to dance.

"Vai!" he cried and turned round and round in one place making a sweeping movement with his right hand, sideways and upwards, "Va-ai! Vai-ai!"

Did far Georgia rise before his eyes as he spun round so wildly? Or did he see his friends whom he had lost on the battlefields of France?

"Va-ai!"

Gamsakurdia put his hands into his ammunition pockets and brought out handfuls of cartridges which he started to throw around him with the gesture of one distributing largesse.

"We need no war!" he cried, for some reason in Russian.

His fellow-countrymen burst out laughing.

"Katso!" cried Abracadabra. "What are you doing! Everyone is laughing at you. One could burst one's innards watching you."

But Gamsakurdia was throwing cartridges right and left and shouting the same thing over and over again in Georgian, French and Russian

"We need no war!"

VI

I went outside to find out what had happened to the 236th. I learnt that the regiment had struck for longer leaves. The regiment was stationed at a neighboring village about five kilometers away. The soldiers had seized a number of lorries and were driving through the whole division.

This news was received with general approval at Zuelma's.

"We should certainly have longer leaves! The 236th are quite right," all agreed.

Lum Lum had his own views on the subject and he was so clumsy in expressing them that Zuelma very nearly flew in his face again.

"Leaves?" he said in a surly tone. "Is that all? Is it worth starting a mutiny about that and getting in trouble with the police? If I had known I wouldn't have associated myself with those idiots."

"Who are idiots?" Zuelma flared up. "Husbands who want to see their wives? Fathers of families who want to see their children? Idiots, are they? You think that they are all homeless tramps like yourself and the rest of the rabble in the Legion?"

"You'll pardon me, Messieurs," she explained, hastily turning in our direction, "I'm not talking about people like you, you are not proper Legionaries, you are just fools."

We all laughed and Zuelma calmed down.

"See what a low-down hussy that woman is," laughed Lum Lum. "I say, and I repeat it, that I have no patience with the kind of soldiers who only go on strike for the sake of leaves. Wherever you turn nowadays you hear of mutinies. But when you look closer, what are they worth? In Gaston Bak's company if you please, they mutinied because the food was bad. That's to say if the mutton hadn't been high they would have had nothing to complain about. In the 65th Line Regiment there was a mutiny because the boys

were tired out. They were made to attack twice a week. That is to say if they had been allowed rest for a month in some quiet corner of the front where one rots in the trenches, they would not have rebelled but would have gone into the attack like husbands into their wives' beds. One hears of such mutinies by the dozen. They don't give enough rum and there's a mutiny! Pay is late and there's a mutiny! And these idiots, the 236ths! Give them two days' longer leave and they won't go flying round like lunatics in lorries, won't sing their songs any more or show their red flag or smash in policemen's faces for them? They'll rush over the top as though they were going to a wedding. Isn't it true! My God, what a simple matter it is to carry on a war when the army is made up of such sheep! But I may as well tell you straight out, I'm not having any mutinies of that kind. And I don't count as my soldier friend the man who comes and incites an infantryman to such a mutiny. The first man that tries it, I'll break his neck!"

Lum Lum was sitting facing his audience and Zuelma was filling up his glass with an enamored look. He was getting drunk. His voice got lower and lower and hoarser and hoarser as he spoke.

"I tell you all quite plainly, I've lost the zest for fighting. Formerly when I had to help Fritz into the next world I was glad to do so. It made me feel fitter. But for some time now I have taken no pleasure in it. What I want to know is, if all this is needed, who needs it?"

"True, my little rabbit! True!" cried Zuelma. She spoke right into his ear and the latter started.

"You keep your mouth shut! We'll have a word with you separately," he snapped. "I don't say there's no need to fight. There are people in the world whose guts are not wanted inside them and had much better be let out. But that's not the Fritzes."

"It seems to me," put in Zuelma meekly, "that that is exactly what the soldiers are doing in Russia if you can believe what a certain gunner told me who . . ."

"I don't know what they're doing in Russia, and I'm not interested in your gunners. Pour me some wine and hold your tongue."

VII

I had been sent to H.Q. The day before had been payday and the men had a little cash. As always on such occasions I came back loaded with purchases, chiefly wine.

Some distance from the post, at the last turn, known as "Guts Bend," I heard loud voices from our hole. I quickened my pace and began to distinguish the voice of a stranger.

"I order you to fire!" Then I recognized the voice as that of the battalion commander, Major André. "Fire this minute!"

I was not at all keen on meeting Major André when he was in a rage, especially when I had six flasks of wine on me. A couple of yards away from me there was a hollow hidden by a fallen tree. I threw myself into it.

"Fire this minute!" roared the major.

Lum Lum answered him.

"At the moment they are not fighting, Sir, they are relieving themselves. We cannot shoot."

"Fire," yelled the major.

"Sir, we have made an agreement," continued Lum Lum.

"Will you fire or will you not?" bellowed the major, beside himself with rage.

"Attention," shouted Urcade. "Put on your clothes."

The men began to dress. Urcade looked at me as though noticing me for the first time.

"You're here, are you, you dirty Russian," he shouted. ' It's all your doing. I expect. All Russians are swine!"

"Shut your gob, Urcade," said Lum Lum in a low voice. "This Russian here had nothing to do with it! He's only just arrived back from H.Q."

"Yes, this Russian had nothing to do with it," confirmed the Lieutenant. "Send for stretchers."

The men had put their clothes on. They now stood there, smiling awkwardly. It was not until the wounded had been taken off and Urcade stationed the new picket, ordered one of the sentries to take the rifles belonging to the arrested men and given the command "To the right, quick march!" that they all realized that the irremediable had happened, that death was near and that there was nothing more to be done.

There was a moment when it seemed as though they all gave a slight shiver.

There was something just a little too disconsolate in the glances that passed between them. Someone sighed a little too deeply.

But Lum Lum raised his eyes and began to laugh. Everyone, including the men of the escort and even Urcade, started and drew themselves up as this dirty, lousy, bearded soldier took his place at the head of the file. There in front of this handful of condemned men who had become mutineers as unexpectedly as they had become soldiers, Lum Lum looked like a stubborn fighter, a stern leader.

To the surprise of all the others present and to my own surprise I found myself among the prisoners. We had not far to go. The major ordered us all to be put in an empty dugout. Then there was a lot of 'phoning: and the preparations for the court martial began.

The court martial was to be held on the spot, in the large dugout formerly occupied by machine-gunners.

The soldiers began to crowd round but policemen summoned hastily from the village kept them off.

I lay on some straw right inside the dugout. No one saw me and I seemed to have been forgotten. The others were sitting on the ground at the entrance. They were looking at the light with the hunger of wild beasts and did not speak. I got tired of lying in the darkness and crawled out towards the entrance. Here I was observed by the major as he passed. It was then that he noticed for the first time that I was armed: my rifle seemed to be grafted onto me. I had not myself noticed that I had brought it with me into the condemned cell.

"Who allowed this Russian to be made sentry? Monsieur Reinalle, I suppose. As though we hadn't enough already! Quick march, to Post No 6! Look sharp!"

Although I was exempted from being one of the prisoners I was nevertheless present at the court martial. An interpreter was wanted for Nezametdinov.

There was not much work for the interpreter, however. With a nod of the head Akhmet Nezametdinov acknowledged his name and with a nod of the head answered the question as to his guilt. The others behaved in much the same way. Peppino Antonelli who was brought in on a stretcher did not make any answer—he was practically unconscious. Lum Lum was the only one to speak.

Quite oblivious of the shouts and threats of the presiding officer Lum Lum declared:

"I advise you to shoot me."

"The court martial does not require your advice. You may set your mind at rest. You shall be shot all right, like a mad dog!"

"You speak the truth, Sir. I was an obedient dog. Now I have gone mad! If you do not shoot me I shall go round to all the regiments of the division and even further. I shall tell the soldiers that they mustn't be fools and mutiny for leaves or for mutton or for back pay. This isn't a button factory. We have quite different work to do here. I shall shout out to the soldiers: 'Stop this work. Let the bosses do it themselves! And we shall smash their jaws while they are doing it.' "

"Hold your tongue," yelled the major.

"If you want me to hold my tongue, better shoot me right away. I want to hit out at the real enemy. And when I get hold of him I'll take him by the snout and smash his head in. He hunted me into a putrid hole where I was eaten by lice. He turned down the sun's wick over my head."

The major raged and stamped his feet, but Lum Lum spoke in a clear, confident voice. They were not able to silence him even when, at the end of his speech, he turned to me:

"When it is all over, old man, you tell them all how we lived and how we fought and how at last we were given a dozen bullets each for breakfast because we began to see things as they are."

"Get to hell out of this, will you!" the major shouted at me. "What the blazes are you doing here? Who let you in?"

VIII

The boys were brought out to be shot in the morning, at about ten o'clock. The sun was blazing down. In the village cemetery African soldiers were boiling wash in canteen boilers. There were pairs of pants drying on the crosses. Bronze-colored athletes from Magreb el Aska and black giants from the Sudan and Senegal were lying naked in the sun. All jumped from their places, guessing why the battalion of Legionaries was on parade.

The condemned men marched in single file. Peppino Antonelli was carried in front on a stretcher. Lum Lum followed up the rear. He was calmly looking about him with an air of complete indifference.

The bugles blew the call which according to regulations is due on such occasions to the president of the Republic and the soldier condemned to be shot.

Major André scraped the mud from his boots with the end of his cane.

For a moment the prisoners were hidden from view by a small hill between us and the cemetery.

Suddenly a shell droned through the air. We heard it coming nearer and nearer and then it burst in the cemetery. An arm in the greenish blue sleeve of the Belgian uniform fell close to us. Shouts were heard from the cemetery at the other side of the hill.

The battalion stood where it was. The buglers continued their salute.

A few minutes passed but the prisoners did not appear from behind the hill. Major André sent Urcade to find out what had happened.

Urcade returned reeling. He was white as a sheet, his hands trembled and his teeth chattered.

"A great misfortune, Sir!" he said. "Two have escaped."

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Urcade returned reeling. He was white as a sheet, his hands trembled and his teeth chattered.

"A great misfortune, Sir!" he said. "Two have escaped."

"Where is Blanchare?" shouted the Carrion Crow, beside himself with rage.

"He's g g-got away, Sir, escaped! Two of the police have been blown to bits, two of the prisoners and both stretcher bearers are wounded! Blanchare and Nezametdinov have disappeared."

The battalion commander was overcome with rage. The old soldier, who had seen so much and had been through such dangers in his day and who was usually so slow and so imperturbably silent and deliberate, now screamed like an hysterical woman.

"Run after them! Quick! Surround them! Bring them back!"

The major lost his head. His excitement spread to the other officers and sergeants. They ran aimlessly to and fro while the buglers, forgotten in the commotion, went on blowing, not having been given the order to stop.

We in the ranks held our breath and counted the seconds.

The sergeants ran towards the cemetery. But the escaped prisoners were not there. No one knew anything. All were busy with their wounded. The Sudanese Kami Mussa had had his arm blown off. He lay naked on the ground with bulging eyes. Waving in the air his remaining arm which was black like a burnt log, he shouted in a voice that was not his own.

Some men from the fourth company led up Bladder and Carmensite. Both were wounded in the leg. They had to be tied to the posts. The men who had been sent after the fugitives returned empty handed. The confusion continued.

Bladder went on shouting abuse at the major until the shots were fired.

"You're a swine, you're the son of a swine! Carrion Crow!"

Peppino was shot on the stretcher, which was held up vertically for the purpose.

Everything seemed to be over. We would now march past the bodies and would then be dismissed. But suddenly all eyes turned to the hill. Nezametdinov was being led between two policemen. The buglers blew with redoubled vigor. Nezametdinov's torn uniform and a large bruise under one of the policemen's eyes showed that it had not been easy to catch him. He was walking fast as though he were hurrying to get things over. Entering the execution ground he went straight up to the post planted in the ground at the head of an open grave.

Nezametdinow had fallen, but Lum Lum was not brought up.

"Surely they won't catch him! Surely they won't catch him," we thought with sinking hearts.

"The devil, they'll catch him," said Adrien.

"They'll search the whole division for him."

"They'll set the whole police after him, they'll have the mounted riflemen on their legs, tracking him down."

"They may set them on their heads but they won't catch him."

It was a hot day. It was stifling. It was stifling looking at four corpses and awaiting a fifth. It was stifling waiting to see Lum Lum die.

The sun was in the zenith when we were moved off and the fugitive had not been found. The incensed major did not want to appear in front of his battalion. He turned into a side-street as soon as we had passed the cemetery.

"To be continued in our next," muttered somebody in our ranks.

"If they catch him . . . "

The news that in the Legion a condemned man had escaped from the firing party had spread round the village like lightening.

In the houses, in the taverns, in the soldiers' billets people made wagers

over whether the fugitive would be caught; they tossed up and threw dice furiously.

Mozikazika, a young fellow from the Senegalese unit, struck a huge black finger on the handlebars of his bicycle and said:

"So his way no lead through death. He now live long. He make big calamity for someone now."

By the end of the day Lum Lum had still not been found.

When three days had passed and all efforts to find him were still without result we began to breathe more freely. We thought he must be far away now.

Mozikazika spread out his hands:

"So his way no lead through death!"

About three weeks later a swollen corpse was found in the river. Our whole platoon rushed to identify the body. We were all greatly alarmed. But the dead man turned out to be Van der Waast. The spy had been drowned naked for some reason. Zuelma smiled mysteriously.

And Mosikazika kept on repeating with conviction:

"No, no! Lum Lum way no lead through death. He now live long. He make big calamity for someone now."

Translated by N. Goold-Verschoyle

Manuel Altolaguirre

The Tower of el Carpio

Bird beloved tower, fled are your doves,
Your swallows swift and your martens;
The crows have crowded them out,
And the vultures awaiting carcasses,
Your desecrated nests of peace
Are turned into nests of murder;
Machine-gun beaks spit lead and flame
Into the windows of workers' homes.

In the tower the curate's soft hands,
And the jowls of the fat caciques,
Give the orders, and sprinkle death
Over the workers in the streets.
No one dares come near this church
Which sings with a choir of machine-guns
Whose incense is gunpowder, the church
Which the clergy have turned to an arsenal,
Its bell tower into gun turrets.

Empty is the square; the shunned streets
Leading to the square are empty.
The tower has made a desert.
But the siege goes on. Our militia
Do not flinch; the town will not be
A prey to the perch of vultures.
See, underneath the olive trees
Men swarming, clenched fists raised,—
Fists to the sky that the tower blackens.

Eight men leave the crowd, step forth;
Their hearts are deep in willing death;
Their pockets deep with dynamite,
Eight miners make an offering
Before this church, an offering of their lives
For the humanity this church betrays.

They climb into an open truck.
"Faster," cry these hurriers to their doom;
"Faster," echo back the hollow streets.
The housefronts and the paving stones
Have taken on the hue of shrouds.
Pallid are the eight faces; pallid
The walls beside, as if blanched with awe.
Has there been seen in the world
Sacrifice so stainless, heroism so pure,
Such a proud pacing into death,

As these miners in the open truck
Riding the mortal streets.

The bullets come, and one by one
The miners topple; one by one
Their names stand up, and stand forever
Risen to height of immortality.

The truck arrives
With three alive.
They stand at the root of the tower
That they will soon uproot;
They gaze down the impossible street
That they have passed, and think
Of the impossible return; but not long.

They dig the ground and pierce the walls
Preparing their own sepulchre.
Then peals the thunder from their hands.
And when, among the olive trees,
Triumphant thunder echoes back,
The tower crashes to the earth.

Dull heap of stones and shapeless hill,
Soon as the wonder settles, like the dust,
Becomes a glorious monument.
Dynamite sticks for funeral tapers—
Never was heroes' burial so sublime,—
Never such a funeral salute!

Dull heap of stones and hill of ruin,
Where three brave hearts now lie entombed,
Is far more eloquent
Than any splendid Alcazar.

The tower toppled to the earth
Has strengthened our foundations,
Cemented there with heroes' blood.
Our strength renewed, our ardor fired,—
Millions heed the valorous example.

Thus was El Carpio stormed.
Long live the armed people!

Freely translated by Isidor Schneider and Stephen Williams

Lino Novas Calvo

The Twentieth of July

On the twentieth of July
A thing came forth;
Monster offspring of a whore,
Fathered by Imperialism.

On the third day it was born,
Eyeless, hairless;
A shewolf's fangs on its jaws,
A vulture's claws on its hands,
A polyp's strangling arms,
A spider's trap-spinning belly.

On the twentieth of July
It rose among the mountains
Three days old, yet scarred
And gashed with ancient wounds.
Worms glided in its scars;
The sap it sucked from us
It rendered into venom.

Gnat swarms ringed its head
As it trampled the land
Ravaging, seeking to devour us.
What a red and tasty repast
For Franco Mola Granda
Iniepo Duval Cabanellas
And all their brother bandits.

But now the monster staggers.
Under its feet. under the feet
Of the train of traitors
The ground begins to shake.

Freely translated by Isidor Schneider and Stephen Williams

Ramon Sender

The First Steel Battalion

"Rah, rah, rah!"

One hundred and fifty men, most of them metal workers, many of them Communists, not all of them Spaniards—Guido Paolo, for instance—traveled in four motor-trucks over the road from Villa Alba to Guadarrama.

The sound of their voices drowned the roar of the engines.

"Rah, rah, rah! *Los de acero pasarán!*" [1]

It was the battle cry they had agreed upon on leaving Madrid.

It was a fresh July morning. The First Company of the Steel Battalion (the Fifth Regiment) was climbing to Guadarrama. Beyond Villa Alba, the road stretched through motor-trucks, through a bridge, past a sentry post that still bore the old sign, "Civil Guard," on its planks, into the village of Guadarrama. In front towered the blue crests of the Alto de Leon. Above them rose columns of gray smoke from the burning pine forests. Past Villa Alba the "front" came in sight. From that moment the war encircled them; it charged the fresh morning air and worked into the blood of the fighters.

Bare hands, blue overalls, rifles over their shoulders, hand-grenades hanging from their belts.

"Rah, rah, rah!"

Captain Marquez sat next to the chauffeur in the first truck. The captain calculated the remaining distance. They were entering the range of the fascist artillery. The next section of the road was under fire, which would undoubtedly be concentrated on the bridge. The moment it left Villa Alba the column could be spotted by the fascists' field glasses.

Captain Marquez gazed toward the blue mountains which seemed so close at hand. He thought to himself, "They hold good positions." But his men shouted their battle cry, and hearing it, a confident smile crossed his face. "The enemy's good positions have this advantage for us," he thought. "It will save us searching and digging in when we take them."

"Rah, rah, rah! *Los de acero pasaràn!*"

Three hundred meters ahead, a 15.5 calibre shell burst into the roadside ditch raising a thick cloud of yellow earth and smoke. Those in the second truck suddenly grew silent. A voice shouted:

"They have seen you, Martinez!"

The chauffeur of the first truck slowed down. The captain was thinking automatically with his eyes—in war people learn to think with their eyes. The motors now went unheard in the thunder of the bursting shells. However, the trucks could not be abandoned.

"Faster, comrade!" Marquez curtly ordered.

The chauffeur stepped on the gas. The four trucks crossed the bridge at top speed, one behind the other.

"Hold on, pioneer!"

"Pioneer" was the nickname of the youngest of the militiamen. Another 15.5 calibre shell landed beside them, another behind. The corporal in the second truck brushed the dirt from his shoulder and gazed at the mountain.

Another shell burst, and another. The chauffeurs who kept their eyes glued

[1] The men of steel will pass!

on the ribbon of road and their feet on the accelerators winced at every explosion and gripped the wheel tighter. The trucks had been seen; smoke and earth churned up by the explosion enveloped them and made the eyes of the fighters smart. The battle cry gave way to the song: "The Youthful Guardsmen."

Once they had crossed the bridge, the explosions spat harmlessly behind them. "The Youthful Guardsmen" sounded clearer and louder now, to the staccato accompaniment of the carbureters.

The captain smiled. They were safely past the first zone of fire. They renewed the battle cry, "Rah, rah, rah." Everyone wanted to laugh. But since they could not laugh in chorus, they talked. Guido Paolo turned to Martinez, nudging him with his elbow.

"Do you hear them, old man?"

"Ours must sound better on the other side."

He glanced at the mountains.

"If one of them should land among us."

Paolo shrugged his shoulders. Martinez continued:

"Don't you value your life?"

This time Paolo reacted with animation. He turned his head and muttered over his shoulder:

"I value it like everyone else. For the sake of my life, I risk my life."

A third spoke up. He talked in a mufffed, irritated voice.

"Don't think about it. If they kill us, there is nothing you can do about it." And he added: "Everyone—his own. . . ."

The convoy approached the first houses of Guadarrama. The nearest house was roofless; its front wall had been blown open. The rooms were visible like shelves. A small picture hung on the wall in one room.

Empty trucks stood near the crossing where the roads from Escorial to Cercedilla pass. They met civil guards whose lacquered three-cornered hats had lost their luster. Their trousers were baggy at the knees—for the last several days they had slept in their clothes. Their faces were bloated, and unshaven, and they wore the tense, cruel expression peculiar to the front. Now the Civil Guardsmen looked like "our brothers," one of the Steel Battalion fighters remarked.

"Their social origin," said Lainez, "is the same as ours."

His companion agreed, but nevertheless, he continued to regard the guardsmen with an air of surprise. When Marquez approached, one of the guardsmen saluted him with a raised fist. But a Steel Battalion man muttered: "He doesn't do it like a real proletarian."

The company got out of the trucks and fell into formation; the officers placed them behind the shelter of a ruined wall. The captain went on to staff headquarters. Meanwhile someone renewed the battle cry:

"Rah, rah, rah!"

But he immediately grew silent. Everyone felt a strange presence, but no one knew what it was. It could not be seen, but it could be felt and heard. It was silence. They had noticed it earlier when the roar of the motors ceased. The village extended up the slope. The neat cottages were surrounded by gardens. They had all been holed by shells, and upon everything—on the faces of the civil guardsmen, on the mess of broken telephone wires, on the ruined walls, one felt the possessing silence.

Someone looked around, glanced at the splintered branches of an acacia tree and remarked: "There is not even a sparrow left, eh?"

But no one spoke of the silence, although everyone felt it, for none concret-

ized the feeling. Another shell announced its arrival with a thin whine which ended in a deafening roar. Pretty close, that time! Fragments of tile, crushed stone and grape-shot landed on all sides. A man who had read something of modern tactics remarked: "If they are firing at an invisible target it means they're in a bad way."

Another, who had never read anything but had been through several battles, thought to himself, "Nevertheless, we too are shooting at an invisible target."

An automobile with a tricolor pennant on its radiator drove down the road that led from the main street of the village. The chauffeur made the brakes screech on the curves and then picked up speed again. By now it was threading beween the houses, in the center of the village. It seemed to be traveling in a wilderness. Observing it, one of the fighters asks: "For what distant and unknown country is that car heading?"

"Rah, rah, rah! *Los de acero pasarán!*"

They are metal workers and Communists besides. They belong to the "Fifth Regiment."

"Rah, rah, rah!"

One hundred and fifty men constitute a friendly family. The last "rah" echoes like the thunder of an avalanche.

"What will we do now?" someone asked of nobody in particular.

Three fighters, standing near each other, looked upwards. White clouds sailed through the sky. Now and then they hid the sun. Occasionally the deathly silence was broken by the rat-tat-tat of a machine-gun. One of the guards jokingly remarked: "That's Felipa."

But no one laughed. No one took any notice. When the "rah, rah, rah" again sounded, another guardsman gazed at the "steel brigadiers" first in surprise and then in an effort to smile sympathetically. This battle cry was very appropriate. If the sun were out, if it were as hot as it had been the previous day, it would be better to shout hurrah, but this morning sky was colored with changing hues of lead and mother of pearl, and the cry, "rah, rah, rah" was like the breath of strong fresh wind.

The steel fighters would pass! Where? No one either asked or cared. No one was interested. Somewhere they would pass! The bullets would be thick there; the shells would bite deep into the earth there.

"Los de acero pasarán!"

One of the guardsmen, hearing the thunderous "rah, rah, rah," thought he might also be in the ranks of the Steel Battalion. It would give him a purpose in life. But something beyond his control tied him to the cross roads. This junction did not lead anywhere; it was a goal in itself. That is the sad part about war roads, they lead nowhere. Every step is a terminal point.

The sergeant thought of his children, but drove the thought out of his mind as a sentimentality. He smiled, nevertheless, recalling that although all the other children said "papa," his little son said "paye" which was so cute and gave the kid a grown up air. The bombardment was increasing. Whole batteries went into action. You could hear the heavy field pieces disgorging their shells. You could hear the whine of them overhead. You could see them burrowing into the earth on both sides of the road to Villa Alba near the bridge. Comments passed, none of a serious character. The fighters, who for the most part were under shell fire for the first time, decided that the proper thing to do under the circumstances was to laugh it off.

Shortly before Marquez returned, the enemy brought into action light 7.5 calibre artillery. The rapid fire of these pieces was intended specially for the

"Steel Battalion" and for another battalion, moving towards the mountain over the road from Collado Mediano. Guadarrama and its neighborhood seemed empty. The only people in sight were the civil guardsmen on the crossroads.

Telegrams were shut up in the snarl of broken wires that dangled from the poles. Dirt clogged the slender tubes of a gasoline filling station pump that had been crippled by a shell. All that remained of a sign giving the name of the locality were the two letters ". . . ma."

A solitary militia man was visible in the distance; he was dragging a mule by the halter and trying to lead it into a ruined stable. From the depths of the amphitheater that circled the lovely village, the traitor's cannon calmly chose their target. What target? The deep silence replied to their shots.

When Marquez returned, the column of steel fighters rose and fell in line. "Comrades, to us has fallen the honor. . . ."

He made a short speech, a mere crisp explanation of their task. Our orders are always accompanied by explanations and directions. Everyone knows what he is doing and why he is doing it. "Comrades, the honor. . . ." A little later all you hear is: "Comrades. . . ." But the gestures and intonations supply the rest. And afterwards you hear an additional word. One that is far more expressive. But it is no longer necessary since you already know where you are going. This word has two variants: "breach" and "break." We had to protect the flank through which the enemy was trying to break.

The motionless line moved; it began to climb the mountain. Its course was along the ditch to the right of the road. Before they reached the Preventorio they were greeted by the first machine-gun and rifle bullets which whizzed overhead, breaking the dry branches of the old poplars.

"Rah, rah, rah!"

Not a soul around. The birds had flown several days ago after the first shelling. An ambulance sped past. New field telephones appeared, their black wires seemed polished by the earth. In the intervals between machine-gun volleys, the shell-torn trees and fragments of brick seemed to crouch and tremble. Beyond the hotel, where the main staff was located, we must come into the open. The bullets were still flying overhead. But when they ricocheted, their whistle was like the cry of a wounded fox. Each fighter eyed his comrade and at the same time tried to avoid the latter's gaze, gritting his teeth. Marquez, who walked ahead, the stars of his rank clear on his uniform, the stars of an officer faithful to the government and the people, repeated:

"Comrades. . . ."

No one wanted to hear. Comradeship is already expressed in struggle under fire, in the face of the enemy whom we all knew so well. The explosions seemed to repeat the battle cry of the Steel Battalion: "Rah, rah, rah"—only louder and sharper.

Above loomed Alto de Leon. Someone shouted, "At them!" And this cry was repeated below, on the road: "At them, at them!" Rifle breeches clicked. Eager hands grabbed hand grenades. Here and there shrapnel burst in the air.

"Rah, rah, rah!"

The Hispano-American sanatorium and the road-keeper's cottage were left behind. The detachment turned off the road and vanished among the rocks and hedges. Now every step cost blood. The enemy was invisible. There was steady rifle fire on the right flank as far as Valdelasierra and on the left along the road to Resineros. The silence was at an end, but the voice of the Sierra was not the voice you would expect from mountains covered with pine forests and groves of oak. It was the evil voice of thousands of forges and anvils.

Metal everywhere: in the bullets flying overhead, in the cannon fire, in the nearby buzzing and loud rumble of a mortar.

The Steel Battalion advanced. Marquez, Martinez, the sergeants, and all the officers co-ordinated the movement. But the thunder of lead and steel did not alarm the steel fighters, most of whom were metal workers.

Skinning their knees and scratching their legs among the thorns and brambles, till they bled, they moved ahead. Whither? The crest of Alto de Leon was visible ahead, sharp and clear and seemed to beckon. Thickets of brambles, chasms, bullets, and shells, were in between. What did the fascists look like? I saw a dead one. He resembled a mole. He wore a cross beneath his shirt. What have fascism and Christ in common? Shrapnel exploded on all sides. It hunted us out, bursting in air like a covey of quail. Marquez consulted the officers in the shelter of a ledge. Then came the order: "Keep quiet!" We had to locate the nests of machine-guns and mortars. "Don't advance! Don't move without my orders." On this sector the bullets flew thick and fast, but we did not know where they came from. The command did not know the enemy's position. The command only knew that the sector through which the members of the Steel Battalion had passed was clear. Now they had to find out where the enemy was and what positions they occupied.

An hour later, the enemy's fire diminished. Two corporals crept forward. When we tried to follow them, the fascists took alarm and the shooting was resumed. It made a noise like the buzzing of a swarm of wasps. On the sector of the first platoon an enemy machine-gun fired round after round, as soon as it spotted our fighters. But the battle cry: "Rah, rah, rah!" grew louder. Everyone fancied he heard the voices of his commanders: "Where is the enemy?"

There was only one way of finding out: by seeing them; by advancing where we could see them. As we started forward, two men were killed beside Marquez.

In war death is a simple matter. A thread suddenly snapped. However, we think about death too much. Are we the only ones? Long before us people also thought of death. The whole world thought of death. Who was not afraid of death? Everyone was. Not only the nervous rich and the nuns. Everyone, and yet they all died, whole generations died and nothing happened. Or rather something did happen. Those who knew how to die fighting made life better It is wrong to say that they lost their lives, it is truer to say that life overcame them. Let us go forward, in fighting formation! We will only know where the enemy is when we see him, and we will see him when he sees us. 'Rah, rah, rah! *Los des acero pasaràn!*"

We spent all morning and afternoon under the blaze of the blue sky and the enemy's fire. The First Steel Battalion not only resisted, it attacked. There was no food, but what was still worse, no water. At nightfall the firing ceased. People wandered in the darkness by twos and by threes. One of these groups made a sensational discovery. At night the noises of the field are more distinct. Through the darkness they heard the noise of a brook running over the stones. A spring! One fighter crawled ahead to the right. He soon reached the edge of a ravine. Crawling, he reached the edge of a cliff. Below, fifteen meters down was running water. When the moon came out you could see flashes of silver and crystal.

One of the three fighters began to descend but before he reached the stream a machine-gun sputtered and bullets whistled past. Lower down by the water edge, a corpse lay. The fighter turned back. They had to give up the water. But the excitement they felt was not from thirst.

"I saw a flash! The machine-gun is three meters from the road, on a level with the second pine-tree."

All three gazed in the direction indicated, fingering the hand grenades that hung from their belts. They tried to determine the location of the machine-gun as closely as they could.

"Someone go back to establish contact."

One of the three started to climb back. In a few minutes a shot echoed from behind. The fighter returned. The whites of his eyes flashed in the darkness.

"We're cut off, surrounded."

No one was surprised. No one said anything. In the silence you could hear the stream gurgling below. The worst of it was that the noise of the water reminded them of their thirst. Someone suggested:

"Let one of us climb down for water. If he gets there, well and good, if not they'll start shooting and we'll see where the machine-gun is."

They did not even argue the proposal. The fighter who had tried to climb down before, vanished in the bushes. The machine-gun sputtered. The two others gazed intently in the direction where red symmetrical stars sparkled.

"There it is, there it is," they repeated.

The third returned. He had not reached the spring. He had another suggestion—they should take a shirt, lower it with a rope, dip it into the water and when it was soaking, pull it up and wring out drinks for themselves. There would be water enough for the three of them. Thus they got water. After that they took turns standing watch so that each could sleep a couple of hours. Two immediately dozed off and the third watched the search-lights in the fascist camp on the hill, flashing signals to spies in the rear. "If I had a searchlight and I knew the Morse code," he thought regretfully, "I could give our batteries the location of that nest!"

At dawn the first shells began to land in the neighborhood. For more than half an hour our artillery fired wide. The three members of the Steel Battalion felt like grabbing the passing shells with their hands in order to aim them properly. Their hearts missed a beat after every shot. The whole day passed without their succeeding in establishing contact with their side. In the evening they tried shouting the battle cry:

"Rah, rah, rah!"

The echo come from the nearby ravine. Then they heard an answer in the distance. Judging by the voices, there were not more than fifty men. A stone's throw away, they saw a group of four men, approaching the ravine. Their faces were the color of ploughed earth. Their lips were cracked and parched. The shooting was resumed, the three had only forty cartridges left. They kept under cover, intending to shoot only when they had a sure target. Our artillery renewed its fire and suddenly ceased. At the same time enemy batteries went into action. A squadron of fascist bombers appeared over the crest of Alto de Leon. Behind them, at a great height, were two destroyers. The fascist artillery now directed its fire at the most varied objects in order to signal to the planes where to drop their bombs.

The squadron followed these directions and the mountains shook with explosions. The three members of the Steel Battalion looked on with bated breath. When the squadron was directly overhead, they flung themselves to the earth as though they were a part of the rocks. A shell fell in front of them. The airplane dropped its load. The three fighters were enveloped in smoke and earth. One of them, his senses stunned for the moment, said over and over as though he were drunk:

"Did they hit you? Did they hit you?"

It was like a gramophone record when the needle sticks.
All three were alive and well.
"I can hear those engines inside of me."
"Of course you can, on an empty stomach."
They had eaten nothing in two days. The shirt as a result of being soaked in the spring innumerable times and dried in the sun afterwards had become unnaturally clean. The people on the opposite side of the gully made incomprehensible signs. They shouted something but the three did not hear them. Neither group could hear the other. The night passed in this fashion. At daybreak they had to use their cartridges. The enemy tried to attack them. Someone opened fire on them from a nearby pine tree. The bullet pierced the arm of the fighter who had tried to establish contact. When they located the sniper in the tree—all three were certain it was a priest—they opened fire. They saw how the rifle fell from his hand and how he tottered on the limb and started to fall. His belt was secured to the limb and he hung there with his arms and legs dangling. In the daylight the corpse was still hanging in the same position. The wind ruffled the tops of the pines and the body swayed gently among the green branches.
Hunger and weariness changed the expressions of the three. They were all eyes and ears. Their pulse grew weak, barely perceptible. But the four on the opposite side of the ravine seemed like phantoms. For three days they had not tasted a drop of water. One of them had a shirt in his hands. Why didn't they follow the example of the three?
The fighter who had tried to establish contact, finished bandaging his wounded arm. Blood appeared on the bandage.
"Now I see why our flag is red," he said.
They agreed to climb down after nightfall at all cost. Just then Captain Marquez appeared and shouted:
"When you hear our third cannon shot, you must all climb down."
And he vanished. The neighboring group listened with bulging eyes. They asked them whether they had heard the captain's words, and they answered in the affirmative. Everyone was inwardly pleased that their intentions had coincided with the command. They waited impatiently for the signal. It began to darken.
Fascist planes appeared. Before they could locate our advance posts and our batteries, six of our destroyers flew up from Villa Alba. The bombers turned around and made off at top speed. The three were seized with childish glee. They felt like rushing over to the machine-gun nests, grabbing the enemy by the scruff of their necks, and bellowing in their faces: "Did you see? Did you see how your tri-motored planes ran away from our brave fliers? That isn't fear, is it? It's just politeness, eh?"
The three laughed. They talked until the sun began to set behind Escorial. A red sky with dark clouds covered the mountain. Columns of smoke rose from the burning forest. There was a tang of resin in the air.
When the first three cannon shots rang out, explosions burst before them, two hundred meters ahead. The three tried to scramble to their feet but they felt as though their bodies had turned to lead. They were seized with a racking cough. By now our artillery fire was more accurate and more intense.
When the moon came out the First Steel Battalion fell in outside the hotel where the staff was quartered. Marquez glanced down the line of his men Seven stepped out, including the one who had spotted the machine-gun and three of the group on the opposite side of the gully. The latter had to be restored with cognac and water. They were half dead from thirst.

"Why didn't you lower the shirt to the spring?" they were asked.

The one to whom the question was addressed did not answer. He merely glanced at the other two. There was a mysterious pride in their silence. It suited the deep stillness of Guadarrama. The seven went to the staff headquarters. The officers listened, made entries on open maps and issued orders to the batteries. The commanders asked: "Three days without water?"

The questions were mechanical; the answers were also mechanical. That did not matter. What did matter was that the enemy's position had been ascertained. By comparison blood, thirst and life itself were unimportant. They now knew where the enemy was. The wounded man again asked his comrades:

"Why didn't you soak the shirt in the water?"

The fighter held a shirt done up in a bundle in his hands. He spread it out. At first we could only see blue stripes. When you looked closer, you saw figures, dots and dashes. It was a map and on it were marked almost all the enemy's machine-gun nests. Two light field pieces were also indicated.

"Paolo did that."

"But where is Paolo?"

The fighter made a gesture which all understood.

"But you still had other shirts," the wounded man persisted, pointing to the two other fighters, "why didn't you soak one of them?"

The other fighters explained that each had made a copy of the map on his shirt so that, in case the other two were killed. . . . The wounded man was silent. He squeezed his comrade's hand with such force that fresh blood oozed upon his bandage.

The command decided to begin building fortifications on the sector that very night. Over the dirty shirt, they argued, calculated distances and made decisions.

The First Steel Battalion again formed its line behind the hotel. Marquez came out and ordered them to count off. The last named his number: sixty-three. Where were the others? No one answered. They raised their fists and again—somewhat fainter, came the battle cry:

"Rah, rah, rah!"

These fortifications are our front lines today, four months later. The fascists were unable to move forward a single step, with tanks, grenades, their more powerful artillery and their foreign made planes. Our fighters beat them back.

Glory to the First Steel Battalion! The names of those who fell will forever remain in the hearts of the working people of the world.

Henri Barbusse

Extracts from Letters to his Wife, 1914 to 1917

August 4, 1914

Dear Fifille,

I have just been before the recruiting board which examined me and passed me as fit for service . . . Do you want some news? There is very important news. England has declared war on Germany. The latter seems to have been seized with a kind of madness. She has practically the whole of Europe against her . . . It is impossible for her to win. I think she will ask for peace before she has been crushed. We shall see . . .

January 1, 1915

. . . We leave the trench tonight. What a life! The mud, the earth, the rain! You are soaked in it, colored with it, petrified by it. You find earth everywhere, in your pockets, in your handkerchief, in your clothes, in what you eat . . .

January 11, 1915

. . . Since the beginning of the war, Albi included, this is the first time that I have not written to you every day. For two days—yesterday and the day before—there was really no opportunity, we were so busy in the trenches. What mud, what mire, what marches by night, what thunderbolts! You can well imagine it. I have made notes so as to set it all down in detail later. This I shall do at leisure the next time we have a moment to ourselves. But at present we are in a condition of super-hustle. Scarcely have we lain down to sleep than we have to rise, and scarcely have we risen than we have to march off. What an existence! . . . Without having gone through it one could never imagine what a perfection of discomfort it is.

April 6, 1915

The post has just come, these days mail has begun to arrive regularly which is splendid. No, my little one, I am not neurasthenic and there is no fear that I ever shall be. But I must say that the general mood is one of depression rather than otherwise and cant holds tyrannous sway in our cantonment. The men who have been mobilized since the beginning of August have had enough of it . . .

April 7, 1915

We rose at four in the morning. It was raining hard and there was a strong wind. For that matter all yesterday evening (after a sunny day) there was wind and rain. We got ready for a march but after twenty minutes falling in there was a counter-command. You will say that this counter-command, which was bound to come, might have been produced the night before and we might thus have been saved getting up at such an unearthly hour and been spared a morning wetting. But this would not have been military and there is no record of an exercise or a march having being stopped on account of the rain—until the men have first fallen in and got thoroughly wet. You cannot imagine the incoherence, the disorder and the inefficiency which from big things to small things and from small to big, reign over our life here. It is utterly idiotic.

April 18, 1915

... It is over: the big route march with full equipment. We shouldered our packs and walked along the road till midnight. It was a matter of twenty kilometers well loaded. Some even assert that it was twenty "rubber" kilometers, which means that one must count twenty-two at the very least. However, we arrived at our new quarters in good form. I stood it very well and could quite easily have gone on marching all night...

We are in a village S...[1] the name of which would not convey much to you. It is like any other village: a vague re-edition of farms, enclosures and barns. It is in one of the latter that we have our quarters. It is somewhat liberally ventilated but it is all the better for that and thanks to my sleeping bag I slept in warmth and comfort...

During the day I was called and offered the rank of corporal. For the fourth or fifth time I declined this offer. I have no hankering after the job of corporal nor for braid, in general. My old ideas make me prefer to stay in the ranks and they have not fundamentally altered since the war.

The proposal after the battle of Crouy, to have me cited in despatches or made a soldier of the first class, has returned upon the waters... I should have preferred being cited, but as you can imagine I did not raise my little finger to bring this matter forward or to make it go the way that suited me best. I shall never ask for anything and I carefully avoid mixing with the officers. I only asked for one thing. I was assigned, on account of my class, to a territorial regiment in the rear but I asked to be allowed to remain with the 231st and at the front. This original request greatly impressed the Poilus of the company. I believe in the necessity for sacrifice in a war which is a war of social liberation like that of 1792. But when it comes to exercises, parades and painful effort to no end and other stupidities I kick harder than they do.

April 22, 1915

You cannot imagine, my little one, how moved and delighted I was to hear that you had been to Aumont. Not only because it is almost half way between here and Paris but also because the country here and your country are as like as two sisters; the gardens, the apple trees, the enclosures, the ends of the houses abutting the fields, the wooden gates and even the houses themselves are similar to what they are in those parts just as the violets and moon daisies which you send me (and which I return so that they shall not be lost or destroyed any more than your letters) are identical with those which grow in the woods by a stream which flows close to our encampment. And the spring is also the same and gives rise to the same ideas. It seems in fact as if that monstrous and above all that stupid business which is war could not be, as if there could be no battles, for viewed from a little way off a battle must appear as it really is—one huge army committing suicide. And yet it goes on: you hear the guns and the rifles and so can we, a little better than you can, although we are not actually in the furnace.

April 24, 1915

... Lord Asquith's speeches at Newcastle have opened out new horizons for me. I do not believe that England will provide her three million men but she will send quantities of guns and ammunition instead, which will come to the same thing. It is easier and more agreeable for her to supply money and

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[1] Serches.

materials than volunteers. It does not matter much as long as the result is the same.

May 16, 1915

... We spent all yesterday and today extricating and burying the dead with which the captured trenches are filled. What scenes, my child! Really, one cannot form an adequate idea of the horror of wholesale massacre except on a batlefield like this. It is four kilometers long and is intersected in the middle of green meadows and ploughed fields by five lines of trenches. They were captured in two hours by the front line troops who made their attack some days ago. It was the Algerian and Senegal rifles. These troops after the 75's had bombarded and wrecked the trenches and blown up the barbed wire and the pickets, took these four kilometers at the run, and jumping over the trenches, whose occupants they massacred as they went, rushed on at headlong speed to the next trench. The Germans, who were killed in their holes, and in some places lie in heaps, are contorted in supplication and terror. One feels that everything was shattered by this unprecedented charge which won for us this vast territory extending as far as the eye can see. Very few of the attackers were killed owing to the lightening speed of their advance. A few magnificent Negroes, a few "bicots" with faces full of youth and energy, were stretched out in the barbed wire entanglements in those places where the latter had been torn up by the artillery and where the men had had to cut their way through them as they went. There are practically none in the open field.

The battlefield is pitted with huge shell holes. At every step one comes across pieces of shell, large and small. In places, haversacks, arms, articles which have fallen out of torn haversacks: a shirt, a handkerchief, an Algerian fez, a beret (there are also a small number of young Alpine soldiers and infantrymen among the black troops). In the trenches there is the most extraordinary confusion, a chaos of arms, cartridges, grenades, rockets and equipment mixed with corpses. The trenches themselves have no longer the shape of trenches, they are filled up, dented, undermined, they are earthy ruins which, however, still show vestiges of a very high degree of order: there are well constructed dugouts full of empty bottles and tinned meat containers, loopholes with safety devices, bullet screens, reserves of ammunition, electric bells, etc. . . . We have found letters from women to their friends: complaints about the length of the war, hardships, etc., family photographs, a lot of fair haired children, military notes, German newspapers giving news which does not tally exactly with what is given in ours and a great profusion of religious tracts and books containing "war prayers" ...

May 26, 1915

... The village where we are at present and of which the Germans still hold a corner is no longer a village. It is an absolutely inconceivable salad of bricks and beams and tree trunks, telegraph poles, steel wire, kitchen stoves in fragments, bits of furniture, old straw and muck. It seems as though an immense hand had been laid upon the place with the intention of crumbling everything to bits and mixing it all up . . . What a sight the houses present, Bou Diou! Poor trampled toys! In one corner there are some piled up sacks, bowls, milk cans, mostly broken and perforated with bullets, the remains of German cigarette boxes and matches with the inscription "Den Deutschen Kriegern." On the white wall there is written in a copper-plate hand "Briefkasten, 1 Komp." . . . There are some drawings on the walls: the German soldier, the French soldier. They are not caricatures. The artist took pains, and the Frenchman's moustache is drawn with a light touch. Behind

the house the bric-à-brac and confusion is still worse. Further on there is smiling and verdant country. At a distance of two hundred meters one sees a church, or rather, all that is left of it. The shells have scooped out and filed the steeple down to two slender columns of stone. It is here and in the churchyard at its foot that the Boches are still crouching. They have installed themselves with large numbers of machine-guns in the vaults and the graves which they have reopened for the purpose, and it is impossible to make an attack, for as soon as we leave our trenches fifty meters away, bang, bang, bang, the "coffee mill" spits out streams of bullets. Our people have succeeded in mounting a seventy-five on a ridge close by at a height of two hundred meters and we expect good work from it. We also have some bomb throwers which hurl vaned high explosive bombs which can turn a house inside out like a glove, cellars and all. If these can be brought up we shall unearth the Germans from the churchyard. It has also been suggested that we blow them up with a mine. But we must wait (the old refrain) and while we wait we can contemplate through one of the numerous apertures above us, the lacework of roof laths across the tangled ceiling joists—and imagine to ourselves the faces of the worthy inhabitants of this village when they return to see their rooms flattened and littered with debris, holed and deformed and illumined so brightly by the light of day.

June 20, 1915

. . . Bou Diou, what a lot of congratulations, my dear! But there is nothing to make such a stir about, I assure you. The incident in question was quite an ordinary one and it did not take place by any means under conditions of exceptional courage or contempt for danger. I have often risked just as much when doing obscure (doubly obscure on account of the darkness) fatigue duty at night. And anyway the reason I was cited was quite different. It was chiefly due to the fact that on a former occasion, on the Aisne, I rallied the comrades of my section under fire during an advance. I would have preferred, indeed, that this motive should have been brought out in the official paper but actually in order that the matter should be more up-to-date it has been sacrificed to the affair with the wounded which dates from our new sector. The mission accomplished in the street of Crouy under machine-gun fire had something to do with it, of course, but, as I told you, I had already been made a soldier of the first class on that account. I shall be given the Croix de Guerre as soon as there are a sufficient quantity. . . . All this is very nice, but one should not attach more importance to it than is due. Those who have done some brilliant exploit which chances to be useful, have not the same merit as those who, since the campaign began, have carried out without fail the enormous, overwhelming and terrible labor of a simple soldier. They, believe me, are really the most magnificent heroes, for I know what misery and suffering, what sacrifice and genuine self-abnegation this pure and simple work involves. And the more so since this interminable output of heroism is accomplished for causes which I continue to find vague and detached from our innermost lives, and which, when all is said and done, seem to me to be contrary to our human destiny. . .

June 20, 1915

I am no longer with my ex-company which is posted in the front line from tonight onwards but behind this line at the first aid station. The sight of the wounded and the dead, this whole charnel house of the war. is terrible.

. . . All along the wall of the second line trench in which I write, uncomfortably seated on an earthen bench and obliged to move every moment to let

people pass, there are small one-man recesses. In some of them there are sleeping men, overcome with fatigue and sleeping soundly. In another we have realized that the man stretched out under a tent cloth with his legs sticking out is a corpse. Another hole has been recently filled up and this is a grave, the grave of an African rifleman. At the top of the slope one sees a cross. If one risks looking over there one sees a body which has not been buried yet lying on its tentcloth shroud at the place where it will be buried hastily by night on this field where there are certainly more scraps of shrapnel than blades of grass. War is something of whose horror one cannot form a conception unless one has seen it. That is why no others besides us must ever have to go through it again.

July 13, 1915

. . . Gustave Téry has asked me for some sketches (to be paid for) for a daily paper he is starting and from Nouvion an article (to be paid for also) for *Le Monde Illustré*. If I have time I shall see about this.

January 26, 1916

. . . I have just seen the issue of *L'Oeuvre* which refers to my having been mentioned in despatches. *L'Oeuvre* is very well disposed towards me and, I repeat it, I base hopes of a practical kind on their friendly attitude. Very good, the letter from a Poilu. I have a small paragraph of the kind in my notes; there is even a curious resemblance in the sentence about the *bobards* on the Kaiser and the Crown Prince, etc. That is the same thing as saying that I approve this article, as indeed is the case with most of the articles in this magazine. The critical side of *L'Oeuvre* I like very much, except where Socialists are concerned, for it is in them that I see—mathematically, inexorably—the only possible recourse against a future war. All the rest is a chimera. That I believe.

But at the moment my first thought is to make use of the leisure which I have at present and which I shall not have later on (the leave season will double each man's work for two months) to gather up scraps of writing, file and classify my work so as to bring it out later under the best possible condition. It is "heavyish work" as a good pal of mine in the 8th used to say, who had been a scavenger at Villemomble. So far I have only drafted and marked; I lack complete subjects and yet I am beginning to be overwhelmed with paper. I no longer know where to stow it all. Afterwards I shall turn to the question of selecting and adapting to certain periodicals; but as it is I shall have something to work on and I shall be in a good position to get down to business and plan things out, having a substantial manuscript ready at my disposal . . .

March 19, 1916

My book on the war is nothing new. Oh no! Its aim is to describe a squad of soldiers through all the ups and downs of the campaign. But it is by no means easy to make a good job of it. I copy out passages and glean all I can from my work of secretary,[1] for my work as novelist—but not very much comes of it for at the moment my job is "heavyish work" as an old fellow of the 8th Territorial used to say. As you see my letters are not long which means that I sacrifice everything to producing something as good as possible and as soon as possible.

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[1] Helping with the secretarial work when behind the lines.—*Translator.*

April 14, 1916

...If only I could inspire you with something of the calm with which I watch events unfold when there is no longer any way to alter their course. And then there is an idea which is coming more and more to take anchor in my mind and that is that there are certainly too many men who, in their folly, have desired and prepared for the present war and that my contemporaries—you know what a poor opinion I have of them—have done everything in their power to make all that has happened happen. When people come to us and say it was Germany that attacked they are quite right. But when they add that we were little saints who honored and practiced pacifism and who never—God forbid!—had any ideas of vengeance or military triumph and that we never committed the smallest act of hostility or provocation against Germany—one "starts dusting the wardrobe" as they say here. The present crisis is the inevitable and fatal fruit of national vainglory and everyone must take their share of responsibility for it. I say further that after a certain time—in ten or twenty years—it will be followed by another war which will make the old world bankrupt in men and money—unless from now on the peoples who are being led to the slaughter make the simple and logical resolution to hold out their hands to one another, above the prejudices of tradition and race, in spite of the desires of governments, and above all the stupidities of bellicose pride and military glory and the dishonest financial calculations of the nations that are resolved to prosper by preventing, by force and brigandage, the expansion of their neighbor. But we see and I see on all sides the immense effort that is being made, despite the sacred union, to put a brake on or utterly annihilate the efforts of Socialism—which is nevertheless the only political doctrine which has, from the international point of view, I do not say only a glimmer of humanity but even a glimmer of common sense. I see also what very little fruit is borne by the terrible lesson and this disgusts me a little and makes me suffer less from this common suffering which would not exist if everyone had been as I am; and that is why one should not be so bitter about things!!

August 3, 1916

I am greatly perplexed. I see in *L'Oeuvre* which I have received that *Le Feu* is starting to appear today (I have yesterday's issue)—and in your letter of the day before yesterday, the first of August, you say nothing about the proofs! I see that they are going to start before having my corrections—and yours, have they got them? I am quite at a loss to understand what is happening and it is most irritating.

Post... The enclosed letter from Hue completes my perplexity. Go and see Hue and mind he does not lay violent hands on "L'Espion," it would be absurd, as there is a change of scene for this chapter (sandwiched into the proofs of Chapter I and which ought to be detached and come at the end of the novel, after Chapter II because it is Chapter III). It would be most annoying if this were to appear without corrections. There are some nasty mistakes.

The announcement in *L'Oeuvre* makes me hope that you got into touch with them the day before yesterday, during the day. Send a line to reassure me...

October 13, 1916

I hip-hip-hurray with you especially as: 1) I got two letters from you today, 2) I see that the whole passage about Bertrand has gone in as it stands. I can't get over it. The people round me can't get over it either. The passage has made a great impression on my comrades here who always ask for the

paper to read after I have read it: "Good for you, old man, you don't beat about the bush, you say things straight out." They also think that I am right in my view that the substitution of a humanitarian and liberal ideal for a narrow and inept Déroulédism[1] can only help the soldier to carry out his terrible duty. It is curious how all the soldiers among whom I have been for two years have always been readily influenced by the truth which I have explained to them! I am coming to believe more and more that the time has now come to speak out and to speak with a loud voice.

I don't think there are any more obstacles until the last chapter. The story about the aviator and the trend of public opinion against God is much less subversive than such passages as those which I am still staggered to see as large as life in today's copy . . . But that proves nothing after all, and it may well be that they hold up ants at the customs barrier of the Rue Francois I-er after letting elephants through . . .

October 26, 1916

You dear little ruffled and indignant person, you are quite right, all that is not important and all the bothers to which *L'Oeuvre* has given rise are not as big as houses, but then no one said they were.

One cannot help kicking when one sees suppressed passages following on excisions and the whole middle part of a chapter like *le Poste de Secours*[2] torn out by an ignorant and ill-intentioned surgeon, but that does not mean that I am not pleased about the rest. The series of articles seems to be going well as far as the public are concerned and a striking and positive proof of its success is Téry's offer which I forwarded to you yesterday, but all the same the success in question has not been due to *L'Oeuvre* which, by its personal suppressions and also—I might even say, above all—by its ill-chosen and mawkish substitutions of detail—has diminished the quality and the import of the series . . .

I shall arrive in Paris approximately for the *bouclaison*. That will be great. I shall see Téry and if he still persists in wanting to publish *Le Feu* in spite of his conclusions I shall probably go ahead with it owing to the very particular publicity that this combination will give to the book. But I shall make it quite clear that as the value of the book depends, in my opinion, more on its tendencies than on its documentation it is the former which should be stressed in offering it to the public.

. . . Peyrebrune's letter is very encouraging. I am greatly impresesd by the eulogies which *Le Feu* has called forth owing to the importance which this book may have in the battle of ideas. I was not so ambitious when I began writing: but I have been lucky in having leisure and aptitude and this has enabled me to unify my work and to give it body. I am more pleased about this than anything. It makes me very happy when I see, as in yesterday's installment containing the last part of *La Virée*[3] the exact exposition of my idea published and broadcast in I don't know how many thousand copies. I feel that it is something serious and important and if they put in the last chapter these are good times for me. But it is just because of this satisfaction, this emotion, that I feel very acutely the attenuations which a state of mind

[1] Déroulède, French poet and politician, born 1846, author of *Songs of a Soldier.—Translator.*

[2] In the English translation *(Under Fire) The Refuge.—Translator.*

[3] In the English translation *Going About.—Translator.*

hostile to my ideas has brought about in making futile changes in the mode of expression which rob the whole of its interest and purport, and by deliberately cutting out whole passages. I admit that I thought it would be worse, but that is not a good enough reason to let them do it without complaining.

Imagine! The "others" do not omit to multiply their polemics and their stupid theories. I am sending you a passage from the *Revue Hebmodaire* containing an article by Henri Bordeaux, a well-known catholic writer and a future academician, about that imbecile, Paul Acker. When I read that kind of thing I am put into a particularly bellicose mood: I feel that people do not fight enough against evil, that I do not do so enough myself and I am right.

I talk a lot with soldiers here. For all the patients are real soldiers, most of them have been wounded and sent back to the front, some of them several times. I do propaganda work, I admit. It gives me great joy to discover how much all that I say about the international—that great scheme for bringing all great moral ideas to a focus by sweeping away all obstacles presented by routine, preconceived ideas and idols—are echoed by these people who, like those in *Le Feu,* have fought the Great War with their hands and are the proletarians of the battlefields. And I also feel this higher satisfaction when I consider that I have said everything in my last chapter and that I have shown the present situation and the task for the future in such a way that it seems to me that I have not left a single point in the shadow. Sometimes in the course of conversation I happen to quote passages from *l'Aube,* [1] which come naturally to my lips when I am talking of the things about which I have thought so much all my life, and the soldiers listen, believe, and say: "It's quite true, all the same," and this, coming as it does from them, is not an empty phrase. I think we'll have to leave the title *Le Feu.* To change it would be to lose, too wantonly, the advantage gained by the effect so far produced. Moreover I am beginning to like that title. It indicates the gravity of the scourge from which the world is suffering: fire [2] has spread over the earth. What do you say about it?

February 12, 1917

... I've had a good post. To begin with a letter from the Société des Gens de Lettres asks me to let them have *Le Feu* for a Swiss magazine that wants to reprint it. Nothing to complain about that! The other letter is from Raymond Lefebvre who sends good news about the progress of our great international review; he has spoken about it to Anatole France who is taking an interest in it, giving his name, etc. ... France spoke to him about me and said: "*Le Feu* is one of the finest books in French literature." According to him it excels Hugo and Zola in the epic *genre*! What will people be saying next!

February 26, 1917

... At the moment I am overwhelmed with work. I never cease writing. I not only have numerous short pieces but also some big things; the manifesto of intellectuals which Raymond Lefebvre is coming to fetch tomorrow and which is important and difficult to word. ...

February 27, 1917 (postcard)

... Ouf! I have given birth to the great manifesto of the intellectuals of the world! I have just copied it out. It is a little grandiloquent and oratorical,

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[1] *Dawn,* the last chapter of *Le Feu (Under Fire).—Translator.*

[2] The literal translation of the title of the book would be "Fire".

but that kind of document has to be, hasn't it? I am passionately interested in this business. Raymond Lefebvre is due to come and see me this afternoon I am waiting for him. . . .

February 27, 1917 (Evening)

. . . I saw Raymond Lefebvre and his friend Vaillant-Couturier today. We spoke about the review. I gave them the manifesto. They will have it typed and then we shall collect the most important signatures. I shall have to start making plans for organizing the Paris office and putting it on its feet. You will soon have news of it all.

28th, Morning

What a quantity of letters! They pour in faster and faster! *Le Feu* is taking everywhere. The conflagration is general. Things are going spendidly. Another Russian translator has come forward. I have been sent articles from *Le Radical,* from *La Griffe*, from the *Grande Revue* (where Ernest Charles is redeeming his *Carnet de la Semaine*), from a front line magazine, from the *Populaire* (a series of four articles of which two have appeared), and from an English magazine. It appears that there have been some polemics between the *Dépêche de Toulouse* and a Brest periodical: the latter having said that *Le Feu* is not a book giving the truth but a book with a bias, the *Dépêche* replies by publishing a letter from a Poilu. . . .

August 17, 1917

Fischers tell me that they have received a Spanish translation of *Le Feu*: *el fuego en las trancheras,* and an offer for a translation of *L'Enfer.*

I have received the translation of the article in the *Frankfurter Zeitung.* It mentions Caillaux and *Le Pays* "to which well-known writers contribute, notably the novelist Barbusse whose last book *Le Feu* has caused a furore in France, not because it was honored by the Goncourt Academy but because it was written in the trenches and shows the soldier just as he is, his labors, his sufferings and his thoughts. This work on which the nationalist press has poured forth its abuse has reached its tenth thousand." The newspaper goes on to say that "although marked out by my work to be the mouthpiece of the soldiers I have not written for the *Pays* revolutionary articles opposing the action of the government, but only an article of a more or less anodyne nature." I don't quite know what this newspaper from the other side of the Rhine is driving at.

My scheme of a "What are you fighting for?" pamphlet has been set going. But I repeat one must not allow oneself to be intimidated by the imbecile and dishonest yells of Hervé and Maurras. At the moment they are to a certain extent at an advantage on account of the scandals about *Le Bonnet Rouge* and *La Tranchée,* but let us wait to the end. . . . I am well repaid by knowing how monstrously this whole band of jesuits distort things for their purposes.

As for myself I am not in the least troubled, I assure you, by what people say or think about me, and things of this kind do not disturb my meditations over my next novel. There was a moment in my life—when *L'Enfer* knocked on the head my recommendation for the cross—when I was surrounded by a mysterious and black sense of reprobation. I do not feel the effects of it any more now. Besides, as Virgil says in Chapter VII of the *Aeneid: uno avulso non deficit alter;* for a periodical compromised by the conduct of a gentleman with a double face there will be ten new ones tomorrow and nothing will be able to stop the forward march for which, in a small way, I am a little responsible.

Translated from the French by N. Goold-Verschoyle

Roger Martin du Gard

The Family Thibault [1]

Vol. III. Summer 1914

"Let's go along," Jacques had said to Jenny.

A dozen of them had met at the Café du Croissant, from there to go in a body to Montrouge, where Max Bastien was scheduled to speak.

That evening the Socialist sections were holding meetings in all the districts—at Grenelle, at Vaugirard, at Batignolles, at Villette. At Belleville where Vaillant had declared that he would take the floor, they expected trouble. In the Latin Quarter the students had organized a meeting at the Salle Bullier.

They took the bus as far as Châtelet, and the tram from there to the Porte d'Orleans where they changed to another tram which took them to the Place de l'Eglise. Here they had to get out and proceed on foot through crowded streets to the empty theater where the meeting was being held.

It was a sultry evening. An evil smell overhung the suburbs. The entire population was out of doors idling after supper. The shouts of the newsboys echoed down the avenues.

Jenny felt rather shaky. She was tired. The weight of her crepe veil, the smell of dye that issued from it in the heat gave her a touch of headache. She felt out of place in her mourning among these men, most of whom were in their work clothes. Instinctively she had taken off her gloves.

Jacques, walking beside her, noticed that it was hard for her to keep up but he hesitated to offer her his arm. He called her comrade before his friends. Now and then he gave her a look of encouragement, while he chatted with Stefany about the news in *l'Humanité*.

Stefany based his optimism on working class agitation which, according to him, was on the increase. There were more and more public protests. There had been the demonstrations by the Socialist Party, the Socialist parliamentary fraction, the Confederation of Labor, the Federation of the Seine, the Bureau of Freethinkers.

"Everywhere the people are aroused; everywhere the workers are in a militant mood," he said, and a gleam of hope brightened his eyes.

An Irish Socialist, returned from Westphalia, who ate at the Croissant, had told him that a big pacifist demonstration was scheduled that very evening, in Essen, the heart of the German steel industry, where Krupp's munition plants were located. The Irishman even claimed that among themselves many workers had advocated sabotage as a way to stop the war plans of the imperial government.

During the afternoon, however, there had been a serious scare. A rumor from Germany had made the rounds of the editorial rooms. It was said that the kaiser, demanding an explanation from Sazonov regarding Russian mobilization, and receiving the answer that this mobilization was only partial but could not be discontinued, had issued mobilization orders. For two hours they had actually thought all was lost. Finally the German Embassy had denied the rumor, in terms so official that it seemed quite definite that the rumor was false. It was discovered that the report had been launched in Berlin by the *Lokalanzeiger,* the whole being a counterpart, on the other side of the

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[1] See note on page 108.

border, of the incident of the *Paris-Midi.* These periodic alarms kept public opinion in a state of dangerous feverishness. Jaurès feared such panic more than political mistakes. He never stopped repeating that the duty of every group, of every household, was to fight these vague fears which delivered people's minds to the obsession of legitimate defence and did the work of the enemies of peace.

"Have you seen him since his return?"

"Yes, I have come from two hours work with him."

As soon as the Chief got back from Belgium, even before reporting to the Socialist parliamentary group on the results of the Brussels conference, he had gathered together the staff to talk over preparations for the international congress which was to convene in Paris on August 9. The French Party had ten days in which to assure the success of this important gathering of European Socialism. There was not an hour to be lost.

His presence had re-energized the people on *l'Humanité.* He had been much encouraged by the firm position of the German Socialists, reassured by the promises he had received from them and was full of new enthusiasm to push the fight. He was angered by the attitude of the government regarding the affair at the Salle Wagram. He had made up his mind to resist the authorities and give the defenders of peace an opportunity for a brilliant comeback by organizing a huge protest meeting on the following Sunday, August 2.

"Buck up," Jacques said, patting Jenny's arm. "We're there."

She saw a group of policemen crouched in the entry way. Some young people were selling *la Bataille Syndicaliste* and *le Libertaire.*

They turned into a blind alley where men were standing around arguing, instead of entering the theater, although the meeting had started. The hall was full.

With Jenny on his arm he pushed his way in.

"Did you come to hear Bastian?" a man on his way out inquired of Jacques. "They say he's been detained at the Federation, and won't come."

In his disappointment Jasques felt like turning around and going away, but Jenny was unwilling to leave immediately. Without worrying about his friends he piloted the young girl to the front row where he had spied two empty seats.

The secretary of the section a man by the name of Lefaur, presided; he sat on the stage at a small metal table, like those kept in gardens.

The speaker, standing behind the footlights, was a municipal councillor of the district. He repeated several times that war was an anachronism.

People chatted with their neighbors without listening.

"Silence!" The chairman exploded at intervals, banging the iron table with the flat of his hand.

"Take a good look at the faces," Jacques said in a low voice. "One can almost pick out the revolutionaries by their features. You see it in the set of their jaws; you see it in their eyes."

"He too," Jenny thought to herself, as she examined Jacque's face; noted his prominent and strong willed chin, the liveliness of his rather hard features, which were concentrated into an expression energetic and intelligent.

"Are you going to take the floor?" she whispered timidly. She had kept asking herself the question all through the trip. She hoped he would speak so she could see him at his best; but she was also a little apprehensive.

"I think not," he answered and he slipped his hand under her arm. "I am not much of an orator. The few times I've had to speak in public I've always

been hampered by the feeling that the words were tripping me up; they did not have the meaning, when spoken, that they had in my mind."

There was nothing she enjoyed more than listening to him analyzing himself for her benefit; although she usually felt that she already knew what he told her. As he spoke she felt the warmth of his hand on her elbow, through the material of her dress; the soft warmth reached through her body, and she could think of nothing else.

"Do you understand," he continued, "I always have a sort of feeling that I am lying, that I am asserting more than I believe. It's an unbearable feeling."

This was correct; but it was also true that when he started speaking he experienced a heady drunkenness, and he almost always managed to set up a direct communion between himself and his audience.

Another functionary, a big fuzzy-necked man, had replaced the municipal councillor on the platform. With his very first words his deep voice had captured everyone's attention. But he flung at them a series of peremptory formulae without continuity.

"Power is in the hands of the people's exploiters! . . . Universal suffrage is a sinister farce! . . . The worker is the slave of industrial feudalism! . . . The policy of the capitalist munition makers has heaped powder kegs under the floor of Europe, ready to explode! . . . People, will you allow yourselves to be skinned alive in order to provide dividends for the directors of Creusot? . . ."

Tame applause automatically punctuated his brief, panting assertions. He was used to ovations. After each period he paused expectantly, and stood for a moment with his mouth open, as though he had swallowed a beetle.

Jacques leaned towards the girl:

"It's idiotic . . . That's not what we ought to tell them . . . We must convince them of their own strength! They know it vaguely, but they do not feel it! They should be taught by direct, decisive action. That is why it is so important for the proletariat to win this time! Once it has seen from experience that by its own efforts it can place an insurmountable obstacle in the path of aggression, and force governments to back down, it will know its true strength, it will realize its power. And on that day . . ."

Meanwhile the audience had begun to weary of the speaker's formulae. A private discussion in a corner of the theater swelled into noisy argument.

"Silence!" yelled the secretary Lefaur. "Instructions of the Central Committee . . . Party discipline . . . Keep quiet, citizens ! . ."

He was obviously terrified by any disturbance that might result in police interference, and his one desire was that the meeting should go off smoothly.

Silence was immediately restored when the third orator, the last who was scheduled for the evening, walked to the footlights. It was Levy Mas, professor of history at Lakanal, noted for his Socialist writings and his rows with the university administration. He proceeded to retrace Franco-German relations since 1870. He presented the subject with quite a display of erudition and twenty-five minutes after he had started his lecture he had barely reached the Serajevo assassination. He spoke of "brave little Serbia," in a throaty voice that shook his spectacles astride his pointed nose. Then he launched on a parallel between the groups of alliances, between the Austro-German treaties and the Franco-Russian treaties. The much-enduring audience grew restless.

"Enough! Get down to facts!"

"How about a program of action!"

"What shall we do? How are we to prevent war?"

"Silence," Lefaur repeated, growing more and more uneasy.

"It's disgusting!" Jacques whispered in Jenny's ear. "All these people came here to get simple, clear and practical guidance and they are to be sent home with their heads stuffed with the history of diplomacy and the impression that it is all too complicatd for them, and that there is nothing to do but await the inevitable!"

The interruptions increased:

"Where does he stand? Where is he leading us?"

"We want to know the truth!"

"Yes! The truth!"

"The truth, citizens?" Levy Mas cried, facing the tempest. "The truth is that France is a peaceful nation, that it has furnished splendid proof of this for two weeks, to the confusion of all the imperialist states! Our government, which is open to criticism as regards its internal policy, is faced with a difficult task. The duty of the Socialist Party is not to complicate this task. Of course we refuse to subscribe to the nationalist demands which the bourgeoisie has written into its program, but, and we must say this aloud, we must proclaim it to the world, no Frenchman will refuse to defend his territory against a new foreign invasion!"

Jacques was seething.

"Do you hear him?" he said, and he again leaned toward Jenny. "Nothing could better prepare the people for war! . . . Tomorrow it will be enough to persuade them that the Germans are about to attack and they will be willing to do anything!"

She raised her blue eyes towards him:

"You speak!"

He watched the speaker without answering; he felt the discontent around him increasing. He sensed in the crowd's disappointment a latent desire for revolutionary action, which it would be criminal not to take advantage of.

"Yes!" he suddenly remarked and he raised his hand to ask for the floor.

The chairman eyed him closely, for a second, and then deliberately looked away.

Jacques scribbled his name on a scrap of paper but there was no one to pass it to Lefaur.

Levy Mas finished his speech amid the rising hubbub.

"Of course the situation is delicate, citizens! But it is not hopeless, so long as the government shall have the people's backing in its endeavors to maintain peace! Reread the articles of our great Jaurès! Those beyond our borders who insolently try to pick a quarrel with us must feel that behind our statesmen and diplomats, Socialist France is unanimous in the peaceful defense of right!"

He adjusted his eyeglasses, exchanged looks with the chairman and without another word vanished in the wings. There was applause from his personal friends, so feeble as to call attention to the lack of real applause; there were also muffled protests and subdued catcalls.

Lefaur was on his feet. He motioned for order. He seemed about to speak and there was a momentary hush. He seized the opportunity to shout:

"Citizens, the meeting is adjourned!"

"No!" Jacques bellowed from his seat.

But the audience had already turned its back on the stage and was shuffling towards the three exits. It was impossible to compete with the din caused by the clatter of the folding seats, the shouting and discussions.

Jacques was beside himself. At any price these well-meaning men, in quest of specific instruction, must not be allowed to leave the hall so confused, with no idea of what the International required of them!

He elbowed his way to the edge of the orchestra pit which made it impossible to reach the stage from the auditorium. He fumed with anger.

"I demand the floor!"

He edged along the orchestra pit to the box and jumping into the box, reached the corridor, found a door that led to the wings, jostled past some people and finally come out on the empty platform. He was still shouting:

"I demand the floor!"

But his voice was lost in the tumult. The theater yawned in front of him. It was already three-quarters empty. He rushed towards the garden table and banged it frantically with both fists as though it were a gong.

"Comrades! I demand the floor!"

Those who were still in the hall—some fifty odd, turned towards the stage. Voices were heard:

"Listen! . . . Keep quiet! . . . Listen! . . ."

Jacques continued to bang the table as though he were sounding a tocsin. He was pale and dishevelled. He ran his eyes from one part of the hall to another. He shouted at the top of his lungs:

"War! War!"

A semi-hush suddenly settled down.

"War is upon us! In twenty-four hours it may break over the whole of Europe. You asked for the truth? You have it. Within a month, those of you who are here this evening may all be massacred! . . ." With an emphatic gesture he brushed back the lock of hair that fell in his eyes:

"War! You do not want war? *They* want it, *they*! And they will force it upon you! You will be the victims! But you will also be the culprits! Because it is you who must prevent it. . . . You look at me? You all of you ask yourselves: 'What are we to do?' And that is why you are here this evening. . . . Well, I shall tell you! There is something to be done. Refuse to fight!"

Calmer, with a curious self-possession, straining his voice and hammering his words to make himself heard, after a short pause, he resumed:

"You have been told: 'Wars are made by capitalism, by nationalist rivalry, the power of money, the armament traffic.' All this is true. But remember, what is war? Is it merely a conflict of interests? No, unfortunately! War means men and blood! War means mobilized people who fight! All the responsible ministers, bankers, directors and munitions manufacturers of the world put together would be powerless to cause wars if the people refused to be mobilized, if the people refused to fight! Cannons and guns do not go off by themselves! You need soldiers to fight a war! And we are the soldiers on whom capitalism counts in its work of profits and death! No constituted authority or mobilization order is of any avail without our consent, without our passivity! Our fate therefore depends upon ourselves alone! We are the multitude, we are the strength!"

Suddenly everything reeled, his head swam. . . . In a flash he realized his responsibility. What right had he to take the floor? Was he sure he was speaking the truth? . . . For an instant he was troubled by doubts and he felt a prey to utter discouragement.

Just then there was a stir at the end of the theater. The loiterers had changed their mind about going out and slowly approached the stage, like bars of iron drawn by a magnet. And as suddenly as they had come, his doubts vanished. All his thoughts, everything he wanted to say to these men whose mute questions rose towards him, seemed clear and indisputable.

He stepped foward; he leaned over; he shouted:

"Do not believe the papers! The press lies!"

"Bravo!" someone shouted.

"The press is in the pay of the nationalists. All governments need a journalism of liars to conceal their machinations, to persuade their peoples that by massacring each other, they are making a heroic sacrifice to a sacred cause, to the defence of their soil, to the triumph of justice, liberty and civilization! . . . As if there were any justifiable wars! As if condemning millions of innocents to martyrdom by torture and death could be justified!"

"Bravo! Bravo!"

The three doors at the end of the theater which opened on the blind alley had filled with the curious, who, under pressure from those on the outside, were pushed in and took seats in the hall.

"How much longer will you allow a handful of criminals, overwhelmed by events which they have nevertheless themselves prepared, to send millions of peaceful Europeans to die on the battlefields? The desire for war never comes from the people, it comes entirely from the governments. The people have no enemies, save those who exploit them! The peoples are not enemies of each other. Not a single German worker wants to leave his wife, his children and his job to shoot French workers!"

A murmur of approval swept through the audience.

Jenny turned around. By now there were several hundred in the theater listening with an attention they had not given the formal orators.

Jacques leaned towards the moving, silent mass which nevertheless hummed like a swarm of insects. On all these faces, none of which he could clearly distinguish, there was an appeal which endowed him with an overwhelming and undeserved importance. But at the same time the violence of his convictions and his hopes were increased tenfold. He had time to reflect that Jenny was listening.

He took a deep breath and launched forth again:

"Shall we stand by, with folded arms, docilely waiting to be delivered to the sacrifice? Shall we trust the peaceful assurances of governments? Who has plunged Europe into the hopeless chaos that it now flounders in? Are we foolish enough to imagine that these same statesmen, these chancellors, these sovereigns who by their secret treaties have brought us to the brink of disaster, can succeed in their diplomatic conferences in saving the peace they have daily betrayed? No! Today peace is in the hands of the people! In our hands! We are the peacemakers!"

Again the applause interrupted him. He wiped his forehead and panted for ten seconds like a runner out of breath. He was aware of his power; he felt each of his phrases violently penetrate people's brains; and like fuses which set off explosions, every blow set off a whole arsenal of rebellious thoughts which only needed a shock to detonate.

With an impatient gesture he demanded silence.

"What should we do?—you ask. We should not allow ourselves to be led by the nose!"

"Bravo!"

"Individually none of us can do anything. But together, firmly united, we can do everything! Remember this: the life of the country, the equilibrium of the state, depends entirely upon the workers. The people possess an all-powerful weapon. An invincible weapon. And this weapon is: the strike! The general strike!"

A loud voice shouted from the end of the hall:

"Just what the Prussians want! And while we're at it, they'll jump on us."

Jacques straightened up and hunted out the heckler with his eyes:

"On the contrary! The German worker will march with us! I know it! I've just returned from Berlin! I've seen it! I've seen the demonstrations on the *Unter den Linden!* I've heard them shout for peace beneath the kaiser's windows! The German worker is also ready to declare the general strike! What holds him back still is fear of Russia! Who is to blame? We are, our rulers and our absurd alliance with tsarism which has increased Russia's threat to Germany. But who can reassure the German people, that is to say, can halt Russia which is on the way to war? We can! By refusing to fight! By calling a general strike, we Frenchmen will strike a double blow: we will paralyze tsarism in its desire for war and we will remove all obstacles to fraternization between German and French workers! Fraternization in the general strike launched simultaneously against both our governments!"

The hall stood up and wanted to applaud, but Jacques gave it no opportunity:

"For the strike is the only act which can still save all of us! Think of it! At a simple summons, issued by our leaders, on the same day, at the same hour the life of the country must suddenly stop! When the strike call is received, all the factories, stores and offices will empty! Strike pickets on the roads will prevent the transport of supplies to the cities! Bread, meat, milk will be rationed by the strike committee! No more water, no more buses, no more taxis, no more letters or newspapers! No telephone or telegraph! The purposeful stopping of all the wheels of society! An anxious crowd wanders through the streets. No disturbances, no noise; silence and fear! What could the government do under such circumstances? How could it oppose such an attack with its police and a few thousand volunteers? How would it distribute food to the population? Unable to provide even for its gendarmes and its regiments and stampeded by the fright of even those who support its nationalist policy, what else could it do but capitulate? How many days. . . how many hours could it hold out against this blockade, this complete stoppage of all public life? And in the face of such a demonstration of the will of the masses, what statesmen would still dare to contemplate the possilibility of war? What government would dare distribute guns and cartridges to a people in revolt against it?"

By now thunderous applause punctuated his every sentence. He martialed all his strength to overcome the noise. Jenny saw his face turn purple, his jaw quiver, the muscles and veins of his neck were swollen from the effort.

"The hour is serious, but everything still depends on us. The tool we possess is so formidable that I do not even believe that we shall have to resort to it! The mere threat of a strike, if the government was certain that the working people would really resort to it unanimously, would be enough to change overnight the orientation of a policy which is leading us to catastrophe. What is our duty, my friends? It is simple and plain! We have only one aim—peace! Unity in spite of all party quarrels! Union in resistance! Union in refusal! Let us rally around the leaders of the International! Let us demand that they make every effort to organize the strike and prepare the great offensive of proletarian forces on which the fate of the country and that of Europe hinges!"

He stopped short. Suddenly he felt utter emptiness within him.

Jenny devoured him with her eyes. She could see him blink, hesitate. She saw him raise his arm and shake his hand. A wan smile played about his lips. As though drunk he turned on his heel and disappeared in the wings.

The crowd shouted:

"Bravo! . . . He's right! . . . Down with war! . . . The strike! . . . Long live

peace! . . ." The ovation lasted several minutes. The listeners remained standing, clapping and shouting to recall the orator.

Finally as the orator did not reappear, they shuffled noisily toward the exit.

The orator had receded into the gloom of the wings. He sat on a packing box, behind a pile of old props, drenched with perspiration, feverish, depressed. He sat there, hair rumpled, his elbows on his knees and his fists in his eyes, with no other wish than to remain alone as long as possible, lost, hidden from everyone.

There it was that Jenny, led by Stefany, found him.

He raised his head and, suddenly brightening, smiled at the girl standing before him. She gazed at his face steadily, in silence.

"The question now is, how to get out of here," Stefany muttered behind them.

Jacques rose.

The empty hall was plunged in darkness, the doors had been closed from the outside. But in one corner of the stage a dim lamp piloted them towards a passage which led to a stage door behind the theater. They passed a coal cellar and came out in a small courtyard cluttered with boards and scaffolding. It opened on a side street which seemed empty.

But the moment they stepped out on the street two men emerged from the shadow:

"The police!" one of them said, producing a badge from his pocket with the gesture of a prestidigitator and poking it under Stefany's nose. "Please show me your papers."

Stefany handed the inspector his press card:

"Newspaperman!"

The policeman glanced casually at the card. He was interested in the man who had spoken.

Luckily Jacques in his wanderings with Jenny during the day had stopped by at Mourlan's to pick up his briefcase. However, he had rashly kept his Geneva student papers, which he had used to cross the German border, in his pocket. "If they search me . . ." he thought apprehensively.

The inspector did not press his zeal to that point. He confined himself to examining Jacques' passport in the lamplight, verifying the resemblance of the photograph with a professional glance. Then he jotted down some entry in his notebook, wetting his pencil point several times.

"Where is your residence?"

"In Geneva."

"What is your address in Paris?"

Jacques hesitated for an instant. He had learned at Mourlan's house that the room on Rue du Jour, where he had stayed before his trip and which was perfectly safe, was no longer vacant. He had not yet hunted up new lodgings. He planned to spend the night at the rooming house on Rue des Bernardins, at the corner of the Quai de la Tourelle. He gave this address and the police made a note of it.

Then the man turned to Jenny, who stood next to Jacques. She had a few calling cards on her and by chance an envelope of Daniel's which had remained in her handbag. The agent made no difficulties and did not even enter the girl's name in his notebook.

"Thank you," he said politely.

He touched his hat and moved off, followed by his acolyte.

"Society defends itself," Stefany remarked in a bantering tone.

Jacques was smiling now.

"So now I'm a marked man. . . ."

Jenny seized his arm and clung to it. Her face showed her worry.

"What are they going to do to you?" she asked in a tremulous voice.

"Nothing, we'll see!"

Stefany started laughing:

"What do you expect them to do to us? We are perfectly respectable."

"It rather annoys me," Jacques acknowledged, "that I gave my address as the Hotel Liebaert."

"Tomorrow you will be free to go and room somewhere else."

It was after half past nine. Most of the customers had left the restaurant. Jacques and Jenny seated themselves on the right where there were fewer people.

Jaurès and his friends had built a long table by placing the small restaurant tables end to end, to the left of the entrance, parallel to Rue Montmartre.

"Do you see him?" Jacques said. "On the bench, in the middle with his back to the window. Wait, he is turning his head to talk to Albert, the manager."

"He doesn't look so very worried," Jenny murmured with a tone of surprise that delighted Jacques; he took her elbow and squeezed it softly.

"Do you know the others too?" she asked.

"Yes. The man on the right of Jaurès is Philippe Landrieu. The big fellow on his left is Renaudel. The one facing Renaudel is Dubreuihl and the one next to Dubreuihl is Jean Longuet."

"And the woman?"

"Madame Poisson, I believe, the wife of the chap opposite Landrieu. And next to her is Amédée Dunois. And across from her are the two Renoult brothers. The man who has just arrived, who is standing by the table, is a friend of Miguel Almereyda, on the staff of the Bonnet Rouge . . . I have forgotten his. . . ."

He was interrupted by a sudden report, a noise like the blowout of an automobile tire. It was followed almost immediately by a second report and the crash of glass. A mirror at the far end of the room had been shattered to splinters.

There was a second of dismay followed by a deafening hubbub. Everybody in the room stood up and turned towards the broken mirror: "Someone shot at the mirror!"—"Who?"—"Where?" and they rushed out of doors from where cries were to be heard.

Jacques had risen instinctively, and, with his arms out to protect Jenny, he sought out Jaurès with his eyes. He caught a glimpse of him. His friends were standing around him, he alone, very calm, remained seated where he was. Jacques saw him bend over to pick something up from the floor. That was the last vital gesture of Jaurès that he saw.

At this moment, Madame Albert, the manager's wife, passed Jacques at a run, shouting:

"They shot at Monsieur Jaurès !"

"Stay where you are," Jacques whispered, laying his hand on Jenny's shoulder and forcing her to sit down.

He rushed towards the chief's table, from where anxious voices could be heard: "Quick, a doctor!—The police!" A circle of men, standing and gesticulating, surrounded Jaurès' friends and prevented Jacques from getting any nearer. Using his elbows, he circled round the table and managed to reach

the corner of the room. Half hidden by the back of Renaudel who was bending over, a body was stretched on the plush bench. Renaudel rose to toss a blood-stained napkin on the table. Then Jacques saw Jaurès' face; his forehead, his beard, and his mouth hanging half open. He must have fainted. He was pale, his eyes were shut.

A man, one of the diners—a doctor, evidently—pierced the circle. With an air of authority he pulled off the man's tie, opened his shirt collar, grabbed his left hand and felt the pulse.

Several voices rose above the noise: "Silence! . . ." Everyone's eyes were riveted on the stranger who held Jaurès' pulse. He said nothing. He bent double, and then he raised a prophetic face towards the ceiling. Without changing his position, without looking at anyone, he slowly lowered his head.

From the street groups of the curious invaded the café.

The voice of M. Albert was heard:

"Shut the door! Close the windows! Lower the shutters!"

A surge of the crowd forced Jacques back into the middle of the room. Friends had lifted the body and carefully laid it on two tables which had been hurriedly pushed together. Jacques tried to see. But the cluster around the wounded man grew thicker and thicker. He saw nothing but a corner of white marble and two upright soles, huge, dusty.

"Let the doctor through!"

André Renoult had succeeded in fetching a doctor. The two men penetrated the gathering, the plastic mass of which closed after them. People kept murmuring: "The doctor . . . The doctor . . ." A long minute dragged by. An agonizing hush set in. Then a shudder seemed to run through the crowd, and Jacques saw those who had kept their hats on remove them. Three words mechanically repeated passed from mouth to mouth:

"He is dead . . . He is dead . . ."

With tearful eyes Jacques went back to find Jenny. She was standing, ready to go, only waiting the signal. She rushed towards him and hooked on to his arm without a word.

A squad of police entered the restaurant and proceeded to clear the room, Jacques and Jenny huddled together, were caught in the swirl and shoved, jostled and dragged towards the door.

The moment they were about to cross the threshold, a man, parleying with the police, managed to enter the cafe. Jacques recognized a Socialist, Henri Fabre, a friend of Jaurès. He was pale and muttered:

"Where is he? Have they taken him to the hospital? '

No one dared answer. A timid hand motioned towards the end of the room. Fabre turned: in the center of an empty space, a bright light shone upon a bundle of black clothing, stretched out on the marble like a corpse at the morgue.

Outside, an improvized guard was trying to disperse the crowd which had gathered in front of the building and obstructed the crossing.

Jacques saw Jumelin and Rabbe arguing with the police. Towing Jenny, who clung to him, he succeeded in joining them. They had come from the paper, they had seen nothing; however it was from them that he learned how the man had fired from the street point blank through the open window, and how, after a short chase, he had been apprehended by onlookers.

"Who is it? Where is he?"

"At the Commissariat in the Rue du Mail."

"Come along," Jacques said, tugging Jenny.

A crowd had gathered in front of the police station. Jacques vainly exhibited his press card; they would no longer admit anyone.

It was a heavy night. All around Rue Montmartre the streets were swarming with pedestrians. Traffic was suspended. Clusters of human beings hung from the windows. Passersby who were strangers informed each other: "Jaurès has just been assassinated!"

A cordon of policemen had finally succeeded in pushing back the crowd in front of the *Croissant* and was now attempting to hold back the human waves that rolled in from the boulevards where the news had spread like wildfire.

As Jacques and Jenny reached the crossing, a detachment of Republican guards on horseback emerged from Rue Saint Marc. First they cleared the entrance to Rue des Victoires, as far as the Bourse. Then they lined up in the center of the square and circled for several minutes to press the curious back against the house walls. As a result of the commotion—frightened people ran down the side streets—Jacques and Jenny succeeded in slipping into the front row. Their eyes were riveted on the facade of the café, where the shutters had been pulled down. Through the doorway which was guarded by police officers and which only opened now for the coming and going of the police, they caught occasional glimpses of the brightly illuminated room.

One after another two taxis and several limousines crossed the barrier.

Those who got out were saluted by the Lieutenant in command of the guard; they hastily entered and the door immediately closed behind them. Informed people whispered names: "The Prefect of police . . . Doctor Paul . . . The Prefect of the Seine . . . The Procurator of the Republic . . ."

Finally an ambulance with a sharp, loud gong that never left off clanging, approached along the Rue des Victoires, drawn at a trot by a small horse. There was a hush. The police halted the vehicle before the entrance to the *Croissant*. Four stretcher-bearers jumped to the pavement and entered the restaurant, leaving the back door of the ambulance open.

Ten minutes passed.

The crowd impatiently shuffled: "What the hell are they up to in there!"

Suddenly Jacques felt Jenny's fingers clutch his sleeve. The double doors of the *Croissant* had been flung wide open. Everybody became silent. M. Albert came out on the sidewalk. The interior of the café was visible, lit up like a chapel and swarming with black-coated police. They saw them part and make a lane for the stretcher bearers to pass through. The stretcher was covered with a cloth. Four men bore it bareheaded. Jacques recognized their familiar silhouettes, Renaudel, Longuet, Compère-Morel, Theo Bretin.

Everyone on the square immediately removed his hat. A timid cry of "death to the assassin" echoed from the window of a building and was swallowed in the night.

Slowly, in a silence which made it possible to distinguish separate treads of the bearers, the white stretcher crossed the threshold, and the sidewalk, was balanced for a few seconds before the ambulance door and then, with a single movement, it disappeared within the vehicle.

Two men got in with it. A policeman climbed up beside the driver. The door banged shut. Then, while the horse pulled in the traces and the vehicle, surrounded by police on bicycles, proceeded clanging towards the Bourse, suddenly a deafening noise drowned out the sound of the gong and rising from everywhere at once, finally relieved those hundreds of oppressed bosoms:

"Long live Jaurès! Long live Jaurès! Long live Jaurès!"

"Let's try to reach *l'Humanité,*" Jacques whispered.

But the crowd around them seemed to have taken root. Their eyes were glued on the mystery of that dark facade, guarded by the police.

"Jaurès is dead . . ." Jacques mumbled. After a pause he repeated: "Jaurès is dead . . . I just can't believe it. I cannot imagine or measure the consequences . . ."

Little by little the packed ranks began to loosen—it became possible to move.

"Come along."

How were they to reach the Rue du Croissant? It was useless to try to break through the barrier which guarded the crossing, equally useless to try to get back to the main boulevard through Rue Montmartre.

"Let us go around the obstacle," said Jacques: "Through Rue Feydeau and the Passage Vivienne."

They had just come out of the passage onto Boulevard Montmartre when they were caught in an enormous marching crowd and swept along.

They had collided with a demonstration in full swing; a column of young patriots, waving flags and roaring the Marseillaise, poured out of the Boulevard Poissonière in a torrent that filled the breadth of the street and carried everything before it.

"Down with Germany! Death to the Kaiser! On to Berlin!"

Jenny felt herself being swept off her feet. She felt frantically for Jacques' arm, for fear of being trampled, and uttered a frightened cry, but Jacques had reached for her and put his arm around her waist in time. He held her tight to his side. He managed to pull her out of the ranks of the crowd, onto the sidewalk and into a closed doorway. Blinded by the dust raised by the hurrying marchers, deafened by the din of their raucous shouting and surging, terrified by the contorted faces, with their obsessed expressions, Jenny saw a brass door handle almost within reach. Summoning her remaining strength, she made an effort, stretched out her arm and grabbed the handle, upon which she supported, hung, as it were, her falling body. It was time; she felt herself fainting. She closed her eyes but her fingers clinging to the brass handle did not relax their grip. In her ear she heard Jacques whispering: "Hang on. Don't be afraid. I am holding you."

A few minutes passed. At last it seemed to her that the tumult was dying away. She re-opened her eyes and saw Jacques smiling. The human tide continued its flow past them, but more sluggishly, in smaller waves, and without clamor. They looked more like curious onlookers than demonstrators. But she was still trembling in every limb and could not recover her breath.

"Be brave," Jacques murmured. "You see, it's over . . ."

She passed her hand across her forehead, adjusted her hat and noticed that her veil was torn. "What shall I tell mother?" she thought, distractedly.

"Let's try to get through there," said Jacques. "Do you feel strong enough to try it?"

The best plan was to go with the crowd and escape through the first clear side street. Jacques had given up the idea of going to *l'Humanité,*—not without a momentary feeling of annoyance. But this evening he had other responsibilities. A delicate creature, and precious to him, had been placed in his charge. He could see that Jenny was at the limit of her nervous resources and his one interest was to get her back to the Avenue de l'Observatoire. She let him support her and lead her. She was no longer afraid: and she no longer kept saying deprecatingly, "Please don't bother about me." On the contrary, she

leaned her full weight on Jacques' arm with an abandon which betrayed the degree of her exhaustion.

By slow steps they reached the Place de la Bourse, but they met with no taxi. The sidewalks and the street were deluged with pedestrians. All Paris seemed to be out of doors. In the cinemas the news of the crime had been flashed on the screen, interrupting the performance, and everywhere that news had stopped the show, the anguish of the audiences had been so overwhelming. The people whom they passed were all talking in a loud voice of the same thing. Jacques caught passing snatches of conversation: "The Gare du Nord and the Gare de l'Est have been occupied by the troops since evening." "What are they expecting? When will the mobilization orders come?"—"Things have reached such a point that it would take a miracle to . . ."—"I have wired Charlotte to come back tomorrow, with the children . . ."—"I told her: Madame! If you had a son of twenty-two, you would not talk that way . . ."

The newboys rushed between the groups.

"Jaurès assassinated!"

There wasn't a single cab at the stand on the Place de la Bourse.

Jacques found a seat for Jenny on a ledge. He stood beside her, his head hanging. Again he murmured tonelessly.

"Jaurès, dead . . ."

He thought to himself: "Who will receive the German delegate tomorrow? And who will defend us now? Jaurès is the only one who would not have let himself be discouraged—the only one the government would never have succeeded in muzzling. The only one perhaps who could have still prevented mobilization."

Hurrying people entered the post office, the windows of which illumined the sidewalk. He had come here to send the dispatch to Daniel the evening Fontain committed suicide, the evening when he had seen Jenny again. Scarcely fifteen days ago!

The news stand displayed special editions. The scareheads read: "All of Europe in arms . . ." "The situation grows more serious every hour . . ." "The ministers are in conference at the Elysée to take the decisions which are demanded by the provocative behavior of Germany . . ."

A drunkard who staggered past them shouted in a thick voice: "Down with the war!" And Jacques realized that this was the first time this evening he had heard this cry. It would be childish to draw conclusions. Nevertheless it was a striking fact that neither before the body of Jaurès nor on the boulevards occupied by the swarming patriots yelling: "On to Berlin!" had a single voice launched the cry of revolt which on the previous day had echoed spontaneously in every street demonstration.

A vacant taxi passed on the opposite side of the square. Others who had been waiting there hailed it. Jacques, dashing across, jumped on the running board and piloted the car before Jenny.

They climbed in and huddled together in silence. Up to this moment they had been sunk in a prostration of anxiety and distress, dazed as though they had just escaped an accident. But now within this vehicle they seemed shielded from the hostile universe. Jacques gathered Jenny in his arms; he hugged her unrestrainedly, and in spite of his weariness, he experienced a sort of paradoxical exaltation, a will to live more violent than ever.

"Jacques," Jenny breathed in his ear, "where are you going to spend the night?" And, rapidly as though she were delivering a prepared speech, she said, "Come home. You won't run any risk. You can sleep on Daniel's couch."

He did not answer immediately. He squeezed her hand; it was not the hand it usually was, unresisting and soft; now it was burning, nervous, alive, and it returned his caress.

"Very well," he said simply.

Paris was calm but tragic. The clouds which had gathered all afternoon after midday formed a gloomy canopy that plunged the city in premature twilight. The early lights of cafés and stores cast gleaming reflections on the black streaks between, where the crowd, deprived of its usual means of transportation, ran, hasty and anxious.

The subway entrances were clogged; the crowd brimmed over on the surrounding pavement; people had an hour's wait there, and on the stairway leading down.

Jacques and Jenny gave up the idea of waiting and headed for the right bank on foot.

Every corner was a newsboy's post. People snatched up the special editions. They stopped, reading only the headlines, and reading them over and over. Everyone was still hoping against hope for the good news that the mysterious trouble had been ironed out, that the rulers of Europe had come to their senses, that they had, by common accord, found an amicable solution, that the ridiculous nightmare was at last dispelled, that their fears could be forgotten.

At *l'Humanité*, after mobilization had been decreed, the offices had emptied. Everyone seemed absorbed in his personal affairs. There were no debaters in the entrance, no traffic up and down the stairway. The only one to be seen was a boy who circulated through the empty rooms and who informed Jacques that Stefany was not in his office. Gallot was in his office but he was working on tomorrow's issue and had given strict orders to admit nobody; and Jacques, whom Jennie, exhausted, followed like a shadow, did not try to argue.

"Let's go to the Progrès," he said.

There was no one in the lower room of the café. The manager was out and his wife sat solitary behind the cash register; she looked red-eyed and damp-faced, as if she had been crying, and she did not budge from her perch.

They climbed to the second floor.

There was only one table there occupied, by some clerks, it seemed, young fellows whom Jacques did not know. They stopped talking for a moment upon the arrival of the newcomers but they promptly resumed their discussion.

Jacques was thirsty. He led Jenny to a seat by the entrance and went downstairs for a mug of beer.

"And what do you propose to do instead, you numbskull? Wait for the gendarmes? Allow yourself to be shot like an idiot?"

The speaker was a boy of twenty-five with a ruddy complexion and a cap pushed back on his head. His voice was sharp. He regarded each of his companions in turn with hard, black eyes.

"And then I want to tell you," he resumed nervously, "to fellows like us who have seen it all from close at hand, there is one thing we can be sure of and it comes before everything: we belong to a country which did not want war, and which has nothing to reproach itself for!"

"That's what they all say," the oldest in the crowd interrupted. He was a man of forty odd, dressed in the uniform of a Metro employee.

"No! The Germans can't say that! Peace depended upon them! Ten times in fifteen days they had a chance to prevent the war!"

"So did we! We could have simply told Russia to go to hell!"

"That wouldn't have prevented anything! It's perfectly obvious today that the Germans had framed the whole business. So much the worse for them! They've been cooking this up a long time. Sure we want peace; but we're no cowards either! France has been attacked; France must defend herself! And France is you and me; it's all of us!"

With the exception of the Metro employee the others seemed to agree.

Jacques cast an anxious look towards Jenny. He remembered Studler who implored: "I must, I must believe that Germany is to blame!"

Without touching the beer he had poured, he motioned to the girl and got up. But before leaving he walked over to the group:

"A defensive war! A legitimate war! A just war! Why, it's the old hoax! Are you going to fall for it now? Three hours ago mobilization was decreed and see where you are. Utterly defenseless against all the evil passions which the press has been trying to arouse for the past week. Passions which the military chiefs are only too anxious to take advantage of! Who will resist this madness if you Socialists don't resist!"

He was not talking to any one of them in particular, but they all stared at him in turn and their lips quivered.

The youngest of the group, a plasterer whose face and hair were still powdered with white chalk, turned a Pierrot-like face towards him:

"I agree wtih Chataignier," he said in a strong clear voice. "I will sign up the first day, tomorrow! I hate war but I am a Frenchman. The country has been attacked. I am needed. I will go with death in my heart, but I will go!"

"That goes for me, too," declared his neighbor. "I shall leave Tuesday, the third day. I am from Bar-le-Duc. My old folks live there. I have no desire to see my native soil become German!"

'Nine Frenchmen out of ten feel that way!" Jacques thought to himself. "Eager to exculpate their country and believe the infamy of the adversary, in order to justify the reactions of their defensive instincts. And the irony of it!" he remarked to himself. "To some extent these young fellows even feel a grim satisfaction in the sudden sharing of a collective injury, in breathing this intoxicating air of collective indignation!" Nothing had changed since the time when Cardinal Retz had ventured to write: "The main thing is to make people believe they are defending themselves even though they are attacking."

"Think!" Jacques resumed in a hollow voice. "If you give up resistance, tomorrow it will be too late. Remember, on the other side of the border the same talk is probably going on; the same talk of defending the Fatherland, the same accusation against us, as the warmakers. Whole nations of grown peoples, blindly lunging at each other, like kids who have lost control of themselves, and shouting: 'He started it!' "

"So what?" the plasterer cried. "What do you expect us to do after we are mobilized?"

"If you believe that violence cannot be justice, if you believe that human life is sacred, if you deny that there are two moral codes, one which condemns murder and one which prescribes it in time of war, remain true to yourselves! Remain true to the International!"

Jenny, who was standing in the doorway, came over rapidly and faced him.

The plasterer rose. He folded his arms angrily.

"To let yourself be stuck up against the wall? You're pretty smart! At least down there you've got a chance. You can get by with a bit of spunk!"

"But," Jacques cried, "you realize perfectly well that it's cowardice to renounce your convictions and your personal responsibility because the others are stronger! You tell yourselves: 'I disapprove but there's nothing I can do.' This costs you something but you ease your conscience cheaply enough by fancying that this submission is difficult and noble. Don't you see that you are the dupes of a criminal game all over again? Have you forgotten that the governments were not established to enslave the people and to massacre them but to serve them, to protect them and make them happy?"

A swarthy man of thirty, who had not spoken up to now, banged the table with his fist:

"No! You are wrong. You are wrong today! God knows that I never have supported the government. I am as much of a Socialist as you are! I've been in the Party five years! Well, I as a Socialist am ready to bear arms for the government like everyone else!"

Jacques wanted to interrupt him but the other raised his voice: "And that has nothing to do with convictions. We'll settle with the nationalist, the capitalist, and the rest of the crew afterwards! Their turn will come, you can bank on that! But for the time being theories are beside the point! The first score to be settled is with the Prussians! Those bastards wanted the war! So we'll give it to them! And I'm telling you if I have my way we'll give them plenty!"

Jacques slowly shrugged his shoulders. There was nothing to do. Grabbing Jenny by the arm he dragged her towards the stairway.

"Long live the Social Revolution just the same!" a voice shouted behind them.

Back on the street they walked along in silence for several minutes. A dull rumble foretold the approach of storm. The sky was inky.

"You see," Jacques said, "I thought, I repeated twenty times that wars are not a matter of sentiment, that they are no more than the fatal result of economic rivalries. Well, when I see the nationalist enthusiasm rise so naturally and so indiscriminately among all classes of society, I almost start asking myself whether wars are not rather the result of an obscure and indomitable conflict of passions, for which the conflict of interests only serves as a pretext." He lapsed into silence again. Then following the train of his thoughts at random, he said: "And the mockery of it is their anxiety, not only to justify themselves, but to convince you that their consent is rational and free! Yes, free! All these wretches who yesterday fought this war side by side and who were dragged into it by a bayonet under their collars are anxious now to pretend that they are acting deliberately and of their own accord. It's tragic, however," he resumed after another pause, "that so many men who were forewarned and by that forearmed could have suddenly become so credulous once their patriotic sentiments were played on. It is tragic and almost incomprehensible. Perhaps it is simply because the average man naively identifies himself with his party, with his nation, with his state. He is in the habit of saying: 'We Frenchmen.' 'We Germans.' And since every individual honestly desires peace it is impossible for him to admit that the state, which is his state, wants war. And so one could almost say: the more the individual is attached to peace, the more anxious he is to absolve his country and the members of his clan, and the easier it becomes to convince him that the warmaking is all done abroad, that his own government is not responsible, that

he is part of a victimized collective, and that he must defend himself by defending the collective."

Large raindrops interrupted him as they were crossing the Place de la Bourse.

"Let's run," said Jacques, "you'll be drenched."

They had barely time to find shelter, to reach the arcade on the Rue des Colonnes. The storm which had overhung the city all day finally burst with dramatic violence. The lightning flashed without interruption, jarring one's nerves, and the incessant rumbling of the thunder echoed between the buildings with a noise that recalled mountain storms. On the Rue du Quatre-Septembre a regiment of mounted police passed at a trot; the men, in their saddles, leaned over the steaming necks of the animals as in a picture by a painter of battle scenes, the helmets glistening under the leaden sky.

"Let's go in there," Jacques proposed, pointing to a small dimly-lighted restaurant at the end of the arcade. "We will eat something while we wait."

They had trouble finding two seats, side by side, at a marble-top table where other customers were huddled.

The moment they sat down, Jenny felt overcome by weariness. Her knees wobbled, her shoulders and her neck ached, her head seemed unbearably heavy. She felt she was going to be ill. If only she could shut her eyes for a few moments, stretch out and sleep, sleep beside him! Suddenly the memory of the previous night possessed her; it was like the stroke of a lash which restored her strength. Jacques, sitting beside her, noticed nothing. She saw his profile, his moist temples, his dark face with its ruddy flush. She wanted to take his arm, bend over and whisper: "Let's go home. What else matters? Take me in your arms! Take me in your arms!"

The conversation around them was lively. Eyes were shining. People passed the salt and the mustard with fraternal looks. The wildest and most contradictory rumors were exchanged with complete assurance and heads were shaken in instant relief. "A storm like this may hold up the offensive," trilled a lady of middle age whose face reflected a platonic but aggressive heroism. "Back in '70," explained a large gentleman with a decoration in his buttonhole, who sat oposite Jenny, "hostilities did not begin until long after the declaration of war; fifteen days at least." "It looks as though there may be a shortage of sugar," said someone. "And salt," the heroic lady added. She leaned towards Jenny confidentially: "I took the necessary precautions ahead of time."

The gentleman with the decoration addressed the public in a loud voice with a catch in it, that suggested restrained emotion. He told the story of a garrison commander in the east who, having received orders to withdraw his men ten kilometers from the border and believing that France was already yielding to the enemy, pulled out his revolver, and, rather than submit to disgrace, blew out his brains in sight of the regiment.

At the end of the table a worker was eating in silence. His roving eyes met Jacques'. He immediately spoke up:

"It's all very well for you to talk," he said in an injured tone. "This was payday in my shop but tonight we went home without our pay."

"Why?" the gentleman asked, good-naturedly.

"The boss claims all his money is in the bank and the bank is closed. You can imagine what a row it caused! But there was nothing we could do. 'Come around on Monday,' he told us."

"Why, of course, on Monday they'll pay everybody," the heroic lady chimed in.

"Monday? First of all many of us are being mobilized tomorrow. Do you realize what it means? Going off and leaving your wife and kids penniless?"

"Don't worry," the gentleman with the decoration remarked authoritatively. "The government has seen to that as well as to everything else. Subsidies will be distributed at the town halls. You may go off feeling reassured! Your families are protected by the state, they shall not want!"

"You think so?" the man said uncertainly. "If that's so, why don't they tell us?"

A neighbor of Jacques' who had managed to get a copy of the latest edition of an evening paper referred to the proclamation Poincaré had addressed "To the French Nation."

Hands shot out:

"Show us! Show us!"

But the man did not want to let the paper out of his hands.

"Read it!" the gentleman with the decoration ordered.

The owner of the paper, a little old man with a fox face, adjusted his spectacles.

"It is countersigned by all the ministers!" he declared emphatically. Then he began to read in a falsetto voice: "Aware of its responsibility, feeling that it would fail in a sacred duty if it left things as they are, the government has just adopted the decree which the situation calls for." He paused for breath: "Mobilization is not war."

"Do you hear that, Jacques?" Jenny whispered in a voice that trembled with hope.

Jacques shrugged his shoulders:

"Another lure to draw the rats into the trapdoor. Once they are inside they'll keep them there!"

"Under the present circumstances," continued the man with the spectacles, "mobilization seems to be the best way of assuring an honorable peace."

The silence at their table fell on the other tables and the hush settled over the entire room.

"Louder!" someone called at the end of the room. The reader rose to continue. His voice broke at times. No doubt the poor fellow had the impression that he himself was addressing the people. He gravely repeated:

"Peace with honor . . . The government relies on the cool-headedness of this noble nation which will not allow itself to be swept away by unwarranted emotion."

"Bravo!" said the lady.

"Unwarranted!" Jacques muttered between his teeth.

" . . . It relies on the patriotism of all Frenchmen and it knows that every one is prepared to do his duty. In this hour there are no longer any parties. There is only immortal France, peace-loving and resolute France, the France of right and justice, fully united in calmness, vigilance and dignity."

The reading was followed by a silence that lasted a long minute. Then conversation recommenced on this exalting theme. The heroism of the lady was not an individual phenomenon. The gentleman with the decoration had become as red as the ribbon in his buttonhole. The eyes of the wageless

worker at the end of the table were full of tears. Everyone experienced the collective intoxication with a sort of enjoyment. Everyone felt carried away without effort, transported beyond himself, tinged with the sublime, prepared to become a martyr.

Jacques was silent. He thought of the identical proclamations being issued across the borders, at the same moment, by the other responsibles, by the kaiser, by the tsar, of the magic formulae, everywhere charged with the same power which would doubtless everywhere unleash the same absurd delirium.

He saw Jenny push back the plate of soup in front of her which she had scarcely touched. He motioned to her and rose. Outside, the rain had stopped. Water dripped from the balconies, swollen muddy rivulets gurgled down the sewers. On the glistening sidewalks, the crowd had resumed its disordered course.

"Let's go to the Chamber," said Jacques, dragging Jennie along at a feverish pace. "We'll find out what they are cooking up over there with Müller."

Silly though it seemed, he could not admit that he had lost all hope.

The Bourbon Palace was under a heavy police guard. However, groups of people could be seen standing behind the gates to the court and Jacques headed in their direction, followed by Jenny.

By the light of the electric lamps they recognized the silhouette of Rabbe, in one of the groups.

"The discussion is not over," the old functionary told them. "They have just come out. They have gone to dinner. The discussion will be resumed presently. Not here, but at the offices of *l'Humanité*."

"Well? What are your impressions?"

"None too good. However, it's hard to get information. They were overwrought and half-dead from thirst and wouldn't or couldn't talk. The only one whom I could worm anything out of was Siblot. And he did not hide his disappointment. Am I right?" he added, turning to Jumelin who had strolled over.

Jenny examined the two men in silence. She only half liked Jumelin. His look and his manners made her uneasy. He had a long narrow face, with a smooth jaw, and his eyes that were too small and too black had an unpleasant glitter.

Old Rabbe, on the contrary, with his broad forehead, his clear, sad eyes which gazed at Jacques with a fatherly fondness, did not inspire her with much confidence and sympathy.

"This Müller had no specific mandate, it appears," said Jumelin. "He has not brought any definite proposal."

"Why did he come, then?"

"Only to get information."

"For information?" Jacques cried. "At a time when there is no time even left to act in!"

Jumelin shrugged his shoulders:

"Act ... you make me laugh! Do you believe that it is possible to make decisions when the situation changes every hour? Do you know that Germany has also decreed general mobilization? It happened at five o'clock, a little after ours. And they say that this evening she will officially declare war on Russia."

"But," Jacques resumed impatiently, "answer, yes or no, did this Müller come to propose the unity of the German and French proletariat, to organize a general strike in the two countries?"

"General strike? Of course not," Jumelin replied. "He has come, I believe, simply to find out whether the French Party plans to vote for the war credits which the government must ask for in the Chamber on Monday. That's all."

"It would be a fine thing," said Rabbe, "if on this specific point the French and German Socialist parliamentarians adopted the same policy."

"It's not very likely," Jumelin said cryptically.

Jacques stamped his feet.

"What we can say," Jumelin resumed with a profound air, "and apparently the Party leaders have not failed to repeat it to Müller in every key, is that France has done everything to avoid the war. Up till the last moment! Up to the point of consenting to withdraw her border garrisons! We French Socialists have our own conscience! And we are free to regard Germany as the aggressor!"

Jacques gazed at him with horrified eyes.

"In other words," he cut in, "the Socialist deputies in France are prepared to vote for the credits."

"In any case, they cannot vote against them."

"Why not?"

"Most likely they will abstain from voting," Rabbe remarked.

"Ah," Jacques cried, "if only Jaurés were alive!"

"Bah! I believe that under the circumstances, the chief himself would not venture to vote against the credits."

"But," said Jacques beside himself, "Jaurès proved the absurdity of this distinction between the aggressor country and the attacked country hundreds of times! It's a swindle. Apparently you have all forgotten the real causes of the mess: capitalism, the imperialist policies of the capitalist country! Regardless of appearances international Socialism must rise against war! Otherwise . . ."

Rabbe agreed evasively:

"In principle, yes. And apparently Müller said something of the sort. . . ."

"Well, then?"

Rabbe made a weary gesture.

"So at that point they went off to dinner, arm in arm."

"No," Jumelin replied. "You forgot to mention that Müller wanted to telephone to Berlin to consult with his Party leaders."

"Ah," Jacques said. He was prepared to clutch at any straw.

He swayed on his heels nervously, took a few random steps and faced the two men:

"Do you know what I think? This Müller simply came to feel out the real extent of our internationalism; the real feelings for peace of our French Party, and if he had found real revolutionists, ready to go the whole length, ready to call a general strike, to oppose the nationalism of the government, I say that peace could still have been saved! Yes! Even after the mobilization decree! Peace could still be preserved by the formidable unity of the French proletariat and the German proletariat! Instead, what has he found? Talkers, debaters, wobblers who are always ready to condemn war and nationalism in words

but who are already willing to vote for war credits and a free hand to the general staff. To the very last moment we are caught in criminal contradictions, the conflict between the internationalist ideal which we subscribe to in theory and all those nationalist interests which in practice no one, not even among the Socialist leaders, is prepared to sacrifice!"

Jacques' voice enveloped Jenny like a familiar and soothing music. She was too tired to follow the words. She lingered on Jacques' face, on his mouth; and the sight of his curved lips, the lines of which expanded and contracted like something surprisingly alive, gave her the physical sensation of contact. At the recollection of the night spent in his arms she suddenly straightened up. "Why don't we go," she said to herself. "What is he waiting for? What else matters?"

Cadieux, who rushed from group to group spreading the news, approached them.

"We have just applied to the Minister of the Interior for permission for Müller to 'phone Berlin. We were unsuccessful. Communications have been severed. It's too late. There's a state of siege on both sides."

"Maybe that was the last chance," Jacques murmured, leaning towards Jenny.

Cadieux overheard him. He sneered:

"Chance for what?"

"For proletarian action! For international action!"

Cadieux smiled ironically.

"International?" he asked. "But my dear chap, let's be realists. Starting from today the war is international, and not the struggle for peace!"

He shrugged his shoulders and vanished in the night.

"He is right," Jumelin muttered, "unfortunately he is right. War is here. This evening, whether we like it or not, we Socialists, like all Frenchmen, are in the war. Later of course we will go back to our international activity, we will resume it. This evening the hour of pacifism has struck."

"Is it you who says that, Jumelin?" Jacques exclaimed.

"Yes! We must reckon with a new factor: war exists. As far as I am concerned, this factor changes everything, and our duty as Socialists is perfectly clear to me, we must not hamper the action of the government!"

"So you are willing to be mobilized?"

"Of course. Allow me to inform you that next Tuesday, Citizen Jumelin will be a plain, second-class private in the 239th Regiment of reserves in Rouen!"

Jacques lowered his eyes and made no answer.

Rabbe placed his hand on his shoulder:

"Do not give yourself more of a headache than you have already. If you don't agree with him this evening you will tomorrow. It's obvious: the cause of France is the cause of democracy. We Socialists must be the first to defend democracy against the aggression of the neighboring imperialists."

"You also agree?"

"I? If I weren't so old I would sign up myself. However, I shall try. Maybe they can still use an old fossil like me. You are surprised? I haven't changed my opinion, I hope to live long enough to resume the struggle against militarism. It is still my *bête noire!* But for the time being there can be no wavering. Militarism today is not what it was yesterday. Today militarism is the salvation of France and by the same token the salvation of democracy. So I have pared my claws and am ready to follow my comrades, to shoulder a musket and defend the country. Afterwards we shall see!"

He met Jacques' gaze steadily. A faint smile flickered over his lips and made the sadness in his eyes even more striking by contrast.

"Even Rabbe!" Jacques muttered, turning away.

He seized Jenny by the arm and walked off without saying goodbye.

An animated group blocked the gateway.

In the center Pagès, Gallot's secretary, was talking and gesticulating. Among the young men around him Jacques recognized acquaintances: Bouvier, Hérrard, Fougerolle, Latour, a syndicalist, Odelle and Chardent, who were on the staff of *l'Humanité.*

Pagès saw Jacques and motioned to him.

"Have you heard the news? A despatch from Petersburg: Germany has declared war on Russia."

Bouvier, a speaker at public gatherings, a man of forty or thereabouts, with a sickly grayish complexion, turned towards Jacques:

"There's a bright side to everything! On the front there will be plenty of work for us! Once we have guns and cartridges!"

Jacques did not answer. He distrusted Bouvier. He did not like his shifty eyes. (Mourlan had told him, one evening, as they were coming out from a meeting where Bouvier had made an inflammatory speech: "I'm keeping an eye on that chap. He is a little too enthusiastic. Every time they make arrests he is one of the first to be pulled in, but somehow he always gets off.")

"The funniest part of it is," Bouvier resumed with a short laugh, "that they think they're sending us into a nationalist war! They never suspect that in a month it will be civil war!"

"And in two months the revolution!" Latour cried.

Jacques coolly asked:

"So you are also letting yourselves be mobilized?"

"Why, of course! It's too good a chance!"

"And you?" said Jacques, turning to Pagès.

"Of course!"

His features had lost their usual expression and he raised his voice nervously. He seemed slightly tipsy.

"It's no fault of ours," he resumed, "that this war couldn't be prevented! But the fact is that it couldn't be. At least it may bring an end to this decaying society which does not realize that it's committing suicide! It's up to us to see to it that the suicide goes off, that capitalism doesn't survive the disaster it is bringing on itself. May this war at least further the cause of social revolution! May humanity profit by it! May it be the last war. May it be the war of emancipation!"

"War against war!" someone shouted.

"We are going to fight," Odelle cried. "But as soldiers of the revolution, for complete disarmament and the emancipation of the peoples!"

Herard, a postal employee who always caused comment because of his astonishing resemblance to Briand (he even had the same warm deep voice), said slowly:

"Yes. Millions upon millions of innocents will be slaughtered! It is monstrous! But the only thing which can make one accept this horror is the thought that we will be investing for the future! Those who will come out of this baptism of blood will be regenerated men . . . Out of the ruin around them, they will finally be able to build a new society."

Jenny, who was behind Jacques, saw his shoulders straighten. She thought he was going to join the argument. But he turned towards her without an-

other word. She was struck by the change in his face. He took her arm and walked away, holding her tightly. He was glad she had come along; his feeling of solitude was less bitter. "No," he told himself, "no! I would rather die than accept this thing which I disapprove of with all my soul! It is better to die than to renig!"

"Did you hear?" he said, after a brief pause. "I did not recognize them."

At this point Fougerolle, who during the discussion by the gate had not breathed a word, came over to them.

"You are right," he said without any preamble, forcing the two young people to stop in order to listen to him. "I even think of deserting in order to be logical with myself. You see how it is! But if I deserted I could never be sure I had acted from conviction, and not from cowardice. For the truth is that I am also afraid. It's ridiculous but I shall do as they do. I shall go."

He did not wait for Jacques' reply, and walked away with a curiously firm stride.

"Perhaps there are many others like him," Jacques muttered dreamily.

They walked past the Bourbon Palace along Rue de Bourgogne towards the Seine.

"Do you know what strikes me?" he resumed after a new interval of silence. "It's their looks, their voices, the sort of involuntary gaiety which surprises one in their gestures. It reaches the point where you ask yourself: 'If they learned this evening that everything had been settled, that the mobilization was called off, wouldn't they experience a feeling of disappointment?. . . And the most exasperating part of it is," he added, "that they put so much energy at the service of the war! All that courage and scorn of death! All this strength of character, wasted. The hundredth part of it would have been sufficient to prevent the war, if only they had used it in time for peace!"

On the bridge they ran into Stefany who was walking alone with bowed head half hidden by his huge spectacles astride his bony nose. He too was on his way to hear the results of the negotiations.

Jacques told him that the parley had been interrupted and would be resumed a little later at the offices of *l'Humanité*.

"In that case I'll go back to the paper," said Stefany, retracing his steps.

Jacques was gloomy. He took several steps in silence, then recalled Mourlan's prophecy and touched Stefany on the elbow.

"It's all over, there are no longer any Socialists; there are only social-patriots."

"Why do you say that?"

"They're all thinking of enlisting. They have an idea that they're obeying their consciences by sacrificing their revolutionary ideal to the myth of the country in danger! Those who were most rabid against the war have become the most rabid patriots, Jumelin, Pagès, everyone! Even old Rabbe is ready to enlist if they'll take him!"

"Rabbe?" Stefany repeated in a questioning voice. "I am not surprised. Cadieux is also going and Berthet and Jourdain. They'd already stuck their military cards in their pockets yesterday. Even Callot, near-sighted though he is, has asked Guesde to appeal to the Ministry to grant him permission to enlist!"

"The Party is beheaded," Jacques concluded gloomily.

"The Party? No, perhaps not. What has been beheaded for sure is the resistance to the forces of war."

Jacques approached him with a brotherly gesture.

"You also believe, that if Jaurès were still alive...?"

"Of course, he would be with us! Or rather, the whole Party would have remained with him! Dunois found the correct formula: 'The Socialist conscience would not be divided.' "

They crossed the Place de Concorde in silence. Cleared of its usual traffic it seemed vaster and better lighted than usual.

Suddenly Stefany stopped. The light of a lamp cast strange silhouettes over his long sallow face and made his glasses glitter over his eyes that were concealed in the shadow.

"Jaurès?" he said (when he pronounced the name his sing-song southern voice acquired a caressing tone which brought a lump to Jacques' throat). "Do you know what he said in my presence last Thursday as we were leaving Brussels? Huysmans was returning to Amsterdam and was saying goodbye. The chief looked him straight in the eye and said:

" 'Listen to me carefully, Huysmans. If war is declared, maintain the International! If friends beseech you to take part in the conflict, do not heed them; maintain the International! And if I, Jaurès, were to come to you and ask you to sponsor the cause of this or that belligerent do not listen to me, Huysmans! Maintain the International whatever the cost!' "

Jacques shouted, thunderstruck:

"Yes! Even if there were only ten of us! Even if there were only two of us! Maintain the International, whatever the cost!" His voice quavered. Jennie, throbbing with emotion, snuggled up to him, but he seemed not to notice her. Again he repeated like a vow:

"Maintain the International!"

"But how?" he asked himself. And he seemed to sink back alone into the shadows.

Romain Rolland

The Old Orpheus: Victor Hugo

When we talk of a great work or a great artist we never touch the work itself or the man himself. We speak of what we have known in our age, known in the biblical sense of having possessed. And it is an attribute of great works and great artists that they elude the embrace of even those who claim to possess them most fully. They survive this embrace, and the oblivion or revulsion that follows. It is a case of *"sterben und werden."* To every subsequent age they offer a different food, food for love and for hate, since hate is also a force of life which requires sustenance. The Victor Hugo whom I "knew" is not the one whom the present age knows or misunderstands. And the latter will pass away when other Hugos shall succeed him, without ever exhausting the eternal fountain of a genius whose whole life was a process of "becoming," a process which continues after his death and shall continue; for such is his law of immortality. And he himself realized it when he said at Guernsey with good natured pride:

"I feel that I am immortal. If others have not the feeling of immortality I am sorry for them but it is their own business ... "

He was certain of his own immortality. He was not mistaken. How many of the living, who censure him, are really dead, while he, though dead, still lives and still "becomes." People continue to prove his existence by denying it, or heatedly arguing about it. Whether he is reviled or exalted, Hugo does not know and never will know the *"Requiescat!"* The name and the spirit of the old man hovers above the standards of the marching army.

I shall try to recall him in the last years of his life, as he appeared to me, a child between the ages of fifteen and nineteen. And my illustration will, I believe, be more representative of the period than that of such men as Leon Daudet who, in their childhood, had the luck (the ill-luck) to see the old man from close at hand, without having troubled to seek him out. Those who are born and raised "in the shadow of statues" either worship them or revolt against them; in either case their judgment is biased. Either the statue crushes them or they urinate upon it. I had not the good fortune to be close to great minds in my childhood. Like millions of humble folk I saw them only from a distance, I imagined them more than I saw them. Only the highest were visible, like peaks on the horizon. And I saw not the shadows but only the splendor ... the majesty of snowcapped peaks in the sun.

To my eyes, as to those of millions of Frenchmen, he was the "old Orpheus."

This was the title of a colored drawing which I have saved, an apotheosized cartoon by Charles Gilbert-Martin, which appeared in his magazine of portraits and caricatures, *Don Quixotte,* issue of June 23, 1882. The old man's white hair and his white beard are like an aureole around his face. He is dressed in a white robe and plays the lyre. At his feet lies a copy of *Torquemada* which had just appeared and a sheet on which is written: "Appeal . . ." In the background are bloody stains labeled *Russia*; fierce tigers rend old men, women and children whose hands are raised in supplication. This symbolizes the savage orgy of tsarist repression that followed the assassination of Alexandre II. Once again the old Orpheus—the French Tolstoy, radiant with the fires of glory and master of the sword of the word—raised his voice on behalf

of the victims, against the oppressors, just as he had done against all great crimes committed from one end of the earth to the other. He was the self-appointed guardian of the immense human tribe. And it little mattered that the tribe was poorly guarded, that the grandiloquent, quavering old voice was insufficient to defend it, and did not in the least intimidate the hangmen and was even ridiculed at the Fair, on the Place de Paris. We, the millions, hearken to its distant echoes with reverence and pride. There was something fine about the old man's tireless pleas for justice, even though they were destined to go unheeded. Hugo was the champion of humanity. We felt that we were under his tutelage. Afterwards there sprang from the soil the powerful League of the Rights of Man, the vigorous International Labor Defence and Red Aid organizations and the committees to aid the oppressed, which watch over the world, sword in hand. We ourselves have enlisted in the army, that has never ceased for many years to rush from one front to another of the battlefield in defense of the victims of a murderous social order. We are, without knowing it, answers to the summons sounded in the notes that were struck by the lyre of the "old Orpheus."

Another aspect of the old man was even more striking to the men of the Third Republic who, like me, were young in the 'eighties. This was the legendary struggle of the exile of Guernsey, the Prometheus who was only partially bound, who snatched Jove's thunderbolts and from his rock smote the eagle, which fell to earth with broken wings. Guernsey became the counterpart of St. Helena. And a duel was fought between Hugo the Great and the Great Napoleon, over the heads of Napoleon the Little and his gang of adventurers of December 2, 1851.

All his life Hugo, the son of a general and a count, had kept his eyes trained on the sun of Austerlitz. And as his pride increased with his fame, the cult of the Emperor became a rival. The two men seemed to measure each other with their eyes. And the man on the column was knocked over by the fist of the young Republic whose godfather Hugo could claim to be. We supported the claim.

Those were the days when the infant Republic took its first faltering steps. We felt it threatened by the men of "Moral Order." In my little town of the Nivernaise people gathered silently outside a bourgeois house and listened with bated breath as the strains of the seditious Marseillaise floated through an open window. For us old Hugo's name was wedded to that of the Republic. In all of literature and art, his glory was the only glory that lived in the hearts of the French people. The inhabitants of my province have never drunk deep from the Muses' spring. They are satisfied with their warm Burgundy, and Adam Bilault wrote his famous "at the break of dawn . . ." merely as a hymn to wine. Hugo was the first and only great man of poetry to penetrate these earthy spirits . . I remember how as a child I followed my father across a field, while he chatted with friends, townspeople and peasants. And suddenly one of them joyously recited a fragment of *Châtiments*, and the others eagerly chimed in with the next stanza. I had not yet read the book, but I had often heard it referred to as a bible of struggle, the leaves of which had been thrown to the wind and scattered over the whole country. I listened with bated breath and throbbing heart to the epic lines that mingled with the song of thrushes over the ploughed field. It was then I discovered the noble nature of the poet who loved the people and punished tyrants. (Afterwards I ceased to recognize it. But just as it was so shall it always be, like a fiery cloud! . . .) And I treasured the example of the heroic spirit who said:

"No!" to the crimes of the state and who embodied the revolt of conscience of the gagged nation.

A third Hugo who left his mark upon me was the bard of the revolution—and of revolutions—the man who evoked the barricades of 1832, and of *The Ninety-Three.* I saw this drama produced in 1882. I have in my possession several of the sheets, which were thrust under people's coats. One of them, the play, *To Passive Obedience,* dated Jersey, January 1853, bears the post mark "Guernsey" and Victor Hugo's signature, with the words *"Ad augusta! per augusta"* written in his hand. And (I was not aware of it at the time but I realize it now) I must have carried away with me sparks of this Corneille of the people, I not only was impressed by the play but also by the local audience which took a noisy part in the performance, encouraging and exciting the hero like a tragic chorus. Some fifteen years later, without my realizing it (and by then I had even acquired a strong dislike for Hugo) these sparks kindled the idea of the People's Theater and my first cycle of dramas on the revolution.

But at the time, in 1882, I was still a poor lad of sixteen in the throes of puberty and metamorphosis (and nothing is more akin to destruction), unaware of what enters into his makeup and his mould and incapable of judging what he likes and what he is (he is not, he will be). And I was still floundering in a semi-darkness that might be called prenatal, when I met the old magician, Victor Hugo, in the flesh, on Sunday, August 19, 1883, a splendid summer day, in one of the loveliest settings in the world.

I went to spend a few weeks' vacation on a slope of the Dent du Midi, in a chalet which belonged to an old musician to whom I owe all my knowledge of the piano. She had known Chopin and had been Rossini's friend (how close one is to the past! I touched it and through my hand you touch it). In those days Switzerland was not the Paris suburb it is today, and as my parents were not rich I was not blasé. My father had given up his vacation that I might breathe the mountain air together with my mother and my sister. We stopped over night in the small town of Villeneuve, among the reeds at the end of Lake Geneva. From our room in the Port Hotel the two of us, I and my genial companion, my mother, who was as young at heart as her child (so she remained till death), gazed with wondering eyes at the clear moon which was mirrored in the lake of Shelley and Byron. The whole coastline from Clarens to Chillon was ablaze with lights. They were celebrating the inauguration of the Territet-Glion funicular, the novelty and daring of which fascinated people. We went to bed late and rose early. As we stood at the water's edge ready to leave for Valais, we noted an air of festivity in everything around us. We were told that Victor Hugo was staying at the Byron Hotel and that afternoon people were coming from Geneva and from all around the lake to pay their respects. We ran over to the Byron Hotel, entered the beautiful park and waited four or five hours under the trees, while our hearts throbbed with impatience (no, we were not blasé). We would have waited all day. At last the lake began to sing. Barques gay with bunting glided over the sparkling blue water. From across the ripples came the sound of music and happy voices. A crowd which had come from either shore milled outside the hotel on the esplanade. And the old man appeared on the middle terrace, standing between his two grandchildren. Then he descended the new outer stairway, which overlooked the park and the lake, to the right of the facade. How old he looked, with the snowy hair, deep wrinkles, bushy brows and sunken eyes! He seemed to have emerged from the depths of the ages. I stood quite close to him; but although I pricked up my ears I could not catch what

the old cracked voice was muttering. All I heard was his shout: "Long live the Republic!" in reply to those who shouted: "Long live Hugo!" His eyes were stern, his hand was raised. Now, fifty years afterwards, I do not regret that the only utterance I heard from Hugo's lips was this wathchword. I received it and I transmitted it to you, my comrades. Close ranks around the Republic.

The crowd devoured him with insatiable eyes. A worker standing near me said to his wife: "Lord! How ugly he is! He has a rugged beauty. Christ! How I'd like to be in his shoes!"

Yes, even if you died tomorrow you would have lived. I had long dreamed of meeting the great man—I scarcely dared dream any longer! And now in such a setting! The happy people, the August sun, the great blue lake, like the Mediterranean . . . My heart swam with joy! And I could not get enough of it. After the crowd had scattered I continued to roam the walks hoping to get another glimpse of the old man. And I saw him, walking with short shuffling steps towards the playground where George and Jeanne played croquet. And George and Jeanne scampered ahead of him constantly chirping "Grandpa" in their shrill small voices. They were sincere, perhaps, but they were showing off. My pitiless youthful ear was not deceived. But the grandfather himself was not acting; his wrinkled old face beamed with a broad smile of gratitude. My mother was meanwhile consumed with the desire to introduce me to the patriarch and ask for his blessing. I myself was not very keen on the idea. In spite of my adoration I told myself (how wise children are!): "What does blessing mean? How can the old gentleman bless me? And besides how strange it seemed that my mother, who was a Catholic and who pretended to be or to have been a royalist" (she had read the *Memoires of Madame de La Rochejaquelein* in her childhood) "wanted me to receive the blessing of this old freethinker!" Such was the strength of the religious warmth that surrounded the figure of Hugo! But was any poet more religious than the man who wrote *A Villequier?* I realized afterwards that people like my mother, who have lost a beloved daughter, secretly identify their own tears with those of the unfortunate father; and this communion of sorrow is worth all the religions put together. I rather regret today that I did not not receive the mystic blessing of that old puffed hand. But I at least communed with his eyes and heart, on that pleasant afternoon of the summer before his last.

I saw him again the following year, on May 15, 1884, at the Trocadero, where from a box, like Voltaire, he witnessed his own apotheosis. Camille Saint-Saens directed his *Hymn to Victor Hugo.*

And the next year, 1885, the year of his death, I received a summons (I still preserve it), issued to the "pupils of the Lyceums and colleges of Paris," to appear on Thursday, February 25, at 8 p.m. on the Place de la Concorde, before the statue of Strasbourg, to take part in the procession which would march to Victor Hugo's house in honor of his eighty-third birthday. The card bore the stamp: "The Patriots of the Lyceums and Colleges of Paris." For the patriots and the internationalists each laid rival claim to Hugo. He belonged to both—and to many others as well.

But before coming to his death, I would like to tell what the years 1884-85 meant to us, and the fever of exultation and lyrical transport which fired our youth, my youth in particular. For me 1884 was the sacred year in which Berlioz, Wagner, Shakespeare, Spinoza came within my reach.

In January I saw Mounet-Sully in *Œdipeus-Rex,* in May I saw Sarah Bernhardt as Lady Macbeth. In February I attended the first performance of the religious scene in *Parsifal,* and in March I heard the first act of *Tristan.* By his rendering of the *Concerto in E-flat,* Anton Rubinstein gave me the great

est insight into Beethoven that I ever received in my whole life. Then came the *Ninth Symphony*. Next I heard Liszt direct his *Mass of Gran* at Saint Eustache, and on March 1 and 8, 1885, the first Paris performances of the second act of *Tristan* ... It is hard to convey how these mighty revelations shook the soul of a whole generation. I have retained the impress to this very day. At the same time, I was overwhelmed by "the Spirit of Nature" (in the style of *Faust* and of *Manfred),* by a feverish pantheism, which was fostered by my summer excursions to the mountains. I felt drowned, swept away in a boundless spiritual sea by waves of music and poetry. I nearly foundered. For two years in succession I failed at the normal school entrance examination; in 1884, to the greater glory of Shakespeare who submerged me; all my days were sacrificed to him. (From these months I have preserved a book of notes on Hamlet, which doubtless contains the best, the most intense, of all my youthful writings.) In 1885 I was the victim of Hugo, Hugo was dying, Hugo was dead! What room could there be for other thoughts when our demigod departed this earth? I have preserved a bulky sheaf of notes dated from May 18 to June 1, on the great man's death and apotheosis.

On the first rumor of his illness I rushed to the house on the Avenue d'Eylau. I cut my classes and stood in the street anxiously waiting for news along with hundreds of admirers, most of them workers, who hung on the words of people who left the house. On Thursday, May 21st, I signed the register in the hallway. At that very moment the last crisis set in, with extreme violence. And Hugo died on May 22nd at one-thirty in the afternoon. I like to imagine (without actually believing it; the mind likes to pretend to itself) that the thunderstorm which burst over Paris at the time when the old god lay dying was caused by the same supernatural forces which had signaled the death of Napoleon and that of Beethoven with salvos of heavenly artillery. On Sunday, May 24th. I returned for a last time to the house where he lay slumbering. The Avenue d'Eylau was thronged with people.A tremendous queue had formed; the people in this devout procession were moved by the single desire to inscribe their names on the register. Next to the signatures of political figures and the Japanese Minister I read "Fouquer, ragpicker, Avenue de Messine." There were rhymed inscriptions and naive exclamations: "We mourn our father! ..." There were messages of condolence to the family from a son of Canaris and a descendant of El Cid Campeador. The young girls of Strasbourg shed their tears ...

On the 26th the street signs on the Avenue and Place d'Eylau were taken down. They were replaced with signs inscribed with the name of Hugo, so that Victor was borne to his Triumphal Arch over his own Avenue.

On the 28th the chaplains of the Pantheon removed the consecrated urns and the Host from the building, which was secularized to serve as an altar for the hero. The evening of that same day unconcerned workers smoked their pipes in the reconquered edifice. The Church was banished from the Temple of Glory by the lash of the author of *Châtiments*.

On Saturday the 30th and Sunday the 31st I spent my evening and part of the night by the Triumphal Arch. A great black shroud was draped diagonally across the left side of the monument. The sculptured group by Falguière atop the Arch was swathed in black crepe, which billowed in the wind. An enormous black and silver sarcophagus set on a double pedestal, and raised to two-thirds the height of the piers of the arch, stood stark against the sky. Two hundred funeral lights burned with red and green flames. Guards on foot and horseback formed a barrier to the waves of the roaring crowd. The lamps around the square were veiled in crepe and their posts covered by

shields, each of which bore the name of one of the poet's works. On the Place de la Concorde, the cities of France were in mourning. Troups of men wandered about the Champs-Elysées singing hymns (what hymns!) to the hero. . . .

Shed your tears my noble land,
Today all your children mourn,
What a blow to your injured soul!
Your beloved son sleeps deep in the tomb.
Let us bow before the noble dead.

But at the Etoile, around the Arch, where the "loved son," the god, slept like a conqueror, on the field of glory which he had wrested from his great rival, Napoleon—there could be no thought of tears. Cries and yells mingled with raucous laughter, girls in trousers perched on the top rung of stepladders allowed themselves to be pinched in the rear. The entire population was tipsy, as in a Kermesse by Jordaens. The old man whom I saw on that afternoon in the gardens of the Byron Hotel, the old Orpheus, the dying man whom thousands of anxious bosoms had aided in his final combat with the "black light," [1] was far away. What remained was the carcass of a Roman emperor asleep beneath the Arch of Vespasian, while the forum crowd surged about. And June 1 was the day of Triumph: *Senatus Populasque,* and the whole Empire, one might have said the whole earth, filed past. All lands save Germany and England [2] were represented.

All the provinces were there, headed by the lost provinces of Metz and Strasbourg, and all the youthful countries, Poland, Russia, Greece, America, etc. All walks of life were represented, porters, cabmen, bakers, pastry-makers, plumbers, trunkmakers, dentists, etc., and all circles, including even the "Epicureans" and the "Children of Gaiety." It was a laughing, joyous, Dionysian procession. . . . The armed guards, who escorted the dead, should have been replaced by a long chain of pretty girls, scantily attired. Admiring bystanders stared wide-eyed at the passing throng and cheered. The trees along the Champs-Elysées groaned beneath the weight of onlookers; branches broke. In each of the cup-like vases that lined the avenue, a man sat swinging his legs in the posture of one of Grevin's cupids, bathing its bottom in a glass. Marly's horses and the statues of the cities were crawling with human ants to their very pinnacles. The balconies on the Rue Soufflot blossomed with gay spring attire. Seven floors above the streets, on the roof of the "Hotel of Great Men," a young mother nursed her baby in the shadow of a chimney. . . . What happiness!

In the center of the pomp and rejoicing, the Bacchantes, lictors and le-

[1] It is said that Hugo's last words as he died were: "I see black light . . ."

[2] The absence of Germany seemed natural but that of England caused indignation. At the demand of the Lord Mayor the Municipal Council of London had even refused to consider the proposal of Sir John Benet that they convey their condolence to France. Rochefort became the outraged spokesman of the people's wrath in a diatribe that appeared in the *Intransigeant*:

"All of Europe was at the Pantheon on Monday. England alone sulked at home. Let her remain there, until the time when Ireland and all her other subject peoples at last succeed in overthrowing her."

These invectives set the tone of the feelings which I experienced along with the majority of Frenchmen. To be sure England was more the "hereditary enemy" at the time than Germany, whose hand we were ready to shake provided she returned Alsace-Lorraine.

gionaries, the heaps of flowers, wreaths and weapons, was an empty space and in it stood the hearse of the poor, utterly bare and utterly black, with two small wreaths of white roses. Death. The last antithesis.

I was not yet rid of him. From the depths of his crypt the old man continued to haunt me. I spent the spring and summer reading his works. And I was turned down a second time at the Normal School.

After that I retained a grudge against him. And my disaffection began. However, in the months that followed I saw the production of *Notre Dame de Paris,* with Taillade, and *Marion Delorme,* with Sarah, who was never more ravishing.

But I began to come under the spell of Renan, the old Celtic Merlin, who amused himself at the time with his philosophic theater: *Le Prêtre de Nemī* (December 1885), *L'Abbesse de Jouarre* (1886). And suddenly the doors of the East opened. In the spring of 1886 the fresh and unspoilt breath of *War and Peace* blew in and swept away all else. My first act as a student at the Normal School on the Rue d'Ulm, which I had entered on November 2nd, 1886, was to make my section buy the works of Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky. Romanticism was swallowed up in these turbulent mixtures of burning reality.

But on December 2nd I still took part in the traditional Normal School demonstration. (I do not know how long this tradition was kept up.) At nightfall all the lights were turned out and the members of the sections, mysteriously wrapped in conspiratorial robes, or in their bed-clothes, passed through the long dark corridors, exchanging the passwod: "*Ad augusta per augusta,*" to the great hall of the "archicube Mega," chief of the clan, the skeleton of a fossil elephant. In the room was a long table to a corner of which a tricolor flag was fastened. Those who wanted to denounce the *coup d'état* climbed up on the table and read a part of *Châtiments* assigned to them. Suarès was one of these. He read the end of *Expiation* and *Floreal*. I must say that sincere admiration for Hugo did not exclude irreverance. We honored the god but we twitted him. We leavened *Châtiments* with a ballad about Barbés. In the refectory we formed an array of tragi-grotesque anti-Bonaparte banners. Our banner portrayed the Republic pulling the tail of an eagle which wept red tears, on one side, and on the reverse side it showed a panoply of skulls and tibias. The streamers proclaimed:

"The uncle was a vampire. The nephew is a jackal. . . ."

"I swear to uphold the Constitution."—"Traitor!"

In the middle of the meal the "wounded child" was borne in on a stretcher. The school's four Bonapartists were furious, and ostentatiously pinned bunches of violets to their hats.

I interred Victor Hugo for the last time on March 31st, 1887, at the Academy, where I atended the reception tendered to his successor, Leconte de Lisle, by Alexander Dumas the younger. It was a beautiful setting. Leconte de Lisle was sepulchral; the only time he livened up was when he launched a violent tirade, in very poor taste, on *Torquemada,* and cried anathema against "the idiocy of a monstrous faith." But Dumas, the other gravedigger, like the one in Hamlet, was jolly and entertained the public. He juggled with the dead man's skull. He put on quite a performance! The Academy members were in stitches. Through the biting nasal voice and sarcasm of the large rumple-haired buffoon they relieved themselves of the repressed grievances which they had nursed against the dead for so many years. At last! At last! The public laughed with them. I realized afterwards that the surest way to enter

the Academy is, as Farrere[1] well realized, to attack Victor Hugo. I left the ceremony unimpressed by the quips of the hilarious gravedigger; but without protest. This time the dead was completely dead. His immortality had begun.

It began as is the rule, with the ingratitude of posterity. And I contributed my share. I forgot Victor Hugo. When we had occasion to mention him at the *Revue d'Art Dramatique* where I first tried my arms as a critic, it was condescendingly with the trenchant point of a haughty pen.

And then the years passed. We proceeded towards other horizons. We fancied we had traveled far from the past and the old wizards . . . Then, at an elbow in "the road that zigzags upward," we again returned to Victor Hugo and Voltaire (who would have expected to see them arm in arm?) during the war, in order to condemn the war. We had treated both of them unjustly. And now they took revenge by coming to our assistance in the fight. During my exile in Switzerland I had time to recast all my judgments. I reread everything I had read. And the man of fifty shook hands with the youngster, over the head of the man between the ages of twenty and forty. They were united by common admiration. But they did not admire for the same reasons. Now I not only valued Voltaire's irony, but his humanity, and the indomitable energy of the free spirit who had said:

"We only have two days to live; we should not spend them crawling at the feet of miserable scoundrels. Nothing great is ever accomplished save by the genius and steadfastness of one man, who fights against the prejudices of the multitude."

And it was no longer merely the great music of Hugo that exalted us; it was the newly revealed depth of thought and faith, contained in the *Contemplations:* "What the voice of the shadows said," the somber light, the "black light," that stole over him as he died. We discovered the value of the things which his contemporaries, even his intimates, had put to ridicule, for which they harshly teased the old man, saying that he had been dropped as a child. They belonged to the most precious, and most vital things which the great thinker concealed beneath the fatal splendor of his too clairvoyant genius. He had to keep them under lock to protect them from the jibes of the wits. This hemisphere of his thought was only explored after his death.[2] And his grandiloquent appeals to humanity which were laughed at the days when dilettantism and positivism bloomed in the garden of the Republic under Grevy, acquired a revolutionary and heroic meaning after the Horsemen of the Apocalypse had passed over devastated Europe between 1914 and 1918.

And I re-read a letter from the man in Guernsey which I have in my possession. It was written from Hauteville-House, in November 1859, to an exile who had returned to Paris and it says:

"Dear proscribed (for you cannot lose this title, and there is something hallowed in proscription . . . .), do not despair over the crowd; it still contains the Word, even though in latent form; and you are one of those men who on a future day must give voice to it. . . . To you belongs the honor and the happiness that the future counts upon you. Your mind is one of those deep urns that guard the flame. I have no need to tell you: Courage! But I do tell you: Hope! . . ."

Today, when so many proscribed have been hallowed by the noblest of misfortunes, we raise in our hands "the deep urn that guards the flame," and we repeat the word of life: "Hope!'

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[1] Claude Farrere had called Victor Hugo an idiot, to the delight of the reactionaries.

[2] *La fin de Satan* was published in 1886, *Dieu* in 1891.

I write these lines at Villeneuve, at the foot of the mountains on the shore of the lake, in these gardens where I met the old Hugo fifty-two years ago this August. Circumstances led me to make this my abode without thinking of him (but does one ever know?). A few steps from my house stand the charred ruins of the Byron Hotel which burned down two years ago. But the stairway over the garden, from where the old man addressed the people and shouted in his cracked voice: "Long live the Republic!" is still intact. Sometimes I hear his shuffling step along the walks. From my window facing the park I see the centuries-old chestnut tree in whose shadow Bonaparte is said to have rested on the road to Marengo. The two rivals were always near each other.

But the little canton of Vaude has forgotten Napoleon's hosts; nothing marks their passage, any more than these historic ruins, the very traces of which will soon be obliterated, retain the souvenir of Wagner, who wrote his *Death of Siegfried* here, or the footprints of Tagore and Gandhi. I am the guardian of these mighty shades. I myself am a shade in their train. Those who come in the future shall find these images of the past inscribed in this valley, between the lake and the mountain wall: the Imperial eagle which soars above the Alps, the plum colored robe of Tagore and his figure of the Eternal Father, the Mahatma's shaved head and lively eyes behind their heavy lenzes, the hoary head of the "old Orpheus" with his muzzle like that of a good-natured lion, and Wagner's strident piano, sounding the prelude to Tristan's eternal flux of sorrow and desire.

George Lukacs

Narration vs. Description [1]

A Contribution Toward the Discussion on Naturalism and Formalism

V

The adherents of the naturalistic method might ask: But what about the intensive life of things? And the poetry of things? How about the poetical truth of description?

To answer these questions we must turn to the basic problems of epic art. What is it that makes things poetical in epic art? Is it really true that a description, skillful and precise as it may be, of the deatils of phenomena of the theater, let us say, or of the market, or the exchange, reproduces the poetry of the theater or the exchange? We take the liberty of doubing this. Boxes and orchestras, stages and pits, backstage and dressing rooms are in themselves inanimate, uninteresting, entirely unpoetical objects. They remain unpoetical even when filled with people, if the destinies of these people do not stir us. The theater and the exchange are junction points of human endeavors, stages or arenas for the interrelations of people, for their struggles. And only in this connection, only inasmuch as the theater and the exchange serve as mediums for these humán relations, only inasmuch as they are shown as indispensable concrete mediums for concrete human relationships, do they become poetically important as a medium.

There is no "poetry of things" in literature independent of man and his destinies.

And it is very doubtful whether the so highly praised completeness of description and fidelity of technical details is capable even of giving us a true image of the objects described. Every object, which really plays a role in an essential action of a poetically stirring character in a novel, becomes poetically significant when this action is narrated in the right manner. A recollection of the profound poetical impression made upon us by the tools picked up out of the shipwreck in *Robinson Crusoe* proves our contention.

Compare with this any of Zola's descriptions. Take, for instance, a backstage scene in *Nana*: "A painted canvas came down. It was the scenery for the third act: the Grotto in Aetna. Some stage hands set poles into the receptacles provided for them, while others brought in pieces of movable scenery and fastened them to the poles with strong ropes. In the background a man set up a searchlight with a red disc: This was the wild fiery glow of the volcano's crater. The entire stage was in a wild confusion, in a seemingly unresolvable confusion and scrimmage; and still every minutest movement was necessary, every manipulation ordered. The prompter promenaded leisurely amidst this hurry-scurry to give his legs some exercise."

Who receives anything from such a description? It gives no real conception of the theater to one who has no previous knowledge of it; and to one who is acquainted with the technics of the theater it offers nothing new. Poetically considered, this description is superfluous. Moreover, this aspiration for objective "truth" of description contains a very dangerous tendency for the novel. One need not know anything about horses in order to be able to comprehend fully the dramatic essence of Vronsky's participation in the

[1] The first part of this article appeared in *International Literature*, No. 6.

races. But the naturalistic school strives for an ever greater professional "trueness" of technical terms; uses ever more of the specific jargon of the trade described by them. Thus, the studio is described as much as possible in the specific language of the painter, the workshop in the language of the metal worker, etc. A new literature is created, a literature for the connoisseur, for the literati, who know how to value the difficulties of literary rendition of this special, professional knowledge, and of the inclusion of the special trade jargons in the literary language.

The Goncourts expressed this tendency in the clearest and most paradoxical manner: " 'Most unfortunate are those works of art whose beauty is comprehensible only to artists . . . .' This is one of the most foolish things that could ever be said. It belongs to D'Alembert. . . ." In their fight against the profound truth expressed by this great pioneer of progress, the Goncourts, who were among the founders of the naturalistic school, declare themselves unconditional adherents of the "art for art's sake" doctrine.

Things become animated poetically only through their connection with human destinies. The epic poet, therefore, does not describe them. He establishes the role played by things in the entanglement of human destinies. Lessing fully comprehended this basic truth of poetry: "I find that Homer depicts nothing but the development of action and that he portrays bodies and all individual things only to the extent of their participation in these actions. . . ." And he illustrates this basic truth so convincingly, by means of an important example from Homer, that we think it will be worth citing the entire passage from *Laocoön.*

The portrayal of the scepters of Agamemnon and Achilles form the subject of this passage. ". . . and what does Homer do in order to give us a more complete and clear idea about this famous scepter? Does he describe, besides the gold studs, the wood out of which it is made, or the carving on the head? No. Were the description intended for a heraldic record, Homer would have given us such a description. I am quite convinced that many of our new writers would have given just such a description, naively confident that they have scored a success if a painter can reproduce their descriptions on canvas. But does Homer strain to excel the painter? He gives us the history of the scepter. At first we see it at Vulcan's workshop; then it glitters in the hands of Jupiter; later it marks the dignity of Mercury; then it serves as the baton of command of the militant Pelops; then it is the shepherd's staff of the peaceable Atreus, etc.

". . . Likewise, when Achilles swears by his scepter to avenge the slight of his reception by Agamemnon, Homer gives us the history of that scepter. We see it covered with green foliage in the mountains; then iron separates it from the tree trunk, bares it of its foliage and bark and makes it suitable to serve the judges of the people as the insignia of their divine dignity. . . .

"Homer certainly aimed not so much to give us a description of two staffs of different material and configuration as to portray vividly the diversity of the authority symbolized by these staffs. One made by Vulcan, the other cut in the mountains by an unknown hand; one the ancient property of a noble family, the other held in the fist of the first comer; one extended by a monarch over many islands and the whole of Argos, the other held by one out of the midst of the Greek people, to whom, along with many others, the preservation of the laws was entrusted. Such was in reality the distance separating Agamemnon from Achilles—a distance which could not be denied even by Achilles himself, no matter how blinded he was by his indignation."

Here we have a precise exposition of the elements which render things really vivid, really poetical in epic poetry. Coming back to the examples from Scott's, Balzac's and Tolstoy's works, cited at the beginning of this article, we shall be compelled to recognize that these writers, *mutatis mutandis,* created along the same principles which Lessing discovered in Homer's works. We say: *mutatis mutandis* for the reason already pointed out by us, that the greater complexity of social relations requires of the new poetry the application of new means.

Description as the dominating method, with its futile attempt at rivalry between poetry and the plastic and graphic arts, is entirely different. The descriptive method of portraying people transforms them into inanimate things, into *nature morte.* Painting alone possesses the means to make the physical features of an individual serve as a direct expression of his deepest inner human nature. And it is by no means a mere coincidence that at the same time when the graphic tendencies of the naturalistic descriptive method in literature degrade the portrayal of people, presenting them as mere component parts of a still-life, we observe also the loss in painting of the faculty of exalted sensitivity of expression. Cezanne's portraits are just as much *nature mortes* in comparison with the humanly soulful totality of Titian's or Rembrandt's portraits as are the portrayals of people by the Goncourts or Zolas in comparison with those by Balzac or Tolstoy.

The corporeal substance of an individual becomes poetically vivid only through his interrelations with other people, only through his effect upon them. Lessing clearly recognized this in Homer's portrayal of Helen's beauty and analyzed it correctly. In this respect also we can see how very closely the classics of the realistic school followed the requirements of epic art. Tolstoy depicts Anna Karenina's beauty exclusively through its effects upon the development of the action, through the tragedies caused by this beauty in the lives of other people and in her own life.

The descriptive method does not present things poetically, but transforms people into inanimate things, into details of still-life. The individual traits of people simply coexist and are described one after the other instead of being interwined and thus revealing the complete living oneness of an individual in his most diverse manifestations, in his most contradictory actions. The false spaciousness of the external world is matched by the schematic narrowness of the characteristics. The individual appears as the finished "product" of social and natural component elements, which are considered as entirely heterogeneous factors. The profound social truth of the mutual intertwining of social conditions with the psychophysical nature of people is always lost. Taine and Zola admire the portrayal of the erotic passion of Balzac's Hulot. They, however, see only the medically pathological description of a "monomania." They see nothing of the profound portrayal of the connection between Hulot's eroticism and his career as a general of the Napoleonic period, the connection which Balzac emphasized especially through the contrast with the eroticism of Greval, that typical representative of the regime of Louis Philippe.

Description based on *ad hoc* observations must necessarily be superficial. Of all the naturalistic writers, Zola surely worked most conscientiously and tried to study his subject most earnestly. Nevertheless, many of the destinies described by him are superficial and false at the most decisive points. We shall limit ourselves to a few examples brought out by Lafargue. Zola ascribes the addiction to drink of the building worker Coupeau to the latter's unemployment, while Lafargue proves that the heavy drinking of certain groups

of French workingmen, among them the building workers, is due to the casualness of their employment, and the fact that the beer saloons serve as labor exchanges where they wait for jobs. Lafargue also shows that Zola in his novel *Money* superficially ascribes the Gundermann-Saccard antagonism to the antagonism between Judaism and Christianity. In reality the struggle which Zola attempts to portray is between the old style of capitalism and the new type of capital investment banks.

The descriptive method of the naturalistic school is *inhuman*. The fact that it transforms people into still-lifes is only the artistic symptom of this inhumanity, which manifests itself in the ideological and artistic conceptions of the most important representatives of this school. Zola's daughter mentions in her autobiography, her father's remark about *Germinal*. Zola accepts Lemaitre's definition of the novel: "A pessimistic epopee of the animalistic in the human," on condition that the conception "animalistic" be precisely defined. "In your opinion it is the brains that distinguish the human being," he writes to the critic; "but I find that an important role is played also by other organs."

We know that Zola's emphasis on the "beastly element" was his protest against the bestiality of capitalism, which he did not comprehend. But this unconscious protest changes in the literary presentation into a fixation of the inhuman, the beastly.

The method of observation and description came into existence with the pretense of rendering literature scientific, of transforming literature into applied natural science, into sociology. But the social moments grasped by observation and fixed by description are so poor, so schematic, that they easily change into their polar antipode, into complete subjectivism. And this is the inheritance received by the various naturalistic and formalistic tendencies of the imperialist period from the founders of the naturalistic school.

VI

Every poetical composition is determined in its principles of composition by the *Weltanschauung* of the author. Let us take a very simple illustration. Sir Walter Scott places in the center of most of his novels—think of *Waverly* and *Old Mortality*—a relatively mediocre personality, who remains undecided in the great political struggles portrayed in the novel. What does Scott achieve by this? The undecided hero stands between the two camps: in *Waverly*, between the Scottish rebellion in favor of the Stuarts and the English government; in *Old Mortality*, between the puritan revolution and the representatives of the Stuart restoration government. Thus the important representatives of both extreme parties may be alternately connected with the destinies of the heroes. The great personalities of the political extremes are thus portrayed not only socially and historically but also individually, humanly. Had Sir Walter Scott placed in the center of his narrative one of his really important figures, it would have been impossible to bring it into active human relations with its opponents. The novel would have become a description of an important historical event, but not a stirring human drama in which we may become acquainted with the typical representatives of a great historical conflict.

Sir Walter Scott's great epic skill is manifested in this manner of composition. This skill is not however of a purely artistic origin. Sir Walter Scott himself takes a "middle" stand in matters of English history, a conciliatory stand between the extreme parties. He is just as much opposed to the radical

puritanism, especially to its plebian trends, as to the catholicizing reaction of the Stuarts. The artistic substance of his composition is thus a mirror reflection of his politico-historical views, the form for expressing his *Weltanschauung*. The hero's stand between the parties is not just a favorable opportunity to portray both parties; it is at the same time the expression of Sir Walter Scott's *Weltanschauung*. Scott's humanly poetical greatness is manifested by the fact that in spite of this preference for his heroes, based on his own world outlook, he saw and convincingly portrayed to what extent the energetic representatives of the extreme parties surpassed his heroes in human magnitude.

We selected this example for its simplicity. For in the case of Scott we have before us a very uncomplicated, and above all, a direct connection between his *Weltanschauung* and his manner of composition. With most of the other great realists, these connections are much more indirect and complicated. The character of the "middle" heroes, a very propitious one to establish epical tone and focus the composition, is a formal device, which may find various ranges of expression. This "middle" character must not necessarily manifest itself as human mediocrity. It may be the consequence of social position or the result of a singular human situation, etc. The important task is to find a central figure in whose destiny the essential extremes of the world which is being depicted cross one another so as to permit the portrayal of the totality of this world with all its dynamic contradictoriness. So, for instance, does Rastignac's social position as a propertyless nobleman serve as an intermediary between the world of the Pension Vauquer and the world of the aristocracy; or Lucian de Rubenpres' indecision between the world of aristocratic, journalistic, etc., pushers and the pure striving towards the genuine art of the D'Arthez circle, etc.

But the writer must have a firm and active *Weltanschauung*; he must see the world in its dynamic contradictoriness in order to be at all in a position to select as the central figure a person in whose destiny these contradictions cross one another. The world outlooks of the great writers are exceptionally varied. The manners in which these various world outlooks find their epico-compositional expression are still more varied. For the deeper, the more differentitated, the greater the store of actual life experience, the more heterogeneous may its compositional expression become.

But without a *Weltanschauung* there can be no composition.

Flaubert felt this necessity very deeply. He quoted over and over again Buffon's profound words: "To write the proper thing means at the same time to feel properly, to think properly and to speak properly." But Flaubert stood this ratio up on its head. He wrote to George Sand: "I am trying hard to think properly in order to be able to write properly. But to write properly is my aim, I make no secret of it." Flaubert according to this, did not achieve a *Weltanschauung* in life and then express it in his works, but strove as an honest man and substantial writer for a world outlook because he understood that without it there can be no literature of any magnitude.

This reversed way cannot result in anything. In the same letter to George Sand, Flaubert admits this failure with astonishing frankness: "I lack 'a well founded and all embracing concept of life.' You are right, a thousand times right. But where can I find the means for changing this? I am asking you. You do not brighten my darkness with metaphysics, neither my darkness, nor that of anybody else. The world's religion or catholicism on the one hand, progress, brotherhood, democracy on the other, do not any longer answer the requirements of the present. The new dogma of equality preached

by radicalism, is tentatively refuted by physiology and history. I see no possibility today either of finding a new principle or of paying any attention to the old principles. And so I am in search of that idea upon which everything else depends, and cannot find it."

Flaubert's confession is a remarkably frank confession of the general crisis on the question of a *Weltanschauung* of the bourgeois intellectuals of the post 1848 period. Objectively, however, this crisis was felt by all of his contemporaries. With Zola it took the form of an agnostic positivism. He said that we can learn and describe only the "how" of events, but not their "why." The Goncourts developed skeptical, superficial indifference toward questions of a *Weltanschauuung.*

In the course of time this crisis inevitably becomes aggravated. The fact that during the imperialist period agnosticism develops ever more into mysticism is no solution of the crisis, as many contemporary writers imagine, but is, on the contrary, a further aggravation of it.

The *Weltanschauung* of a writer is only a condensation of the totality of his life experience raised to a certain height of generalization. The importance of a *Weltanschauung* for the writer lies, as Flaubert correctly saw it, in the opportunity it presents of bringing the contradictions of life into an ample and ordered concatenating, and in the fact that it forms a basis for proper feeling and proper thinking, upon which proper writing may be founded. The isolation of the writer from active participation in the struggles of life, in the abundant variety of life, makes all questions of *Weltanschauung abstract.* It does not matter whether this abstraction finds its expression in pseudo-scientific theories, mysticism or indifference toward the great problems of life. In either case it strips the problems of world concept of their artistic fertility, that fertility which they possessed in the old literature.

Without a *Weltanschauung* it is impossible to narrate properly or to achieve a composition which would reflect the differentiated and epically complete variety of life. Observation and description are just a *substitute* for the dynamic coordination of life in the writer's mind.

How could epic compositions be based on such premises? And what may be the merit of such compositions? The false objectivism and the false subjectivism of the modern writers, both alike, lead inevitably towards a *schematization* and *monotonization* of the epic composition. In the case of the false objectivism of Zola's type, the objective unity becomes the main principle of composition, which is made up of a detailed description of all the important objective elements of such a thematic complex, a description from every angle. It results in a series of static pictures, of still-lifes, connected only by their objective unity. These pictures, according to their intrinsic logic, just stand alongside one another, in no integral sequence, and have no casual connection.

The so-called action is only a thin thread for the stringing together of these still-life pictures. This action secures only a simple sequence of separate still-life pictures, a sequence which is very superficial artistically, accidental and inefficient. The opportunities for any artistic variations in such compositions are very slight. The writers are therefore compelled to surprise the reader with the novelty of their themes and originality of description in order to make him forget the innate monotony of this sort of composition.

The opportunities for compositional variations are not much greater in novels composed in the spirit of false subjectivism. The scheme of such compositions consists of a direct reflection of the basic mood of the bourgeois writers

of the twentieth century: disillusionment. A psychological description of the vital subjective hopes and expectations is given, and then, through a description of different stages of life, the wreck of these hopes in their collision with the rudeness and cruelty of capitalistic reality is shown. Here, it is true, the theme itself warrants a certain chronological sequence. But on the one hand, this chronological sequence always remains the same, and on the other, the subject is so determinedly and irrevocably contrasted against the rest of the world that there is no chance for the rise of any active interrelations between them. The highest stage of development of subjectivism in the modern novel (Proust, Joyce) transforms the entire inner life of man into a static object-like condition, which, paradoxical as it may sound, brings extreme subjectivism very close to the inanimate object-like state of false objectivism.

Thus, the descriptive method leads toward compositional monotony, while the genuinely epic story not only permits but even requires an endless variability of the composition and furthers its realization.

But is not such a development of the descriptive method unavoidable? Granted that the descriptive method upsets the old epic composition, granted that the new composition is poetically inferior to the old, still, does not just this new form of composition give an *adequate* picture of "finished" capitalism? Granted that the descriptive method is unhuman, that it changes people into mere appendages of things, into details of a still-life: still, does not capitalism do *just this* with people in real life?

This sounds very convincing, but is not correct.

To begin with, there lives within bourgeois society the proletariat. Marx emphasizes sharply the difference between the reaction of the bourgeoisie and that of the proletariat to the inhumanity of capitalism.

"The propertied class and the class of the proletariat are in the same state of human self-alienation. But the first class is contented and established in this self-alienation; it sees in this alienation evidence of *its own power*, and enjoys in it a *semblance* of a human existence. The second class feels itself annihilated in this alienation, sees in it its own powerlessness and the reality of an inhuman existence."

Further Marx shows the significance of the *indignation* of the proletariat against the inhumanity of this self-alienation.

But when this indignation is poetically portrayed, the still-life of the descriptive manner is blown up into the air and the necessity of the plot, of the narrative method, arises of itself. We can refer here not only to Gorky's masterpiece, *Mother,* but also to novels like Andersen Nexo's *Pelle the Conqueror,* which show such a break with the modern descriptive manner. (It is self-understood that this method of portrayal is the result of the class contact with life of the writer connected with the class struggle of the proletariat.)

But does this indignation against the alienation of humanity, described by Marx, exist only among the workingmen? Of course not. The subjugation of all types of workers tied to the economic forms of capitalism, brain workers as well as manual workers, provokes the most varied forms of indignation among them all. Even a considerable part of the bourgeoisie yields to the capitalistic "upbringing" in the spirit of bourgeois inhumanity only gradually, after violent struggles. The new bourgeois literature here gives evidence against itself. The most typical theme of this literature—the portrayal of disappointment, the loss of illusions, proves the presence of a protest. Every novel about disillusionment is the history of such a protest.

But this protest is planned superficially and is therefore portrayed without real force.

It is self-understood that the fact that capitalism is, as a matter of course, "finished" does not at all mean that from now on everything is completed, and that development and struggle have ceased also in the life of individuals. When we speak of the capitalist system being "completed," we only mean to say that it reproduces itself on an even higher stage of "complete inhumanness." But the system reproduces itself continuously and this process of reproduction consists in reality of a chain of bitter and furious battles. The same applies to the life of every individual, who does not, naturally, come into this world as a ready appendage to the capitalistic machine, and becomes such an appendage only gradually in the course of his life through a series of struggles.

The basic weakness, ideological as well as poetical, of writers of the naturalistic school, lies in their unconditional surrender, as writers, to capitalistic reality. They see in this reality only the result, the outcome, but not the struggle of counteracting forces. And even when they seemingly portray some kind of development—in the disillusionment novels—the final victory of capitalist inhumanity is anticipated in the image of the hero. This means that the characters do not become stiffened in the spirit of "finished" capitalism in the course of the unfolding of the novel, but are portrayed from the very beginning in this state, which can only be the result of the entire process of development. This is why the illusions which are wrecked in the course of the novel produce such a slight, purely subjective impression. It is not a living person whom we learn to know and to love that is spiritually murdered by capitalism in the course of the novel, but a corpse wandering before stage scenery, with an ever-growing consciousness of his deadness. The fatalism of writers, surrendering, even though with a gnashing of teeth, to the inhumanity of capitalism, determines the absence of development in their "development novels."

It is therefore incorrect to assert that this method of portrayal adequately reflects capitalism in all its inhumanity. On the contrary! The writers involuntarily weaken the feeling of horror caused by this inhumanity of capitalism; for the sad fact of the existence of people without an active inner life, without an animated sense of humanity and human development, is much less shocking and provokes much less indignation than the fact that capitalism, in reality, transforms daily and hourly into "living corpses," thousands of live people with infinite human potentialities.

To get a clear understanding of the contrast it is sufficient to compare some of Gorky's novels portraying the life of the bourgeoisie with the works of modern realism. Modern bourgeois realism, which uses the method of observation and description, and has lost the ability to portray the actual pulsations of the process of life, reflects capitalistic reality inadequately, weakly. The deformation and degradation of the individual by capitalism is much more tragic, the bestiality of capitalism viler, more savage and cruel, than the picture which even the best novels of this school can give.

It would, of course, be a gross over-simplification to say that all modern literature has surrendered, without any struggle whatsoever, before the fetichization of things and the "dehumanization" of life brought on by "finished" capitalism. We have already pointed out that the French naturalistic school of the post 1848 period was, judged by its intentions, a movement of protest against this process. Also, in the later literary tendencies of the decaying capitalistic system, it may be observed again and again that their notable

representatives have always linked their various literary tendencies with the spirit of protest. The humanly and artistically significant representatives of the various formalistic tendencies desired to combat the senselessness of capitalist life in their works. An analysis of the symbolism of Ibsen's later works for instance, shows clearly this revolt against the monotonous senselessness of bourgeois everyday life. But these revolts are bound to be without any artistic results unless they get down to the human causes of this senselessness of human life under capitalism, unless the writer participates actively in the actual struggle of people for a sensible arrangement of their lives, unless he encompasses this struggle in his *Weltanschauung* and portrays it artistically.

This is why the humanistic revolt of the better representatives of the intellectuals of the capitalist world is of such great importance to literature and the theory of literature. The extraordinary variety of tendencies, the significance of some of the personalities entering the ranks of this humanistic movement, and our limited space do not permit even a cursory analysis of this movement. We can only indicate briefly that in the open humanistic revolt of Romain Rolland, in the satirical self-disintegration of the isolated and isolating egotism of André Gide, etc., there are already present very earnest tendencies to go beyond the literary traditions of the post 1848 period of bourgeois literature. The intensification of this humanism by the triumph of socialism in the Soviet Union, the concretization of its aims, the sharpening of its struggle against fascist brutality as the highest form of capitalisic inhumanity, brought these tendencies to a higher level. In the theoretical essays of recent years by Malraux, J. R. Bloch, we even see the beginning of a principled analysis of the art of the second half of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. It is self-understood that this struggle in the field of criticism has not as yet reached the concluding stage, has not as yet brought a principled clarity everywhere; but the fact alone of such a principled struggle, of such a principled break with the period of decadence, is a historical symptom of the greatest significance.

VII

But this struggle is very far from finished even with us in the Soviet Union. We see a very interesting, but, to us writers, very mortifying contrast caused by disproportionate development. On the one hand, the colossal upswing of our socialist economy, the rapid expansion of proletarian democracy, the springing up from the midst of the masses of multitudes of outstanding personalities of great initiative, the growth of proletarian humanism in the everyday usage of the toiling masses and their leaders, etc., act as a powerful and revolutionizing factor upon the consciousness of the better intellectuals of the capitalistic world. On the other hand, we see that our literature has not as yet gotten rid of the surviving traditions of the declining bourgeoisie, survivals which hamper its further development.

Yes, our literature has not as yet even reached the road leading to the real liquidation of these survivals. The discussion on naturalism and formalism in the Writers' Union shows very clearly how little we have advanced in this direction. Despite the great clarity of the *Pravda* article, the discussion hardly touched upon the questions of principle concerning naturalism and formalism. The fact that Yuri Olesha finds Joyce's form of presentation more interesting than Maxim Gorky's proves strikingly how little clarity there is among our writers in the problem of form, how—captivated by the later

bourgeois and Bogdanov traditions—they still confuse form with technique. Of the connection between the problems of form and the deepening of the *Weltanschauung* and the revision of the bourgeois survivals in the realm of the world concept there was hardly any mention. And whatever was said, was said in such a vulgarized manner that it could lead only to a muddling of the problem. Thus, Gronsky, for instance, espied in both naturalism and formalism a tendency *directly* hostile to the Soviet Union.

We can, thus, rightly raise the question as to whether the criticism of the method of bare observation and dominating description of the bourgeois literature of the post 1848 period may not be true also of Soviet literature? Unfortunately, we must answer this question in the affirmative.

Think of the composition of most of our novels. They are mostly of the objective-material sort in the naturalistic sense of Zola's documented novels. The fact that they are adorned with more modern "achievements of the latest technique" does not make much difference. They do not portray human destinies and the relations between people for which the things described serve only as mediums. Instead they give us *monographs* about collective farms, factories, etc. The characters serve mostly only as "appendages," as illustrative material for connecting things in a concatenation of things.

Of course it is not only the naturalistic traditions that are at work here. We have already pointed out in the course of this essay that naturalism necessarily strikes out into formalistic tendencies (symbol). Let us add here that the formalist endeavors which are opposed to naturalism, take the same superficial stand towards all important questions, from the point of view of the *Weltanschauung,* as naturalism itself. The relation between the individual and society, the individual and the organization, are at least as much distorted, abstract, and fetichized by expressionism and futurism as by naturalism itself. And the pseudo-realistic current of post war imperialism, with its impoverished revival of documented literature, forms an even more noxious tradition than the old naturalism itself. For the predominance of objects over people in the portrayal impresses itself in these latest formalistic and pseudo-realistic tendencies perhaps still more sharply, soul-lessly and inhumanly.

Sergei Tretyakov, for instance, published a few years ago the following theoretical declaration of principles, which due to its candor may serve us here as valuable evidence, even though it is to be hoped that the author of these views no longer holds them. He wrote that the newspaper gave him the interview as a method of work. The study of certain Soviet novels evoked an enhanced interest in him in the *biography of objects*. It seemed to him that a thing *followed* on its journey through the hands of people *can tell us more about an epoch than a psychological novel* (my italics. G.L.).

Of course, the theory of such "biography of objects" is seldom proclaimed so openly nor is it so crassly fetichistic in its practical application as in Tretyakov's declaration. But we are dealing here with an extreme case of a universally existing tendency. The compositional identity of the majority of our novels is made up, after all, of the biography of an objectively material complex, and the characters appearing in it serve only as illustrative material for the complex.

This is the common cause of the monotony of our novels. Before you ever start reading, you already know the course of events in most of them: There are some wreckers at work at the factory, there is confusion, finally the Party nucleus or the N.K.V.D. uncover the nest of wreckers, and production has an upswing; or because of the sabotage of the kulaks, the collective farm does

not work, the factory worker commissioned to the farm or the M.T.S. (machine and tractor station) succeeds in breaking up the sabotage of the kulaks, and we see the resulting improvement of the collective farm, etc.

It is self-understood that these were the thematics of a development stage, and there is nothing to be said against the fact that many writers worked upon these themes. On the contrary. But the fact that many writers confuse a socially more or less correct definition of the theme with the invention of a plot shows the low level of our literary culture. The real work of the writer—the invention of the plot and the composition—should *begin* where most of our writers consider their work as *finished*. This confusing of the theme with the plot, or better to say this substitution for the plot of a materially complete description of all things belonging to the theme is an important heritage of naturalism.

The significance of the plot does not lie chiefly in its richness of color and variety. These qualities of a good plot are due mainly to the fact that the really human, individual as well as typical, traits of character can be portrayed emotionally and vividly with the aid of a good plot, while the monotony of a bare descriptive presentation of the theme offers no opportunity for the portrayal of developed and individualized characters. The real variability, the infinite richness of life must be lost in the absence of a portrayal of the complicated entanglement of the highways and byways upon which individuals, consciously or unconsciously, willingly or unwillingly, materialize the common task. The bare theme can only indicate the socially necessary course, without showing it as the result of innumerable contingencies. In our novels this social necessity of the theme is extraordinarily narrow and single-tracked. That is one more reason for writers not to stop at the bare formulation of the theme, but to invent individual plots. The scarcity of such plots is due less to the want of talent in the writers than to the fact that writers, captivated by false theories and traditions, do not recognize this necessity at all.

The composition of our novels is just as schematic as that of the naturalism of the Zola school, but with a reversed sign. There the futility of the capitalistic material complex was disclosed, together with the baseness behind the glitter of the exchanges and the banks. With us the signs are reversed. The correct principles, hidden and suppressed in the beginning, become victorious in the end. But the manner in which it is done is equally abstract and schematic in both cases. The socially and historically correct theme does not find a convincing artistic expression.

Lack of individual plot results in the characters appearing as pallid schemes. Characters can attain real human countenance, real human outline, only through the emotions evoked by their deeds. No amount of extensive psychological description of their inner life, no amount of detailed "sociological" description of general circumstances can serve as a substitute for action. And this is just what takes place in most of our novels. The characters in these books run around excitedly, discuss excitedly questions whose importance to them, to their personal destinies, is not shown in these books. All these matters are objectively of the highest importance of course; but the objective importance gains artistic vividness, can convince and carry the reader away, only when the personal interest of these questions to the heroes, who become humanly intimate to the reader, is individually portrayed (*i.e.*, through action, through the plot.) Where this is missing, the characters, almost without exception, become mere *episodic figures* in static pictures. They appear and disappear without arousing any interest.

Again the "modern reader" will ask: but is it not just so in real life? People are commissioned to go somewhere, then to return, delegations arrive, sessions are held, etc. The portrayed relations of the characters conform to our reality.

Ilya Ehrenburg defends this dissolution of the real epic form with almost the same arguments as the modern western formalists: the old classical form no longer conforms to the "dynamics" of the new life. It is very characteristic of the formalism of conceptions and argumentation that in the one case the "dynamics" of life are those of the chaos of decaying capitalism, while in the other case the same dynamics are supposed to signify the construction of socialism, the birth of a new humanity. "The classics," said Comrade Ehrenburg at the Moscow Congress of Writers, "depict firmly settled forms of life and heroes, while we portray life in its motion. The forms of a classic novel applied to contemporary life would therefore require from the author false ties and particularly false solutions. The flourishing of reporters notes, sketches, the enormous interest of artists in living people, all these stenographic notes, confessions, session minutes and diaries are no accident."

This fits in exactly with Sinclair Lewis' description of Dos Passos' style. We have already answered this question. Yes, on the *surface* our reality actually seems like that. But it never seemed different; and the bourgeois writers, who did not go artistically behind this surface, were never able to awaken a real interest in their characters, could portray only episodic figures. Take a simple episode from the work of a great writer—say, the death of Andrey Bolkonsky in *War and Peace*. The wounded Andrey Bolkonsky is operated on in the same room where Anatoli Kuragin's leg had been amputated. He is then transported to Moscow and is brought accidentally into the Rostov house. Does it happen so in reality? Yes, it *may* so happen, when the great writer makes use of the contingencies of life in order to express the humanly essential traits of his characters. But in order to do this the author must have a view of life going beyond the description of the large surface, beyond the abstract description of social phenomena, be they ever so correctly observed—a view espying the *connection* between the two and artistically composing a *plot* out of this connection. This requirement became extinct on account of the general ideological decline of the bourgeoisie. The peculiar contradiction of our literary position lies in the fact that life brings up these questions with ever greater clarity, while our literature insists, with a tenacity deserving of a better cause, on the superficiality of the decadent bourgeois literature, raising this superficiality to the dignity of a method. Fortunately this does not apply to all of our literature. Our outstanding writers feel the necessity of a deep portrayal of the new life and strive with ever greater energy toward the individual plot. This tendency is shown with especial clarity in the latest works of Fadeyev.

This is not a literary problem in the technical sense of the word. The portrayal of the new humanity can not possibly be achieved with this episodic material. We must know exactly, we must experience humanly: *where* it takes its roots, and *how* its human growth was achieved. The description of the past and the description of the "accomplished" new humanity as contrasting static pictures remain artistically trivial. And this triviality is not done away with when it is dressed up in fantastic forms, when it appears as the enigmatic outcome of unknown assumptions. Thus, for instance, the "redhaired" fellow in Shaginian's *Water Turbine* seems extraordinarily interesting on his first appearance. But inasmuch as Marietta Shaginian neither tells the fellow's story, how he came to be such a man, nor reveals his qual-

ities, so interestingly exposed, in an individual plot, this interest dissipates Instead of a grey triviality we are handed a triviality in many colors.

Our writers feel ever more intensely the need to present the inner life of their characters. This undoubtedly is a step forward in comparison with the first steps of our literature.

It must however be remembered that this inner life may become important in a novel only in connection with the plot, as an assumption, as stages on the way or as the result of individual action. Taken by itself the static portrayal of inner life is just as much a still-life as the description of things. Feodor Gladkov, for instance, gives in his *Energy* the copious diary of one of his characters. But this character plays no important role in the plot. As far as the development of the plot is concerned, the information contained in the diary is inessential. It is a mere "document," a mere description of a state, of a condition, and never for an instant rises out of the level of the episodical.

The method of description robs these novels of every tension. The dialectics of social development bring about the fact that the reader knows beforehand the end of the story. This, as we know, would not, from the point of view of genuine narration, be an obstacle to real tension, could even lend the tension a genuinely epic character. But only when this known end is gradually revealed in the course of a concatenation of interesting human destinies, which now seem to be near, now more into the remote distance, etc.

With the descriptive method there is no such tension. In a general social way, which from the artistic point of view means an abstract way, the end is firmly established. But there are no connecting lines between the plot and this end. The different stages of the plot are generally pervaded by a perplexity felt by the characters toward the events. The crisis, from the point of view of portrayal, springs up "suddenly" out of this perplexity. The contradictions of the descriptive method assert themselves here unmitigatedly, especially when, as in the case of many of our writers, the description is made from the point of view of the acting character, for in such cases there appears a picture of a state of things, of a complex of things and of people occupied with these things, all of which are described by a perplexed observer, an observer who has lost his bearings. And when matters are described "objectively," consequently from the point of view of the general theme, these descriptions have no inner connection with the figures and press these figures down to the level of episodes.

Thus the new humanity appears in such novels not as the master of things but as their appendage, as a human component part of a monumentalized still-life. Here the dominating method of description contradicts the basic historical reality of our great epoch. Of course, it is maintained in all of these novels that the people became the masters of things and they are described, as masters. But this serves no purpose artistically. The relations between humanity and the outer world, the expression of human power in the struggle with the outer world, can be conveyed only by a real portrayal of this struggle. When the struggle between necessity and liberty is epically related with the greatest display of human power, then the underlying figures achieve a human size. Most of Balzac's heroes are stranded in life. The heroes of Gorky's *Mother* are mistreated and thrown into prison, yet in spite of this they display an enormous development of strength and even a mastery of life, while the description of human mastery over things still shows artistically the predominance of things over people.

We have said: Naturalism and formalism *belittled* capitalistic reality, portrayed its dreadfulness more weakly and trivially than reality.

The survivals of naturalism and formalism, the methods of observation and description belittle, alienate the greatest revolutionary process of humanity. Our writers, like the bourgeois writers before them, who made use of this method, feel instinctively the want of inner meaning in their descriptions and like the others, in their attempt to elevate the inner meaninglessness of the portrayed characters and events by means of artificial, purely exhibitionary contrivances, introduced the symbol. We could cite numerous instances of false thoughtfulness, of puffed up triviality. And the more is the pity that such things often happen with writers who positively have ability to give their stories a real meaning from within. In its application to our great reality, the symbol acts as a miserable substitute for inner poetry, and for this very reason this mania must be exterminated by means of the most trenchant criticism. Think of the puffing up of harmless berries to a symbol of blood in Ilenkov's *Driving Axle,* or the personification of the mountain brook by Shaginian, or especially the closing lines of Gladkov's new novel: "The wires on the masts sang with distant voices, as if a soft accord of some interrupted oratorio was hushed to silence. On the tracks behind the cliffs male and female voices shouted something to one another; these were probably the switchmen. 'Conduct the train to the upper track . . . to the upper. . . .' 'Yes . . . I know to the new . . . leading to the dam. . . .' 'Yes,' thought Miron, gazing into the early dawn, 'yes, on a new track. . . . Life always constructs new tracks.' "

It is comprehensible, yes, it is almost tragic when a Zola or an Ibsen in despair at the futility of the every-day capitalist life which he is portraying, resorts to symbolism. But for writers whose material is our colossal reality, there is no excuse.

All these styles of presentation are survivals of capitalism. But survivals in the consciousness always indicate survivals in reality. At the Komsomol Congress the mode of life of our writers underwent some earnest criticism. Here we can only raise the question that the persevering remnants of the type of "observers" in our literature must have their roots in the mode of life of the writers themselves. And the point in question is not one of simple individualism directly manifesting itself in an anarchistic trend toward isolation. The study of documents *ad hoc,* the reporter-life attitude toward the problems of the epic, the Zola manner, "legal-document" exactness of description, belong to the same category. All this points to the fact that our writers do not as yet create out of the abundance of life experience, out of which great stories could be made, but gather *ad hoc* observations and arrange them naked, in a news item style, or with a lyrically symbolic trim.

Of course there are many writers who portray life in an entirely different manner. But should we examine their relations to the background of life out of which they draw their material, we would see a fundamentally different attitude toward life itself. It is sufficient to indicate the art and life of Sholokhov.

Thus the contrast between active participation in life and observing it, between narrating and describing is with us, just as in the bourgeois world, a problem of the writers' attitude toward life. But that which was a tragic situation for Flaubert is with us simply something erroneous, a survival of capitalism which must be overcome.

It can be overcome and it will be overcome.

Translated from the German by S. Altschuler

K. Stanislavsky

Tasks of the Artists of the Theater

When I heard of the generous rewards received by our theater and its individual workers, I was stirred by a twofold feeling; great joy and gratitude, and at the same time agitation in view of the responsibilities it involved. The responsibilities are great. It is not easy to justify the hopes placed in our theater.

First of all, in common with all artists throughout the world, we have to think seriously about saving the art of the theater which is perishing in all countries. Fortunately in our country, thanks to the support, attention and care of the Party and the Government, art finds itself in exceptional circumstances.

Nevertheless in this country, as in the rest of the world, the keepers of the best art traditions are gradually dying off. The development of the rising generation was retarded in this country too, firstly, due to the World War, and secondly due to our own fault, as we did not devote enough attention to this important question.

Unless extreme measures are taken by us, there will be no one to teach the youth. We must save the roots of genuine art for the rising generation.

Therefore, it is the task of our theater, as of the Soviet theater generally, not only to put on good shows, not only to assist in the growth of Soviet art, but above all, to preserve the art of the theater and its traditions which are gradually being forgotten throughout the world. This is not enough. We must advance the technique of our art and direct it to new achievements.

The only means to this end is to write about our achievements, about the experience of every one of the artists who are masters of their art. Let those who wield the pen take it up and outline on paper their methods of creative effort.

But it is also possible to explain orally, in practical work, their psychological technique to the young artists. Let, therefore, all those who know how to teach, and have the ability to teach, devote part of their energy to pedagogical work.

But this requires a correct method of teaching, good schools and a correct program.

How shall such a program be drawn up, and wherein are the mistakes of the existing programs?

At present the theatrical schools focus the attention of the pupils on the regisseur so as to carry out the tasks given by the regisseur—the creator of the contemporary show. The performers of roles are shown at rehearsals how their roles "are played." These shows of the regisseur are carried out with great precision. But such actors are helpless when left without the inspiring regisseur. While he is in the theater, the work thrives. If the inspiring regisseur goes away, the theater and the entire collective fade and pass on to artisanry and hackneyed patterns.

Is it necessary to prove the wrongness of such a situation? I consider it one of the tasks and duties of the old artists, masters of their art, to teach the pupils to create their roles by themselves after an established general plan. It is necessary to form more independent young actors who are not entirely dependent on the "guidance" of the regisseurs. The aim should be that each

actor shall be a master of his own performance. Let such a "master" bring *his own* work, produced in *his own* creative laboratory. Let the regisseur create from these independent achievements the harmonious ensemble of the performance.

The organization of schools for the training of such actors calls for a new program. Whence should the principles of this program be drawn?

They should be drawn from the following sources.

There exist specific creative laws in our artistic nature. They are obligatory for all people, all countries, times and nations. The substance of these laws should be conceived. It should be made the basis of the school program and studied in all its details. This is the only way for the creation of masters of art.

All the great artists, without being conscious of it, have subconsciously followed this road in their creative work.

It will be said that this is a difficult road. No. It is much more difficult to violate your own nature. It is incomparably easier to follow its natural demands. It is difficult to study the laws of nature, it is difficult to construct on the basis of these laws a simple, comprehensive school program and to study it.

I can think of two types of theatrical schools. One of them is the type of school to which young people come to study their art. Having completed their studies the young people form a theatrical collective which was solidly welded during the course of study and begins to function after graduation. Only individual graduates will go away to other theaters.

Another type of school I should describe as "a school in practice." It is a school attached to a theater. This school, in addition to teaching special subjects, has also public practice classes, *i.e.,* lessons obtained by the pupils in the atmosphere of a theater production itself. In this performance they take part in minor roles and in general mass scenes.

The school, the lesson, with the use of stage effects, costumes, lighting arrangements, the full atmosphere of the stage production with the thousands in the audience—is this not a lavishness of training never known before.

It is infinitely more practical to train actors in the difficult conditions of a public performance than in seclusion, in the presence of the teacher alone or in the familiar surroundings of the classroom.

The rehearsals in the theater are also lessons for the school. They furnish the teacher with new tasks for the next lessons.

The habit of regular appearance on the stage is conducive to the creation of masters of the stage.

Increased qualification of the actors does not diminish the role and significance of the regisseur. On the contrary, with high artistry of the performers the duties of the director become even more subtle and important. To be the co-creator of great artists is more interesting and honorable than to be their exploiter.

The new type of regisseur, as I can conceive with a collective of master artists, demands of future directors different preparation and a different approach to their creative work.

Its basis should be sought in the regisseur's method of affecting the organic nature of artists. The basis are to be found in the knowledge of the laws of our creative nature, our ability to inspire and subtly to propel the creative searches in the right direction.

But the problem of regisseurs is a complicated one. Regisseurs are born and not made. All one can do is assist them in their development. I've realized

it as a result of my experience. Stage directors and administrative regisseurs —they are a different matter, they can be made.

It should be remembered that the question of the art director of a show will aways be a burning one, and every theater has to provide for the possibility and sad necessity of working without the help of a regisseur.

What should the procedure in such a case be?

His duties will have to be shifted to the whole collective of masters. There was a time in the Maly Theater when there was no prominent art director, and his place was taken by the masters Shchepkin, Shumsky, Samarin, Medvedeva, Fedotova, and others. They were not only great artists, but also good directors. They were able to work collectively.

Actors who interest themselves in everything pertaining to their art become such versatile masters. Our predecessors did not consider the creation of an image and even of an entire performance to be dependent on the regisseur alone. The images they created themselves, while the harmonious ensemble of the show was worked out by common effort.

We too have to be ready for such collective work and for this we must work out, beforehand, in ourselves and in others, the necessary discipline and ethics.

Our new task arises from the fact that the progressive theater cannot afford to restrict its artistic interests to its own art. It must also study other theaters, being prepared to the extent of its strength, possibilities and abilities, and the time at its disposal, to help art collectives, amateur and collective-farm theaters, and so on.

This should be all the more interesting as there is developed the playgoer who subsequently comes to us. Also artists grow there, young talents are revealed, the methods of psychological technique are formed, and the laws of the organic nature of the artists are learned.

It should be remembered that in our business it is dangerous to become restricted to one's own artistic quests. The new and important task of the progressive theater consists in the constant endeavor to develop its collective into an artistic tower crowning the art of the country. All should aim for the pinnacle of this tower, this should be the standard for all the theaters of our fatherland and if possible, also of the whole world. The striving after the beautiful has an ennobling effect on art, as well as the demand for it. Our task is to arouse and support such strivings.

These are approximately the tasks to be fulfilled in order to justify the solicitude, encouragement, the great, touching attention and the high rewards bestowed on our theater and its workers. These are the real paths which will actually, and not in words, express our boundless gratitude for the confidence placed in us, for the care and encouragement of the true friends of art and of our theater—the Party, and our Government.

Moscow, May 7, 1937

Pavel Markov

The Moscow Art Theater

The Gorky Moscow Art Academic Theater has been awarded the highest distinction—the Order of Lenin. A number of the actors of the theater have received decorations and some of them have been honored with the title of People's Artist of the U.S.S.R. The Art Theater has produced during the years of the revolution some remarkable performances which show how much the theater has become an essential part of the life of the U.S.S.R.

In 1898 the popular theater known as the Moscow Art Theater was opened in Moscow. Its founders were K. S. Stanislavsky and V. I. Nemirovich-Danchenko This young theater acquired world fame and much that was valuable was learnt from it by other theaters in Russia and abroad. It made it its aim to give mass audiences good productions of the best classical and modern plays. It began in a modest way in a small building and with a small company.

One of the most distinctive features of the Art Theater was that its repertory consisted of plays by the best writers. The following list of dramatists whose plays have been performed by the theater during the thirty-nine years of its existence is sufficient to show the high standard maintained: foreign classics: Shakespeare, Goldoni, Molière, Byron, Dickens, Beaumarchais; Russian classics: Griboyedov, Pushkin, Gogol, Leo Tolstoy, Turgenyev, Dostoyevsky, Saltykov-Shchedrin, Tolstoy, Ostrovsky, Pisemsky, Gorky; modern playwrights: Trenyev, Vsevolod Ivanov, Leonov, Katayev, Y. Olyosha, Korneichuk, and others.

A still more important reason for the Art Theater's success has been that it has found a convincingly simple and truthful manner of staging its plays.

The Art Theater bases its work on the best traditions of Russian realist art. It consistently and unwaveringly maintains the greatest possible simplicity and truthfulness in all aspects of its work. Such unity can only be attained by producers who are great artists. Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko are men with great artistic daring, freshness of ideas and personality who today, after a lifetime of achievement in the theater, still preserve to the full their intellectual and creative powers. They have gathered around them a company of talented young actors.

One of the theater's objectives has been that in its productions every part, however subordinate, is acted with the same care and by artists as distinguished as those in the leading parts. The actors of the Art Theater, being welded together by the unity of their ideas about dramatic art, and having thoroughly assimilated the production methods of their teachers, form an integrated group the members of which require often only the slightest hint to understand one another and can act in a single spirit and a single style. That is why even to act in one of the crowd scenes in an Art Theater production is to take an organic part in the performance.

It has been the desire of the Art Theater to show life on the stage directly and concretely, thus giving its performances greater depth and significance than is generally found on the stage. It has taken its stand against all arbitrariness, against the lack of attention to life which prevails in other theaters, and against theatrical clichés.

As its development has proceeded it has increasingly freed itself from trifles and excess of detail. It has realized that the theatrical presentation must be concrete and must correspond to reality, but only in such a degree as makes it possible to present not an imitation of life, but a selection of what is most typical and expressive.

As regards its acting the Art Theater has passed through a similar development Through stubborn effort and artistic invention the theater has penetrated, step by step, into the secrets of dramatic art.

V. I. Nemirovich-Danchenko holds the principle that "the only good producer is the one who, in a remarkable production, is not in evidence." The producer's task is helping the actor to fulfil *himself*, rather than the producer, as profoundly as possible, and interpret the character he is representing in the freshest and most daring manner. The actor is expected not to act his part merely, but to live it.

Although the theater had at one time, and briefly, surrendered to the conventional and symbolic school of drama it has come more and more to the conviction that modern stagecraft can be founded only on the most exacting realism, and on the force of the ideas embodied in the play.

Even during the darkest years of reaction the Art Theater produced plays which were both an emotional and an intellectual stimulus to the public. It was not a revolutionary theater in the direct sense but such productions as Ibsen's *Doctor Stockman*, Chekhov's plays and still more so those by Gorky were for Moscow and the rest of the country important social events, revealing as they did in living characters the ideas and aspirations

cherished by the best representatives of the Russian intelligentsia.

A very important part was played in this respect by Maxim Gorky's dramatic work, which had an immense influence in widening the theater's horizon and bringing on to the stage the advanced social ideas of those days. It is not surprising that the tsarist government answered the theater's aspiration to become a channel for progressive social ideas with repressive measures. Plays were frequently banned by the censor; and the reactionary press did its part by hostile criticism and ridicule.

During the years 1914-16, the Art Theater was deprived of all opportunity to carry out its aims. Russia was passing through a period of black reaction. There was nothing for the theater to produce. It saw with growing despair that its art was losing contact with the people. This became particularly evident during the war. The theater felt that it was imperative to take up more basic problems than those which the drama of that time enabled it to deal with, since the latter was prostrated with the deepest pessimism. It concentrated upon producing the classics and gave increased attention to actors' training.

The theater was emancipated by the Great Socialist Revolution of October. From the very first days of the Revolution it enjoyed public interest and support. The country saw that it had inherited from the old culture a superb artistic treasure. And although the people anticipated from this theater the most impassioned response to the revolutionary events no one hurried it or required it to lower its standard. On the contrary, everyone wanted and expected the theater to give in even greater measure its artistic wealth, its inspiration, and to show the new theatergoer the magnificent productions of classical art and a new, virile drama that would reflect Soviet life. The theater felt that the new era was pregnant with great things. It went on training new actors who together with the old ones now make up the company. The directors of the theater consider that it has never had before such an able group of actors. It still has such renowned actors as Kachalov, Moskvin, Leonidov, Lilin and Knipper-Chekhova who have been with the theater since its founding. It still has its old directors and founders who continue steadfastly to maintain its artistic policy. It has trained young producers. Young men and women who were brought up during the years of the revolution and are in close contact with the life of the country have joined the company. Tarasova, Yelanskaya, Stapanova, Andreyevskaya, Dobronravov, Khmelyev, Livanov and Kedrov and many others like them are among the foremost actors of the Soviet Union.

The Art Theater has retained in its repertory the outstanding productions of its earlier years. It still performs such plays as Alexei Tolstoy's tragedy *Tsar Feodor Ioannovich*, first produced in 1898, Gorky's *The Lower Depths* (1902), Chekhov's *Cherry Orchard* (1904) and Maeterlinck's *Bluebird* (1908); it has also included in its repertory, apart from Soviet plays, such classical productions as *The Marriage of Figaro* by Beaumarchais, Ostrovsky's *Warm Heart* and *The Storm*, Gogol's *Dead Souls*, *The Pickwick Club* after Dickens, and *Resurrection* and *Anna Karenina* from Tolstoy's novels. The theater has thus widened its scope, and it has introduced something essentially new which distinguishes its productions of classical plays from pre-revolutionary performances. It presents these classical plays against a broad social background. It frees Tolstoy's novels from their religious propaganda and presents in *Resurrection* not Tolstoy the moralist but a vividly painted picture of social life. In *Anna Karenina* the Art Theater presents a brilliant exposure of the false society morality and pharisaical laws of tsarism. In its productions of these plays it recreates the atmosphere of the period, the charm of its language, the complexity of its characters and the subtle psychological changes which they undergo.

These features of the Moscow Art Theater are still more in evidence in its productions of modern plays. The truth of the revolution was first thundered forth in *The Armored Train*, a dramatization of Vsevolod Ivanov's novel performed on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the October Socialist Revolution. The theater strove to avoid the declamatory style and to preserve a severe sensibility and thorough humanity in depicting the Civil War and partisan uprisings. It showed the people in its revolt for freedom. In this play it sensed with warmth and joy its creative link with the revolutionary present.

The theater is conscious of the interest and affection with which Soviet theatergoers follow its work. This affection which is felt for it by the masses puts the theater under very great obligations. That is why, apart from utilizing its great classical heritage, it directs all its efforts towards revealing the social truths of contemporary Soviet life.

Many of the plays produced deal with political problems of the day. The theater has shown on its stage the Civil War, the village as it is today, the life of Soviet youth and the world of science. The closer contact it makes with real life, the more clearly it sees how this enriches its work and holds the audience.

The theater believes that it is more imperative and easier for the Soviet theater to be simple and true to life than for any other theater. It holds that bombastic elocution

and the ranting style are out of harmony with our times. It therefore prefers outward austerity to dazzling costumes and a self-sufficient magnificence of scenery.

Both in pre-revolutionary and Soviet times Maxim Gorky had an extremely important revolutionary influence on the theater. The Moscow Art Theater produced Gorky's play *Enemies* and felt in it the only approach to reality which can integrate the class analysis and the artistic analysis.

The realities of Soviet life find their way into the Moscow Art Theater, bringing with them fervor of thought and the truth of great feelings.

The theater is eagerly awaiting a dramatic work which will help it to reveal the poetry and heroism of the Soviet present in all its fulness with that artistic joy with which the whole actors' collective is now filled, regarding as it does the award of the Order of Lenin as laying upon them a tremendous artistic obligation before the whole country.

Alfred Durus

A. M. Kanyevsky [1]

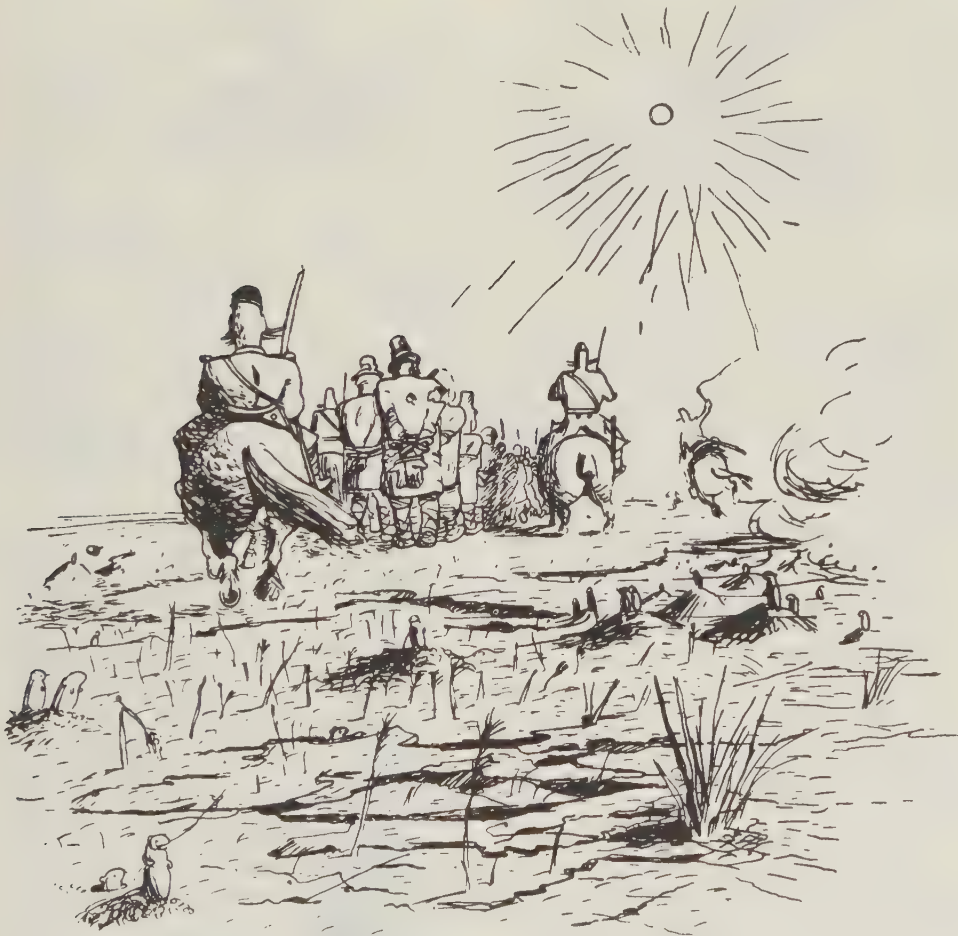
Satirist, poster artist, water color painter, illustrator of children's books and the imperishable literary works of Saltykov-Shchedrin—in all these capacities a master, Kanyevsky is the artistic representative of a generation whose development is determined and moulded by the Soviet power.

For eight years an industrial worker, he took part in the Civil War and then joined the Workers' Faculty. From here he went on to the Art School where he received his diploma in 1930 as an artist of the liberated working class.

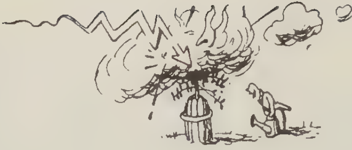
Like Kukriniksi he still remains a lyricist and satirist—a lyricist of hate against the enemies of the workers' state and of unbounded love for the working people.

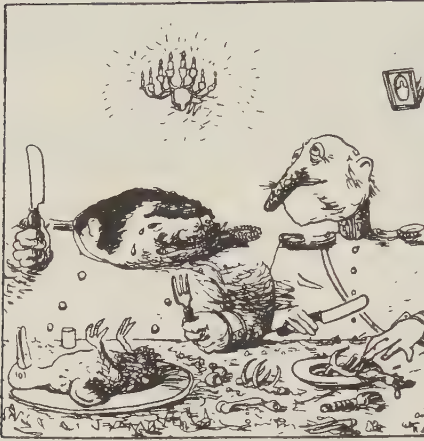
In the convincing and irresistible way in which he gives this love and this hate artistic form, he shows himself to be a herald of proletarian humanism.

There are artists of small caliber who like to put what they have to say into the strait waistcoat of an artistic manner. This



[1] The drawings reproduced here are from illustrations by Kanyevsky to books by Saltykov-Shchedrin.





manner, which is entirely alien to art, is described as their "style." Kanyevsky is not one of these lovers of mere appearances, these shufflers of superficialities, these self-satisfied flash artists who are in love with themselves. He knows that an artistic style can only be forged through great effort and is the crowning achievement of an artist's life.

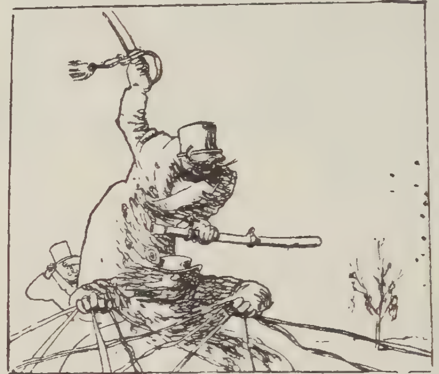
He strives to make what he has to say expressive and to give it a true artistic form in the most profound sense of the word, so as to develop himself as a human being and not merely superficially as an artist. He goes on making the content of this art richer and deeper as he works.

He is a graphic artist of profound artistic and human sensibility, and no mere narrow "artistic expert." It is his aim to give a many-sided picture of his times and he refuses, to be the kind of artist who is left behind by the times.

Through and through a political and Party artist, he is an artistic combatant in mankind's most critical struggle. As a socialist realist he pursues a revolutionary aim even where he may appear to be "standing apart." This is the case even in such intimate works as his water colors.

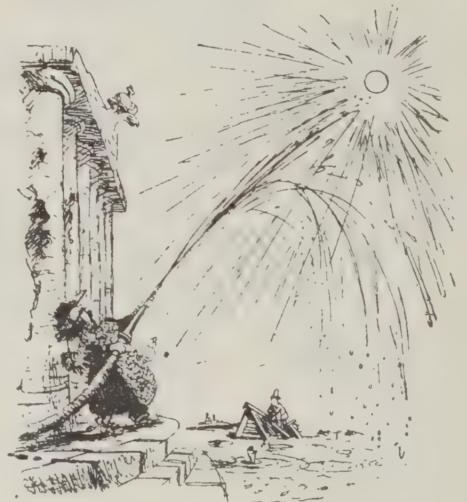
In his posters, which are pioneer works, he has been able to influence collective farm workers on a very wide scale and to sharpen their revolutionary vigilance in the struggle against the class enemy.

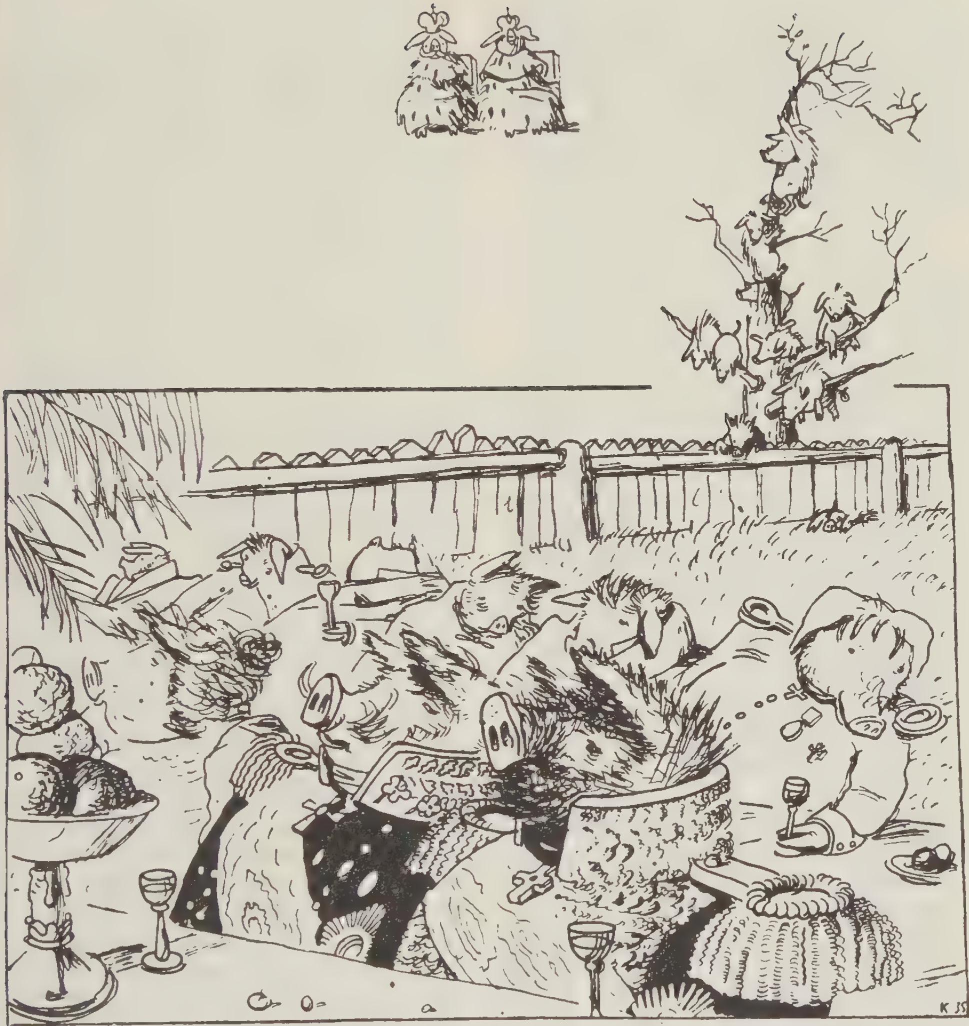
As an illustrator of children's books he has won the hearts of Soviet children and has opened out a new world of knowledge to them with the light and homely style of his drawing.



In his satire he throws a searchlight on the class enemy which penetrates all masks and discloses the true features in all their deformity.

Kanyevsky reached the height of his artistic power in his illustrations of Saltykov-Shchedrin's books. These are brilliant productions worthy of their great literary model. They are penetrating exposures of the barbarism of tsarist Russia. At the same





time they are independent compositions, not mere mechanical translations of the language of literature into the language of pictorial art. These illustrations rank among the best contributions to this form of art by young Soviet illustrators.

Kanyevsky has a trait which promises well for his future development as an artist. That is his modesty. He has the modesty of a man who knows how great and difficult is the task which confronts an artist who wishes to be and to remain worthy of the epoch in which he lives.

Translated from the German
by N. Goold-Verschoyle

V. Vladimirov

The Family Thibault

The Family Thibault, a novel by the French writer Roger Martin Du Gard, is not yet completed. In the third volume of this novel, which recently appeared in France under the title of *Summer 1914*, the author carries the action up to the events that shook the whole capitalist world to its foundations.

In the hectic days preceding the outbreak of war, Jacques Thibault, the chief hero of Du Gard's epic, was already armed with the experience gained as a result of his passionate and persevering enquiry into things in the years of his boyhood and youth.

The Thibault family is a typical bourgeois family religiously observant of the precedence of age and regarding the avaricious and egoistic traditions of bourgeois society as inviolable laws; it is a miniature replica of the bourgeois order. And in this dusty and musty microscopic world Jacques is a "monster," a kind of "white raven." The development of his character is something like the progress of an alien body with sharp angles threatening not only to tear the threads that bind this minute world with the world at large but even to cut its own binding fibers.

Jacques' childhood was spent in a continuous unequal struggle against the despotic rule of his father who wanted all the members of his family to be thorough Thibaults.

When Jacques began to show signs of recalcitrance, a dangerous manifestation from the point of view of a Thibault, his father sent him to a children's reformatory which had been established with his aid and bore his name.

It was the task of this institution to kill all individuality in the children, bend their will and deaden their desires. The children were to be turned out resigned, obedient dummies. Jacques returned to his father's home apparently a "thoroughly reformed" boy. But it was a delusion. All Jacques had learned was protective coloration and from the very first years of his youth he broke with his family and with bourgeois society in general.

Instead of passing his examinations and entering the university he, after a quarrel with his father, fled abroad where he devoted himself to the study of life. He became a journalist and lived in Switzerland. There he came in close touch with a circle of Socialist emigrants and it seemed that the Thibault family was nothing to him but a memory of the past.

However, when his father was on his death bed, Jacques was sought out by his elder brother Antoine, and for a time it seemed as if Jacques had been brought back to the old life again. Antoine was the man to carry forward the banner of the Thibaults. At one time he too had rebelled against his father's despotism and in the days of his youth he had sympathized with his brother and admired his insubordination; but finally he had become a real representative of the Thibaults and had taken great pride in it. As a result the brothers became estranged.

One of them was a hot-tempered youth who doubted everything, who renounced his inheritance rights and forsook his family and country. The other was a prosperous physician who had made good use of Thibault's money, a man in a flourishing position who believed in nothing but "common sense." Each time the brothers met, the gulf between them widened.

On the eve of the war, when Jacques, at the instance of his Socialist club, came to Paris on a secret mission, the brothers were practically strangers.

Jenny de Fontanelle, a girl of whom Jacques is very fond, is a sister of Daniel, Jacques' closest friend from childhood. She is of the same mettle as Jacques, a restless, passionate soul and persevering. But while Jacques sees and understands a great deal, Jenny continues to grope in the dark.

They are rejoined on the eve of the war and Jenny accompanies Jacques in his walks. At a certain meeting Jacques in his conversation gives utterance to a fiery belief in reason, conscience and in the mission of the Second International which, as he believed, would prevent the outbreak of war.

However, Jacques ever more and more loses faith in those whom he has followed. Little by little he begins to see how illusory are his beliefs in the reason, conscience and honor of the taskmasters of the Second International whose deeds are in glaring contradiction to their words about struggle for peace and for improvement in the workers' lot. Jacques now doubts whether reason is strong enough to hold back the hand of the war lords.

Finally, after the outbreak of war Jacques leaves France and proceeds to Switzerland determined to continue his struggle against war.

Jacques and one of his comrades from the old circle set out in an airplane for the front to throw down anti-war leaflets. However, the enterprise ends in a catastrophe.

The airplane crashes and Jacques, seriously wounded, is captured by the French. He is carried away on a stretcher, but during an attack by the Germans is shot as a spy.

With this incident concludes the third volume of du Gard's novel, some chapters of which appear in this issue.

The appearance of *The Family Thibault* is an important event in modern French literature.

Following the traditions of the great realists of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (the Thibault family reminds one of Zola's Rougon-Macquart family), Roger Martin du Gard unfolds before us the fate of a typical bourgeois family against the background of great social events. Du Gard appears as a chronicler of the Thibault family but at the same time he lays bare the evils not only of the Thibault family but also of pre-war French bourgeois society and in a certain sense of the capitalist order as a whole.

Translated by E. D. Levin

V. Verov

The Foreign Legion

Henri Barbusse was the first writer who told the terrifying truth about the imperialist war of 1914-18. His *Under Fire* (in the French orginal *The Fire)* was an alarm to mankind of the destructive fire that consumed human lives by the millions, and destroying cultural values and achievements of ages of progress. *Under Fire* helped dissipate illusions and gave an insight into the inner workings of the war machine. Barbusse wrote in the trenches. In contrast to the cliche of the hero soldier of the mercenary chauvinistic literary hacks, eager to fight for king, country, religion, democracy, civilization, etc., Barbusse rendered living images of deceived, suffering people drawn into the war mill. *Under Fire* bared the hypocrisy of the slogans—"war for liberation," "war to end war," and convincingly proved that the war was not wanted by those who bore its brunt; *i.e.*, the masses of workers, peasants and professionals dressed in soldiers' uniforms.

Barbusse's book, together with the statements of the great humanist Romain Rolland, constituted the first serious protest emanating from the circles of the Western intelligentsia, against the imperialist conversion of Europe into a slaughterhouse. These manifestoes were a sign of the antagonism against the imperialist war ripening in the depths of the European masses. It was followed by several other books describing the sufferings inflicted on mankind by the imperialist war.

Erich Maria Remarque wrote his *All Quiet on the Western Front,* Richard Aldington his *Death of a Hero,* Ernest Hemingway his *Farewell to Arms;* these come to mind among other important anti-war novels.

The inextinguishable light at the grave of the "Unknown Soldier" had been taken as a warning—the smouldering fires of the "last" war were threatening to burst out anew. No one now would venture to call the war of 1914-18 the "last" war... Confronted once more with the terrible visage of the war god the honest writers raised cries of alarm. Not many of them were endowed with Henri Barbusse's gift of penetrating through appearances and laying bare the hidden springs of imperialist wars Not many of them knew so well the effective means of struggle against war... Some of them, with unpardonable naivete, appealed to human conscience. Others remained draped in the threadbare toga of pacifism. Others placed their entire faith in the League of Nations.

However, in their attitude to war, the novels written by honest and courageous writers spoke from the heart. Enough! No more illusions. There can be no "last" war nor any "liberationist" war for the imperialists.

Let the "coordinated" bards of fascism compose hymns to wars of conquest. With hatred and contempt humanity listens to their howling on the Abyssinian graveyard and on the ruins of the beautiful cities of Spain.

War engineered by imperialists always was and always will be a catastrophe for peoples and countries; a destruction of culture and a setback to human progress.

Among the dozens of anti-war books devoted to the war of 1914-18 there is *The Foreign Legion* from the pen of a Soviet writer, Victor Fink. Romain Rolland called this book a *humane* and *potent* book.

These words aptly and amply characterize the work: *The Foreign Legion* is a humane book. Its author had gone through the mill of the imperialist war as a private in the Foreign Legion. His friends were his soldier comrades; with them he suffered and learned. A victim to the romanticism of the "last" war he had joined the army as a volunteer, and it was only at the front that his eyes were opened. For a long time he fired at German workers, peasants and students without knowing why; or for what cause he was risking his life. Finally it became clear to him and he longed to cross "no-man's-land" and shake hands with those who were firing at him and tell them: "Enough, comrades! Why should we kill one another? Should we not keep the bullets for another purpose? Who wants this accursed war?"

The Foreign Legion was not written under the fresh impression of the war. Victor Fink began work on it at a time when the clouds of a new war were gathering over the heads of humanity and he wrote it as a man who had not only fought through the last war but also learned the working of its driving forces. He wrote as a *Soviet writer*. That is why *The Foreign Legion* is an inciting, mobilizing book which calls upon people not to stick the bayonet into the ground but to point it against the fomenters of war.

Victor Fink passed through a severe and cruel school of life. He was born in the family of a needy solicitor in the small town of Barty. As a Jew he very early experienced the beneficence of the tsarist regime. In 1909 he was thrown out of the Odessa University and left for France where he graduated from the faculty of law. At the outbreak of the war, he, like some other foreigners in France, enlisted in the Foreign Legion, where he met representatives of many nationalities, Frenchmen, Italians, Tatars, Georgians, Spaniards and Jews.

The heroes of *The Foreign Legion* are two Frenchmen, Lum-Lum and Bladder, a Spaniard José Ayala, a Tatar Nezametdinov, an Italian Peppino Antonelli and a Russian nicknamed Samovar. But at the same time the *chief* hero of the novel is *the soldier* of the imperialist war. At the beginning he is duped and patiently awaits his death, but later he begins to straighten his back; he begins to understand that he is a man whom the war has deprived of his human rights and of the joys of life. At first flashes of indignation and contempt: "The scoundrels—they feed us rotten meat!" "How they delay our leave!" "Captain Percier is a cruel, overbearing dummy of a soldier," "They shot the Legionnaire Shapiro for nothing at all." But these are only incidents. They irritate; they enrage; however, the understanding that they are parts of the evil whole of imperialist war is still lacking.

The incidents grow in number and intensify. Now the *whole war* begins to appear in an entirely new light. The soldiers at last realize the capitalist nature of the war, its criminality to the interests of humanity, and their patience is exhausted.

Lum Lum, an old soldier of the Foreign Legion who had tramped across the whole of Africa and had made war his profession, when tried by the field courtmartial, cries: "I was an obedient dog. Now I have gone mad. If you do not shoot me I shall go round to all the regiments of the division and even further, I shall tell the soldiers that they mustn't be fools and mutiny for leaves or for mutton or for back pay. This isn't a button factory. We have quite different work to do here. I shall shout out to the soldiers: 'Stop this work! Let the bosses do it themselves! And we'll smash their jaws while they're doing it.' "

Lum-Lum is a collective image of that part of the imperialist army that begins to see the truth of its situation. Lum Lum ceased to be a patient soldier. He wished to know why he had suffered all these years of war. And when he discovered the cause of it his patience changed into hatred; if he gets out of the scrape alive (and there are too many of him not to), he will never again raise his gun against a brother soldier, a proletarian like himself. He will turn to the other "job." Lum Lum will once more take up war as a profession if only to help make life more humane and secure to him and his comrades the rights of which the "bosses" seek to deprive him. Lum Lum will fight for the freedom of the Spanish people; he will take his post in the trenches; under volleys of bullets he will rush in the attack, shoulder to shoulder with the fighters of the International Brigade. He has new courage and new patience because he knows he is fighting the originators and fomentors of wars.

Fink's *The Foreign Legion* gives a picture of the soldiers of the imperialist war who twenty years ago went out to kill and die: they were blind then but their eyes opened and they are ready to meet the coming war with arms in hand.

Thus the blind regain their eyesight, the meek rise in arms and those that are driven to slaughter turn upon the butchers.

Translated by E. Levin

CHRONICLE

Thomas Mann on Pushkin

Asked as to my preference and choice with regard to poetical geniuses, even if it was not six but four, I should never forget Pushkin's name. I agree entirely with Tolstoy who wrote: "Do me a favor and read all the *Stories of Belkin* over again. Every writer should study them and go on studying them. I did so recently and cannot describe the beneficial influence that this reading has had on me." Beneficial, that is just the right word for it. It has in it the moderation and the joy that were this Apollo's portion—the moderation of fullness and the joy that is the deliverance from a deep and abundant pain. His artistic achievement is a perfection, consecrated by life, from which the whole of later Russian literature has drawn its nourishment. Pushkin, the slav Latin, was genuinely national and European like Goethe, like Mozart. That the founder of Russian national literature to whom Dostoyevsky paid such high tribute in his famous speech, was the great grandson of a Negro is a fact which is not without a certain irony in the light of present events. The figure of Pushkin, the Europeanism of his form, his classicism, however, acquire a still greater significance at the present day when Russia as a member of the League of Nations is associating with the peaceful powers of the West and in intellectual matters is establishing new relations of tolerance, consideration and friendship between the socialism of the Soviet World and the humanism of still bourgeois Europe. The name of Alexander Sergeyevich Puskin might be taken as the symbol of much that is to come.

Samurai, Legionaries, Vikings

Japan has suddenly begun to manifest a great interest in Italian literature. Italy, on her part, has taken up the study of Buddhism. A Japanese library and an art collection—gifts from Baron Okura to the Italian Institute for the Study of the Middle and Far East—have made their appearance. The formation of an Italian library in Tokio has been suggested. This is all done under the guise of "the union of the East and West," it being strongly emphasized that this union is of a purely "cultural" character. But culture of quite a specific character is had in mind. Recently in Tokio, under circumstances of great pomp, an Italian-Japanese society was formed which aims to acquaint the Japanese with Italian literature and art. But, as the Tokio correspondent of the *Giornale d'Italia* states, the most prominent guest at this ceremony was a man who up to now has been little known as an authority on literature. His name is Sadao Araki. The correspondent notes with great satisfaction the presence of this leader of the most agressive group of the Japanese militarists. *Corriere dello Sera* states that the society will work in close contact with Japanese diplomacy. Briefly, the study of Italian literature in Japan is entrusted to "wholly competent hands."

The Italian academician, Trucci, made a lecture tour through Japan, speaking on Italian culture. The Japanese academian, Kamada, has been selected for analogous purposes in Italy. Trucci delivered four lectures in Tokio and Kioto universities. He explained to his hearers that "fascism has caused profound changes in all fields of Italian culture, thanks to which it has completely revived." It was taken for granted, of course, that this "revival" meant a step forward. However, the Japanese professor, Ikuma Arisima, who is also one of the most ardent champions of an Italian-Japanese "cultural" *rapprochement*, in an interview with a representative of *Lavoro Fasista*, was obliged to explain this *rapprochement* on an entirely different basis. According to him Italy and Japan are united by general characteristics—a considerable lowering of the level of their art today as compared with the past. Of course, Arisima sharply denounces those "blasphemers" who unfortunately do not understand that if art is passing through a crisis, it is only an indication of the possibility of a new rise in the future. But the significance, of course, is not in the "theoretical" arguments of a Japanese professor, but in the facts which he is forced to admit.

But the picture would be incomplete if to the Italian-Japanese duet were not joined the hoarse bass of the "culture apostles" of the Third Empire, the chief prompter of this *rapprochement*. In Cologne, an Italian-German Institute of Culture, also called the "House of Petrarch," has been opened. Recently, the Institute published its program for the coming year. In it we find that reports on the "political and economic inter-

ests of Italy in the Mediterranean Sea" are being prepared.

The German professor, Karl Haushofer, the editor of the Berlin monthly periodical, *Zeitschrift für Geopolitik,* lectured recently in Rome at the Institute for the Study of the Middle and Far East on "the parallelism in the development of Italy, Germany and Japan." This parallelism, the lecturer pointed out, is revealed primarily in the "independent state organization of the three countries and their common struggle against Bolshevism."

But this was not enough. They are counting on drawing to their side the most politically backward elements of the intelligentsia and for this purpose they blasphemously utilize in their propaganda the cultural past of their country. That is why Haushofer was obliged to justify the German-Italian-Japanese rapprochement by referring to the similarity (clear to him alone) between Walter von der Vogelweide, Dante and the Japanese poet, Chikafusa. He has also discovered a resemblance in the development of the architectural styles of Germany, Italy and Japan. However, the most important thing, according to Haushofer, is that before the three "defrauded" countries lies the prospect of simultaneously "transforming themselves into great powers." At this point the missions of the professors and literary specialists end and the work of the war offices begins.

Editor-in chief SERGEI DINAMOV

INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE

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