POEMS

BY

ALEXANDER PUSHKIN

Translated from the Russian, with Introduction and Notes

By IVAN PANIN



BOSTON
CUPPLES AND HURD
94 Boylston Street
1888

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Title: Poems

Author: Aleksandr Sergeevich Pushkin

Translator: Ivan Panin

Release date: June 27, 2017 [eBook #54991]
Most recently updated: October 23, 2024

Language: English

Other information and formats: www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/54991

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TO
MRS. JOHN L. GARDNER,
WHO WAS THE FIRST TO RECOGNIZE HELPFULLY
WHATEVER MERIT THERE IS IN
THIS BOOK.

CONTENTS

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL PREFACE 9

INTRODUCTION.

I. POETIC IDEAL 15

II. INNER LIFE 28

III. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS 38

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL POEMS.

MON PORTRAIT 59
MY PEDIGREE 61
MY MONUMENT 64
MY MUSE 66
MY DEMON 67
REGRET 69
REMINISCENCE 70
ELEGY 72
RESURRECTION 73
THE PROPHET 74

NARRATIVE POEMS.

THE OUTCAST 79

The Black Shawl 82
The Roussalka 84
The Cossak 87
The Drowned 90

Poems of Nature.

The Birdlet 97
The Cloud 98
The North Wind 99
Winter Morning 100
Winter Evening 102
The Winter-road 104

Poems of Love.

The Storm-Maid 109
The Bard 110
Spanish Love-Song 111
Love 113
Jealousy 114
In an Album 116
The Awaking 117
Elegy 119
First Love 120
Elegy 121
The Burnt Letter 122
"Sing not, Beauty" 123
Signs 124
A Presentiment 125
"In Vain, Dear Friend" 127
Love's Debt 128
Invocation 130
Elegy 132
Sorrow 133
Despair 134

A Wish 135
Resigned Love 136
Love and Freedom 137
Not at All 138
Inspiring Love 139
The Graces 141

Miscellaneous Poems.

The Birdlet 145
The Nightingale 146
The Floweret 147
The Horse 148
To a Babe 150
The Poet 151
To the Poet 153
The Three Springs 154
The Task 155
Sleeplessness 156
Questionings 157
Consolation 158
Friendship 159
Fame 160
The Angel 161
Home-Sickness 162
Insanity 163
Death-Thoughts 165
Rights 167
The Gypsies 168
The Delibash 169

Notes 171

Preface: Bibliographical.

1. The text I have used for the following translations is that of the edition of the complete works of Pushkin in ten volumes, 16mo., by Suvorin, St. Petersburg, 1887. The poems form Volumes III. and IV. of that edition. Accordingly, I have designated after each heading, volume, and page where the poem is to be found in the original. Thus, for example, "My Muse, IV. 1," means that this poem is found in Volume IV. of the above edition, page 1.

2. I have translated Pushkin literally word for word, line for line. I do not believe there are as many as five examples of deviation from the literalness of the text. Once only, I believe, have I transposed two lines for convenience of translation; the other deviations are (*if* they are such) a substitution of an *and* for a comma in order to make now and then the reading of a line musical. With these exceptions, I have sacrified *everything* to faithfulness of rendering. My object was to make Pushkin himself, without a prompter, speak to English readers. To make him thus speak in a foreign tongue was indeed to place him at a disadvantage; and music and rhythm and harmony are indeed fine things, but truth is finer still. I wished to present not what Pushkin would have said, or should have said, if he had written in English, but what he does say in Russian. That, stripped from all ornament of his wonderful melody and grace of form, as he is in a translation, he still, even in the hard English tongue, soothes and stirs, is in itself a sign that through the individual soul of Pushkin sings that universal soul whose strains appeal forever to man, in whatever clime, under whatever sky.

3. I ask, therefore, no forgiveness, no indulgence even, from the reader for the crudeness and even harshness of the translation, which, I dare say, will be found in abundance by those who *look* for something to blame. Nothing of the kind is necessary. I have done the only thing there was to be done. Nothing more *could* be done (I mean by me, of course), and if critics still demand more, they must settle it not with me, but with the Lord Almighty, who in his grim, yet arch way, long before critics appeared on the stage, hath ordained that it shall be impossible for a thing to be and not to be at the same time.

4. I have therefore tried neither for measure nor for rhyme. What I have done was this: I first translated each line word for word, and then by reading it aloud let mine ear arrange for me the words in such a way as to make some kind of rhythm. Where this could be done, I was indeed glad; where this could not be done, I was not sorry. It is idle to regret the impossible.

5. That the reader, however, may see for himself what he has been spared by my abstinence from attempting the impossible, I give one stanza of a metrical translation by the side of the literal rendering:—

LITERAL:

> The moment wondrous I remember
> Thou before me didst appear,
> Like a flashing apparition,
> Like a spirit of beauty pure.

METRICAL:[1]

> Yes! I remember well our meeting,
> When first thou dawnedst on my sight,

Like some fair phantom past me fleeting,
Some nymph of purity and light.

Observe, Pushkin the real does not appear before the reader with a solemn affirmation, Yes, or No, nor that he remembers it *well*. He tells the story in such a way that the reader knows without being told that he does indeed remember it well! Nor does he weaken the effect by saying that he remembers the *meeting*, which is too extended, but the *moment*, which is concentrated. And Pushkin's imagination was moreover too pure to let a *fleeting* phantom *dawn* upon his sight. To have tried for a rendering which necessitated from its very limitations *such* falsities, would have been not only to libel poor Pushkin, but also to give the reader poor poetry besides.

[1] Blackwood's Magazine, lviii. 35, July, 1845.

6. The translation being literal, I have been able to retain even the punctuation of Pushkin, and especially his dots, of which he makes such frequent use. They are part of his art; they express by what they withhold. I call especial attention to these, as Pushkin is as powerful in what he indicates as in what he shows, in what he suggests as in what he actually says. The finest example of the highest poetry of his *silence* (indicated by his dots) is the poem I have entitled "Jealousy," to which the reader is particularly requested to turn with this commentary of mine (p. 114). The poet is melted with tenderness at the thought of his beloved all alone, far-off, weeping. The fiendish doubt suddenly overpowers him, that after all, perhaps his beloved is at that moment not alone, weeping for him, but in the arms of another:—

Alone ... to lips of none she is yielding

Her shoulders, nor moist lips, nor snow-white fingers.

. . . . . .

. . .

. . . . . .

. . .

None is worthy of her heavenly love.

Is it not so? Thou art alone. . . . Thou weepest. . . .

And I at peace? . . . . . .

. . . . . .

But if . . . . . .

One must be all vibration in order to appreciate the matchless power of the dots here. The poem here ends. I know not the like of this in all literature.

7. Wherever I could ascertain the date of a poem, I have placed it at the end. The reader will thus at a glance find at least one of the proper relations of the poems to the poet's soul. For this purpose these two dates should be borne constantly in mind: Pushkin was born in 1799; he died in 1837.

8. To many of his poems Pushkin has given no name. To such, for the reader's convenience I have supplied names, but have put them in brackets, which accordingly are to be taken as indication that the name they enclose is not Pushkin's. Many of his most beautiful poems were addressed to individuals, and they appear in the original as "Lines to ———." The gem of this collection, for instance, to which I have supplied the title, "Inspiring Love"—inadequate

enough, alas!—appears in the original as "To A. P. Kern." As none of these poems have any *intrinsic* bond with the personages addressed, their very greatness lying in their universality, I have supplied my own titles to such pieces, giving the original title in a note.

9. It was my original intention to make a life of the poet part of this volume. But so varied was Pushkin's life, and so instructive withal, that only an extended account could be of value. What is worth doing at all is worth doing well. A mere sketch would here, for various reasons, be worse than useless. Critics, who always know better what an author ought to do than he himself, must kindly take this assertion of mine, for the present at least, on trust, and assume that I, who have done some thinking on the subject, am likely to know whereof I speak better than those whose only claim to an opinion is that they have done no thinking on the subject, resembling in this respect our modest friends, the agnostics, who set themselves up as the true, knowing solvers of the problems of life, because, forsooth, they know nothing.... Anyhow, even at the risk of offending critics, I have decided to misstate myself by not giving the life of Pushkin rather than to misstate poor Pushkin by giving an attenuated, vapid thing, which passes under the name of a "Sketch." The world judges a man by what is known of him, forgetting that underneath the thin film of the known lies the immeasurable abyss of the unknown, and that the true explanation of the man is found not in what is visible of him, but in what is invisible of him. Unless, therefore, I could present what is known of Pushkin in such a manner as to suggest the unknown (just as a study of nature should only help us to trust that what we do *not* know of God is likewise good!) I

have no business to tell of his life. But to tell of it in such a way that it shall represent Pushkin, and not misrepresent him, is possible only in an extended life. Otherwise, I should be telling not how he was living, but how he was starving, dying; and this is not an edifying task, either for the writer or for the reader.

10. Such a life is now well-nigh writ, but it is too long to make part of this volume.

Introduction: Critical

I. POETIC IDEAL.

1. Pushkin was emphatically a subjective writer. Of intense sensibility, which is *the* indispensable condition of creative genius, he was first of all a feeler with an Æolian attachment. He did not even have to take the trouble of looking into his heart in order to write. So full of feeling was his heart that at the slightest vibration it poured itself out; and so deep was its feeling that what is poured out is already melted, fused, shaped, and his poems come forth, like Minerva from Jupiter's head, fully armed. There is a perfection about them which is self-attesting in its unstudiedness and artlessness; it is the perfection of the child, touching the hearts of its beholders all the more tenderly because of its unconsciousness, effortlessness; it is the perfection which Jesus had in mind when he uttered that sentence so profound and so little followed because of its very profundity: "Unless ye be like little children." So calm and poiseful is Pushkin's poetry

that in spite of all his pathos his soul is a work of architecture,—a piece of frozen music in the highest sense. Even through his bitterest agony,—and pathos is the one chord which is never absent from Pushkin's song, as it is ever present in Chopin's strains, ay, as it ever must be present in any soul that truly *lives,*—there runneth a peace, a simplicity which makes the reader exclaim on reading him: Why, I could have done the self-same thing myself,—an observation which is made at the sight of Raphael's Madonna, at the oratory of a Phillips, at the reading of "The Vicar of Wakefield," at the acting of a Booth. Such art is of the highest, and is reached only through one road: Spontaneity, complete abandonment of self. The verse I have to think over I had better not write. Man is to become only a pipe through which the Spirit shall flow; and the Spirit *shall* flow only where the resistance is least. Ope the door, and the god shall enter! Seek not, pray not! To pray is to will, and to will is to obstruct. The virtue which Emerson praises so highly in a pipe—that it is smooth and hollow—is the very virtue which makes him like Nature, an ever open, yet ever sealed book. Bring to him *your* theories, *your* preconceived notions, and Emerson, like the great soul of which he is but a voice, becomes unintelligible, confusing, chaotic. The words are there; the eyes see them. The dictionary is at hand, but nought avails; of understanding there is none to be had. But once abandon will, once abandon self, once abandon opinion (a much harder abandonment this than either!), and Emerson is made of glass, just as when I abandon *my* logic, God becomes transparent enough.... And what is true of Emerson is true of every great soul.

2. The highest art then is artlessness,

unconsciousness. The true artist is not the conceiver, the designer, the executor, but the tool, the recorder, the reporter. He writes because write he must, just as he breathes because breathe he must. And here too, Nature, as elsewhere, hath indicated the true method. The most vital processes of life are not the voluntary, the conscious, but the involuntary, the unconscious. The blood circulates, the heart beats, the lungs fill, the nerves vibrate; we digest, we fall asleep, we are stirred with love, with awe, with reverence, without our will; and our highest aspirations, our sweetest memories, our cheerfullest hopes, and alas! also our bitterest self-reproaches, come ever like friends at the feast,—uninvited. You can be happy, blest at will? Believe it not! Happiness, blessedness *willed* is not to be had in the market at any quotation. It is not to be got. It comes. And it comes when least willed. He is truly rich who has nought left to be deprived of, nought left to ask for, nought left to will....

3. Pushkin, therefore, was incapable of giving an account of his own poetry. Pushkin could not have given a theory of a single poem of his, as Poe has given of his "Raven." Poe's account of the birth of "The Raven" is indeed most delightful reading. "I told you so," is not so much the voice of conceit, of "I knew better than thou!" but the voice of the epicurean in us; it is ever a delight to most of us to discover after the event that we knew it all before.... Delightful, then, it is indeed, to read Poe's theory of his own "Raven;" but its most delightful part is that the theory is a greater fiction than the poem itself. It is the poem that has created the theory, not the theory the poem. Neither could Pushkin do what Schiller has done: give a theory of a drama of his own. The theory of Don Karlos as developed in

Schiller's letters on that play are writ not by Friedrich Schiller the poet, the darling of the German land, the inspirer of the youth of all lands, but by Herr von Schiller the professor; by Von Schiller the Kantian metaphysician; by Von Schiller the critic; by another Schiller, in short. Pushkin, however, unlike most of us, was not half a dozen ancestors—God, beast, sage, fool—rolled into one, each for a time claiming him as his own. Pushkin was essentially a unit, one voice; he was a lyre, on which a *something, not he*—God!—invisibly played.

4. And this he unconsciously to himself expresses in the piece, "My Muse."

> "From mom till night in oak's dumb shadow
> To the strange maid's teaching intent I listened;
> And with sparing reward me gladdening,
> Tossing back her curls from her forehead dear,
> From my hands the flute herself she took.
> Now filled the wood was with breath divine
> And the heart with holy enchantment filled."

Before these lines Byelinsky, the great Russian critic, stands awe-struck. And well he may; for in the Russian *such* softness, smoothness, simplicity, harmony, and above all sincerity, had not been seen before Pushkin's day. And though in the translation everything except the thought is lost, I too as I now read it over on this blessed Sunday morn (and the bell calling men unto the worship of the great God is still ringing!), I too feel that even before *this* sun, shorn of its beams though it be, I am still in hallowed presence. For the spirit is independent of tongue, independent of form; to the god-filled soul the leaf is no less beautiful than the flower. Discrimination, distinction, is only a sign that we are still detached from the whole; that we are still only *half*; that we

are still not our own selves,—that we still, in short, miss the blessed ONE. To the god-filled soul the grain of sand is no less beautiful than the diamond; the spirit breaks through the crust (and words and forms are, alas, only this!), and recognizes what is its where'er it finds it, under whate'er disguise. The botanist prizes the weed as highly as the flower, and with justice, because he seeks not the gratification of the eye, but of the spirit. The eye is delighted with variety, the spirit with unity. And the botanist seeks the unity, the whole, the godful in the plant. And a fine perception it was,—that of Emerson: that a tree is but a rooted man, a horse a running man, a fish a floating man, and a bird a flying man. Logical, practical Supreme Court Justice, with one eye in the back of his head, declares, indeed, such utterance insane, and scornfully laughs, "I don't read Emerson; my garls do!"[2]but the self-same decade brings a Darwin or a Heckel with his comparative embryos; and at the sight of these, not even a lawyer, be he even Chief Justice of Supreme Court, can distinguish between snake, fowl, dog, and man.

[2] Jeremiah Mason.

5. In time, however, Pushkin does become objective to himself, as any true soul that is obliged to reflect must sooner or later; and God ever sees to it that the soul *be* obliged to reflect if there be aught within. For it is the essence of man's life that the soul struggle; it is the essence of growth that it *push* upward; it is the essence of progress in walking that we *fall* forward. Life is a battle,—battle with the powers of darkness; battle with the diseases of doubt, despair, self-will. And reflection is the symptom that the disease is on the soul, that the battle is to go on.

6. Pushkin then does become in time objective, and

contemplates himself. Pushkin the man inspects Pushkin the soul, and in the poem, "My Monument," he gives his own estimate of himself:—

> "A monument not hand-made I have for me erected;
> The path to it well-trodden, will not overgrow;
> Risen higher has it with unbending head
> Than the monument of Alexander.
>
> No! not all of me shall die! my soul in hallowed lyre
> Shall my dust survive, and escape destruction—
> And famous be I shall, as long as on earth sublunar
> One bard at least living shall remain.
>
> "My name will travel over the whole of Russia great
> And there pronounce my name shall every living tongue:
> . . . . . .
> And long to the nation I shall be dear."

Observe here the native nobility of the man. There is a heroic consciousness of his own worth which puts to shame all gabble of conceit and of self-consciousness being a vice, being immodest. Here too, Emerson sets fine example in not hesitating to speak of his own essays on Love and Friendship as "those fine lyric strains," needing some balance by coarser tones on Prudence and the like. This is the same heroic consciousness of one's own worth which makes a Socrates propose as true reward for his services to the State, free entertainment at the Prytaneum. This is the same manliness which in a Napoleon rebukes the genealogy-monger who makes

him descend from Charlemagne, with the remark, "I am my own pedigree." This, in fine, is the same manliness which made Jesus declare boldly, "I am the Way, I am the Life, I am the Light," regardless of the danger that the "Jerusalem Advertiser" and the "Zion Nation" might brand him as "deliciously conceited." This recognition of one's own worth is at bottom the highest reverence before God; inasmuch as I esteem myself, not because of my body, which I have in common with the brutes, but because of my spirit, which I have in common with God; and wise men have ever sung, on hearing their own merit extolled, Not unto us, not unto us! There is no merit in the matter; the God is either there or he is not....

7. Pushkin, then, even with this in view, is not so much a conscious will, as an unconscious voice. He is not so much an individual singer, as a strain from the music of the spheres; and he is a person, an original voice, only in so far as he has hitched his wagon to a star. In his abandonment is his greatness; in his self-destruction, his strength.

> "The bidding of God, O Muse, obey.
> Fear not insult, ask not crown:
> Praise and blame take with indifference
> And dispute not with the fool!"

"And dispute not with the fool!" The prophet never argues; it is for him only to affirm. Argument is at bottom only a lack of trust in my own truth. Caesar's wife must be above suspicion: and to bear misunderstanding in silence,—this is to be great. Hence the noblest moment in Kepler's life was not when he discovered the planet, but when he discovered that if God could wait six thousand years for the understanding by man of one of his starlets, *he* surely could wait a few brief years for *his*

recognition by his fellow-men. God is the great misunderstood, and he—never argues. In living out my truth in silence, without argument even though misunderstood, I not only show my faith in it, but prove it by my very strength. If I am understood, nothing more need be said; if I am not understood, nothing more can be said. Pushkin, therefore, often weeps, sobs, groans. He at times even searches, questions, doubts, despairs; but he never argues. Broad is the back of Pegasus, and strong is his wing, but neither his back nor his wings shall enable him to float the rhyming arguer. No sooner does the logician mount the heavenly steed than its wings droop, and both rider and steed quickly drop into the limbo of inanity. Melancholy, indeed, is the sight of a dandy dressed for a party unexpectedly drenched by the shower; sorrowful is the sight of statesman turned politician before election; and pitiful is the spectacle of the manufacturing versifier, who grinds out of himself his daily task of one hundred lines, as the milkman squeezes out his daily can of milk from the cow. But most pitiful of all, immeasurably pathetic to me, is the sight of pettifogging logician forsaking his hair-splitting world, and betaking himself to somersaulting verse. To much the bard is indeed called, but surely not to that....

8. To affirm then the bard is called, and what in "My Monument" is but hinted, becomes clear, emphatic utterance in Pushkin's "Sonnet to the Poet."

> "Poet, not popular applause shalt thou prize!
> Of raptured praise shall pass the momentary noise;
> The fool's judgment thou shalt hear, and the cold mob's laughter—
> Calm stand, and firm be, and—sober!

"Thou art king: live alone. On the free road
Walk whither draws thee thy spirit free:
Ever the fruits of beloved thoughts ripening,
Never reward for noble deeds demanding.

"In thyself reward seek. Thine own highest court thou art;
Severest judge, thine own works canst measure.
Art thou content, O fastidious craftsman?
Content? Then let the mob scold,
And spit upon the altar, where blazes thy fire.
Thy tripod in childlike playfulness let it shake."

But because the bard is called to affirm, to inspire, to *serve*, he is also called to be worn. To become the beautiful image, the marble must be lopped and cut; the vine to bear sweeter fruit must be trimmed, and the soul must go through a baptism of fire.... Growth, progress is thus ever the casting off of an old self, and *Scheiden thut weh*. Detachment hurts. A new birth can take place only amid throes of agony. Hence the following lines of Pushkin on the poet:—

... No sooner the heavenly word
His keen ear hath reached,
Then up trembles the singer's soul
Like an awakened eagle.

"The world's pastimes now weary him
And mortals' gossip now he shuns.
. . . . . .
Wild and stem rushes he
Of tumult full and sound
To the shores of desert wave
Into the wildly whispering wood."

9. This is as yet only discernment that the bard must

needs suffer; by-and-by comes also the fulfilment, the recognition of the wisdom of the sorrow, and with it its joyful acceptance in the poem of "The Prophet."

> "And out he tore my sinful tongue
> . . . . . .
> And ope he cut with sword my breast
> And out he took my trembling heart
> And a coal with gleaming blaze
> Into the opened breast he shoved.
> Like a corpse I lay in the desert.
> And God's Voice unto me called:
> Arise, O prophet, and listen, and guide.
> Be thou filled with my will
> And going over land and sea
> Fire with the word the hearts of men!"

"Be thou filled with my will!" His ideal began with abandonment of self-will; it ended with complete surrender of self-will. When we have done all the thinking and planning and weighing, and pride ourselves upon *our* wisdom, we are not yet wise. One more step remains to be taken, without which we only may avoid the wrong; with which, however, we shall surely come upon the right. We must still say, Teach us, Thou, to merge our will in Thine....

II. INNER LIFE.

10. I have already stated that Pushkin is a subjective writer. The great feelers must ever be thus, just as the great reasoners must ever be objective, just as the great lookers can only be objective. For the eye looks only on the outward thing; the reason looks only upon the outward effect, the consequence; but the

heart looks not only upon the thing, but upon its reflection upon self,—upon its moral relation, in short. Hence the subjectivity of a Tolstoy, a Byron, a Rousseau, a Jean Paul, a Goethe, who does not become objective until he has ceased to be a feeler, and becomes the comprehender, the understander, the seer, the *poised* Goethe. Marcus Aurelius, Pascal, Amiel, look into their hearts and write; and Carlyle and Ruskin, even though the former use "Thou" instead of "I," travel they never so far, still find their old "I" smiling by their side. But the subjectivity of Pushkin, unlike that of Walt Whitman, is not only not intrusive, but it is even delight-giving,—for it paints not the Pushkin that is different from all other men, but the Pushkin that is in fellowship with all other men; he therefore, in reporting himself, voices the very experience of his fellows, who, though feeling it deeply, were yet unable to give it tongue. It is this which makes Pushkin the poet in its original sense,—the maker, the sayer, the namer. And herein is his greatness,—in expressing not what is his, in so far that it is different from what is other men's, but what is his, *because* it is other men's likewise. Herein he is what makes him a man of genius. For what does a genius do?

11. What is it that makes the water, when spouting forth in a smooth stream from the hose, such a power? What is it that makes the beauty of the stem and curve of the body of water, as it leaps out of the fountain? It is the same water which a few yards back we can see flowing aimless in stream or pond. Yes, but it is the concentration of the loose elements into harmonious shape, whether for utility, as in the case of the hose-spout, or for beauty, as in the case of the fountain. Nought new is added to the *mass* existing before. This is precisely the case of genius.

He adds nought to what has gone before him. He merely arranges, formulates. A vast unorganized mass of intelligence, of aspiration, of feeling, becomes diffused over mankind. Soon it seeks organization. The poet, the prophet, the seer, cometh, and lo, he becomes the magnet round which all spiritual force of the time groups itself in visible shape, in formulated language.

12. Pushkin, then, is self-centred; but it is the self that is not Pushkin, but man. His mood is others' mood; and in singing of his life, he sings of the life of all men. The demon he sings of in the poem called "My Demon" is not so much his demon alone as also yours, mine, ours. It is his demon because it is all men's demon.

> "A certain evil spirit then
> Began in secret me to visit.
> Grievous were our meetings,
> His smile, and his wonderful glance,
> His speeches, these so stinging,
> Cold poison poured into my soul.
> Providence with slander
> Inexhaustible he tempted;
> Of Beauty as a dream he spake
> And inspiration he despised;
> Nor love, nor freedom trusted he,
> On life with scorn he looked—
> And nought in all nature
> To bless he ever wished."

And this demon—"the Spirit of Denial, the Spirit of Doubt"—of which he sings afterwards so pathetically tormented him long. He began with "Questionings:"—

> "Useless gift, accidental gift,
> Life, why art thou given me?

Or, why by fate mysterious
To torture art thou doomed?

"Who with hostile power me
Out has called from the nought?
Who my soul with passion thrilled,
Who my spirit with doubt has filled?..."

And he continues with "Sleeplessness:"—

"I cannot sleep, I have no light;
Darkness 'bout me, and sleep is slow;
The beat monotonous alone
Near me of the clock is heard
Of the Fates the womanish babble,
Of sleeping night the trembling,
Of life the mice-like running-about,—
Why disturbing me art thou?
What art thou, O tedious whisper?
The reproaches, or the murmur
Of the day by me misspent?
What from me wilt thou have?
Art thou calling or prophesying?
Thee I wish to understand,
Thy tongue obscure I study now."

13. And this demon gives him no rest, even long after he had found the answer,—that the meaning of Life is in *Work*. Solve the problem of life? *Live*, and you solve it; and to live means to do. But that work was the solution of the problem of life he indeed discerned but vaguely. It was with him not yet conscious fulfilment. He had not yet formulated to himself the gospel he unconsciously obeyed. Hence the wavering of the "Task:"—

"The longed-for moment here is. Ended is my long-yeared task.
Why then sadness strange me troubles secretly?

My task done, like needless hireling am I to stand,
My wage in hand, to other task a stranger?
Or my task regret I, of night companion silent mine,
Gold Aurora's friend, the friend of my sacred household gods?"

14. And for the same reason, when he had ceased to be a roamer and at last settled down to quiet home-life, the memory of the days of yore still gives him a pang; and at the sight of the gypsies, whose free and easy life once occupied his thoughts seriously, not only to sing of them, but to live with them, only a plaintive note bursts forth from his soul:—

"Thee I greet, O happy race!
I recognize thy blazes,
I myself at other times
These tents would have followed.

"With the early rays to-morrow
Shall disappear your freedom's trace,
Go you will—but not with you
Longer go shall the bard of you.

"He alas, the changing lodgings,
And the pranks of days of yore
Has forgot for rural comforts
And for the quiet of a home."

15. And this too when these same "rural comforts" he now regrets to have taken in exchange for his wanderings were the very circumstances he sighed for when he did lead the free life he now envies the gypsies for. For this is what he then had been singing:

"Mayhap not long am destined I

In exile peaceful to remain,
Of dear days of yore to sigh
And rustic muse in quiet
With spirit calm to pursue.

"But even far, in a foreign land
In thought forever roam I shall
Around Trimountain mine:
By meadows, river, by its hills,
By garden, linden, nigh the house."

16. No wonder, therefore, that the demon, having unsettled the poet's soul with restlessness, should now unsettle his reasoning powers with regrets. For regret is at bottom a disease, an inability to perceive that the best way to mend harm once done is not in lamenting the past, but in struggling for a future; in which future much of the past could be undone; or if it could not be undone, at least it could be prevented from contaminating with its corpse the life of the future. And his regret is bitter enough. In the first of the two poems, "Regret" and "Reminiscence," the feeling again is as yet only discernment; but in the second, the poison has already entered his soul, and accordingly it no longer is a song, but a cry of agony....

At first it is is only—

"But where are ye, O moments tender
Of young my hopes, of heartfelt peace?
The former heat and grace of inspiration?
Come again, O ye, of spring my years!"

But later it becomes—

"Before me memory in silence
Its lengthy roll unfolds,
And with disgust my life I reading

Tremble I and curse it.
Bitterly I moan, and bitterly my tears I shed
But wash away the lines of grief I cannot.
In laziness, in senseless feasts,
In the madness of ruinous license,
In thraldom, poverty, and homeless deserts
My wasted years there I behold...."

17. Regret, in itself a disease, but only of the intellect, soon changes into a more violent disease: into a disease of the constitution, which is fear, fear of insanity. In ordinary minds such disease takes the form of fear for the future, of worry for existence; in extraordinary minds it takes more ghastly shapes,—distrust of friends, and dread of the close embrace of what is already stretching forth its claws after the soul,—insanity.

Hence,—

"God grant I grow not insane:
No, better the stick and beggar's bag;
No, better toil and hunger bear.
. . . . . .
If crazy once,
A fright thou art like pestilence,
And locked up now shalt thou be.

"To a chain thee, fool, they 'll fasten
And through the gate, a circus beast,
Thee to nettle the people come.

"And at night not hear shall I
Clear the voice of nightingale
Nor the forest's hollow sound,

"But cries alone of companions mine
And the scolding guards of night

And a whizzing, of chains a ringing."

18. That thoughts of death should now be his companions is only to be expected. But here again his muse plainly sings itself out in both stages,—the stage of discernment and the stage of fulfilment. In the first of the two poems, "Elegy" and "Death-Thoughts" he only *thinks* of death; in the second he already *longs* for it.

In the first it is only—

"My wishes I have survived,
My ambition I have outgrown!
Left only is my smart,
The fruit of emptiness of heart.

"Under the storm of cruel Fate
Faded has my blooming crown!
Sad I live and lonely,
And wait: Is nigh my end?"

But in the second it already becomes—

"Whether I roam along the noisy streets
Whether I enter the peopled temple,
Whether I sit by thoughtless youth,
Haunt my thoughts me everywhere.

"I say, Swiftly go the years by:
However great our number now,
Must all descend the eternal vaults,—
Already struck has some one's hour.
. . . . . .

"Every year thus, every day
With death my thought I join
Of coming death the day
I seek among them to divine."

19. Pushkin died young; that he would have conquered his demon in time there is every reason to believe, though the fact that he had not yet conquered him at the age of thirty-eight must show the tremendous force of bad blood, and still worse circumstance, which combined made the demon of Pushkin. But already he shows signs of having seen the promised land.

In the three poems, "Resurrection," "The Birdlet" (iv. 133), and "Consolation," the first shows that he conquered his regret-disease; the second, that he already found in Love *some* consolation for sorrow. And the third shows that he already felt his way at least to *some* peace, even though it be not yet *faith* in the future, but only hope. For hope is not yet knowledge; it only trusts that the future will be good. Faith knows that the future *must* be good, because it is in the hands of God, the Good.

In the first it is—

> "Thus my failings vanish too
> From my wearied soul
> And again within it visions rise
> Of my early purer days."

In the second,—

> "And now I too have consolation:
> Wherefore murmur against my God
> When at least to one living being
> I could of freedom make a gift?"

And in the last,—

> "In the future lives the heart:
> Is the present sad indeed?
> 'T is but a moment, all will pass...."

This *is* consoling utterance, but not yet of the highest; and the loftiest *spiritual* song, the song of the Psalmist, was not given unto Pushkin to sing.

III. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS.

20. I have translated the poems of Pushkin not so much because they are masterpieces in the literature of Russia, as because I think the English reading-public has much to learn from him. English literature is already blessed with masterpieces, which, if readers would only be content to study them for the sake of what they have to *impart* (not amuse with!), would give enough employment as well as amusement for all the time an ordinary reader can give to literature. So that merely for the sake of making new beauty accessible to English readers, it is hardly worth while to go out of English literature, and drag over from beyond the Atlantic poor Pushkin as a new beast in a circus for admiration. The craze for novelty has its place in human nature but not as an end in itself. As a literary method, it might be found commendable in a magazine editor, whose highest ambition is to follow the standard of a public even he does not respect. It might be found commendable in a gifted author to whom bread is dearer than *his* genius, so that he is ready to sacrifice the one to the other; but an inexperienced author, who has not yet learned wisdom (or is it prudence merely?) from the bitter literary disappointments which are surely in store for every earnest, aspiring soul,—such an author, I say,—must not be expected to make *mere* novelty his motive for serious work.

Nay, the conclusion at which Pascal arrived, at the age of twenty-six, that there is really only *one* book that to an earnest soul is sufficient for a lifetime to read,—namely, the Bible,—extravagant though this sound, I am ready, after many years of reflection on this saying of Pascal, to subscribe to, even at an age when I have six years of experience additional to his.... To read much, but not many books, is old wisdom, yet ever new. A literary masterpiece is to be read, not once, nor twice, nor thrice, but scores of times. A literary masterpiece should, like true love, grow dearer with intercourse. A literary masterpiece should be read and re-read until it has become part of our flesh and circulates in our blood, until its purity, its loftiness, its wisdom, utter itself in our every deed. It is this devotion to one book that has made the Puritans of such heroic mould; they *fed* on one book until they talked and walked and lived out their spiritual food. If any one think this estimate of the influence of one great book exaggerated, let him try to live for one week in succession wholly in the spirit of the one book that to him is *the* book (I will not quarrel with him if it be Smiles instead of St. Matthew, or Malthus's Essay on Population instead of the Gospel of St. John, or even our modern realistic Gospel of dirt), and let him see what will come of it.

21. Shakespeare, Milton, Carlyle, Ruskin, Emerson, Scott, Goldsmith, Irving, Johnson, Addison, furnish a library which is really enough for the life-time of *any* one who takes life seriously, and comes to these masters, not as a conceited lord waiting for amusement,—as a judge, in short,—but as a beggar, an humble learner, hoping to carry away from them not the tickle of pleasure, but the life-giving sustenance. To *make* letters a source of amusement is but to dig for iron with a spade of gold. Amusement

is indeed often necessary, just as roasting eggs is often necessary; but who would travel to a volcano for the sake of roasting his eggs? No, the masters in letters are not sent to us for our amusement; they are sent to us to give the one answer to each of us, which at the peril of our lives we must sooner or later receive,—the answer to the question: How shall we live to be worthy of that spark from heaven which is given us in trust to keep alive for the brief years of life on earth? The great masters, then, are the inspirers; and God ever sees to it that there be enough inspirers, if men but see to it that there be enough inspired.

22. But of the millions of the English-speaking readers, who to-day *assimilates* the masterpieces of English literature? Generations come, and generations go. The classic writers keep their reputation; but do they hold their readers? Do the readers hold to the masters? Not the masters sway the public taste, not the writers of the first rank, not the giants; but the pygmies, the minions, the men of the second, fifth, twentieth rank. If any one think me extravagant, let him cast a glance of his *open* eyes at our monthly reviews and magazines, both here and in England, especially those whose circulation reaches into the hundreds of thousands....

23. Not, then, because *additional* masterpieces are needed for rousing our degenerate literary taste have I translated Pushkin. As long as the literary editors (who, from the very fact of once having the ear of the public, become the *stewards of the hungry*) insist on feeding it with the Roes and the Crawfords and the Haggards and the Stevensons and the rest of them, not only new masterpieces, but even the old ones will remain unread. The Bible lies on parlor

table (if it ever get there!) unread; Milton lies indeed beautifully bound, but has to be dusted once a week; and Emerson need not even be dusted,—he has not yet got as far as to be the ornament of parlor table.

But I have translated Pushkin because I believe that even the masters of English literature have defects which are part of the English character; and as such they must reappear in its literature. And it is against these that Pushkin's poems offer a healthy remedy.

24. For the first characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon race is that it is a race of talkers; and the destinies of the two most advanced nations of that race are to-day governed almost wholly by men whose strength is neither in the head nor in the will nor in the heart, but in the tongue. But the talker cares only for the effect of the moment. With the great hereafter he has but little to do; hence he becomes, first of all, a resounder, a thunderer, a sky-rockety dazzler. And once that, the orator need not even care whether he persuade or not; if he merely astound the ear, dazzle the eye, and overwhelm the hearer himself for the moment,—if, in short, he but produce *an* effect, even if it be not *the* effect desired,—it is well with him in his own estimation. The orator thus soon becomes the mere rhetorician. And this rhetorical quality, appealing as it does only to the superficial in man, and coming as it does only from the surface of the man, is found nowhere in such excess as in the poetry of the Anglo-Saxon race. Ornament, metaphor, must be had, and if it cannot be had spontaneously from a fervid imagination, which alone is the legitimate producer of metaphor, recourse must be had to manufactured sound. Hence there is scarcely a single poet in the English tongue whose style is not vitiated by false metaphor; this is

true of the greatest as well as of the least. The member of Parliament who smelt a rat, and saw it brewing in the air until it was in danger of becoming an apple of discord to the honorable members of the House, could have been born only on British soil. To take up arms against a sea of trouble, and to discover footprints in the sands of time while sailing over life's solemn main (no less than five false metaphors in this example from the Psalm of Life!) are feats that can be accomplished by the imagination of even a Shakespeare or a Longfellow solely because these are Anglo-Saxons. And I am yet to see five consecutive pages of any Anglo-Saxon poet free from this literary vice of false metaphor! I call this a vice because it is at bottom an insincerity of imagination. The false metaphors are not pictures seen, but pictures made up; they are not the spontaneous outbursts of an overflowing imagination, but the ground-out product of pictureless will for the sake of effect. And this I do not hesitate to call literary insincerity even though the process of making them up be unconscious at the time to the poet himself.

25. Now it is Pushkin's great virtue that his imagination is eminently spontaneous. He seldom uses adjectives; but when he does use them, he uses such only as do actually describe something. He seldom uses similes or metaphors,—he prefers to sing of the subjects themselves, not of what they resemble; but when he does use them, the reader's imagination is able to *see* the picture the poet had in mind, which is not often true of the English bards. Examples for comparison are innumerable; let a few suffice. Turn to Pushkin's lines, "Regret." He there regrets the days of his youth, but first tells by way of contrast what he does not regret; and his poem is simple, straightforward. Byron, however, in his

"Stanzas for Music," of which Canon Farrar thought well enough to insert them in his "With the Poets," and Mr. Palgrave thinks good enough to be admitted into his "Treasury of English Poetry," finds it necessary to preface it with something like philosophical remarks, and then proceeds in this fashion:—

> "Then the few whose *spirits float above the wreck of happiness*
> *Are driven o'er the shoals of guilt or ocean of excess:*
> *The magnet of their course is gone, or only points in vain*
> *The shore to which their shivered sail shall never stretch again.*
>
> "Then *the mortal coldness of the soul* till death itself comes down;
> It cannot feel for other's woes, it dare not dream it's own.
> *That heavy chill has frozen o'er the fountain of our tears*,
> And though the eye may sparkle still, 't is where the ice appears,
>
> "Oh, could I feel as I have felt, or be what I have been,
> Or weep as I could once have wept o'er many a vanished scene,
> As springs in deserts found seem sweet, all brackish though they be,
> *So midst the withered waste of life,* those tears would flow to me."

One must go to Shakespeare's Sonnets for poetry as false as this. Among writers with the true poetic

feeling, such as Byron truly had, I know not the like of this except these. Of these twelve lines only the first two of the last stanza are *true*, are *felt;* the rest are *made.* How are *we*, not Arabs but English-talking folk, to know the springs which in deserts found seem (*do* they?) sweet, brackish though they be? And Byron *was* a poet! But even a Byron cannot make a shivered sail or a coldness of a soul which is mortal, or a chill that freezes over a fountain of tears anything but mere verbiage, and verbiage moreover which instead of the intended sadness is dangerously nigh raising laughter....

26. Again, take Longfellow's "Hymn to Night:"—

> "I heard the trailing garments of the night
> Sweep through her marble halls!
> I saw her sable skirts all fringed with light
> From the celestial walls.
> . . . . . .
> From the cool cisterns of the midnight air,
> My spirit drank repose."

For the like of this one can no longer go even to Shakespeare's Sonnets. For Shakespeare was still a poet. One must now go to Mrs. Deland, who is not even that. For observe:

Night has halls, and these halls are marble halls; and this marble-hailed Night is unable to stay at home, and must go forth, and accordingly she does go in full dress with her garments trailing with a right gracious sweep. And the bard not only sees the sable skirts which dangle about in fringes made phosphorescent by contact with the celestial walls of such peculiar marble, but he even hears the rustle.... And these halls with accommodating grace are changed into cool, deep cisterns from which

accordingly the bard's spirit with due solemnity draws into his spirit's wide-opened mouth a draught of repose.

27. Turn from this "Hymn to Night" of thirty lines to the three lines of Pushkin in his "Reminiscence," which alone he devotes to Night:—

> "When noisy day to mortals quiet grows,
> And upon the city's silent walls
> *Night's shadow half-transparent lies."*

The marble halls and the trailing garments were *ground out* from the writer's fingers; the half-transparent shadow of the poet *came* to the poet....

28. After such examples of wretchedness from real giants such as Byron and Longfellow indisputably are, I do not hesitate to ask the reader for a last example to turn first to Pushkin's "Cloud," and then read Shelley's poem on the same subject:—

> "I bear light shade for the leaves *when laid*
> *In their noonday dreams*. [Just *how* are leaves thus laid?]
> From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
> The sweet buds every one,
> *When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,*
> *As she dances about in the sun."*

(Oh, good, my Shelley! one *dances* to and fro; one cannot dance in a uniform, straightforward motion. Thy imagination never *saw* THAT picture! Spin, whirl, rush,—yes, but *dance*?)

> "That orbèd maiden with white fire laden
> Whom mortals call the Moon
> *Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,*
> By the midnight breezes strewn;
> *And wherever the beat of her unseen feet*

Which only the angels hear
May have broken the woof of my tent's roof,
The stars peep behind her and peer."

Who has not been stirred by the sight of the fleece-like, broken clouds on a moonlight night? But who on looking up to that noble arch overhead at such a moment could *see* it as a *floor*?...

29. I call this wretched poetry, even though other critics vociferously declare Shelley's "Cloud" to be one of the masterpieces of the English language. *De gustibus non disputandum*. The Chinese have a liking, it is said, for black teeth, and a bulb of a nose is considered a great beauty in some parts of Africa, and a human leg is considered a great delicacy by some Islanders; but....

30. And the second characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon race, which, however valuable it may prove in practical life, is reflected disastrously in its poetry, is its incapacity to appreciate true sentiment. An Anglo-Saxon knows sentimentality when he sees it, he knows morbidness when he sees it; but the healthy sentiment of which these are but the diseases he is incapable of appreciating to a depth where it would become part of his life. Hence, though a Malthus might have written his Essay on Population anywhere, since it is a truly cosmopolitan book, a Malthusian doctrine with all that it means and stands for could have grown up only on British soil; and though the warning voice against the dangers of sentimental charity (*if* there really be such a thing, and *if* such a thing, supposing it to exist, be really dangerous!) might be lifted in any land, the hard, frigid, almost brutal doctrine of scientific charity could strike root only in London, and blossom out in full array only in a city like Boston. The reader will

please observe that I do not here undertake to judge. Malthusian doctrine, scientific charity, brutality of any kind may be necessary, for aught I know. A great many well-meaning and kind-hearted people have in sober thought decided that it often is necessary. I am only stating what seems to me to be a fact. To me this is a most melancholy fact; to others it may be a joyful fact. But whether joyful or melancholy, this fact explains why so little sentiment is found among the Anglo-Saxon poets even when they *feel* their passions, and do not, as is usually the case with them, reason about them, or what is worse, compose far-fetched similes about them. Glimpses of sentiment are of course found now and then, but only now and then. It is not often that Wordsworth sings in such pure strains as that of the lines,—

> "My heart leaps up when I behold
> A Rainbow in the sky."

It is not often that Byron strikes a chord as deep as that of the lines "In an Album:"—

> "As o'er the cold, sepulchral stone,
> Some name arrests the passer-by."

It is here, however, that Pushkin is unsurpassed. One must go to Heine, one must go to Uhland, to Goethe, to find the like of him. And what makes him master here is the fact that his sentiment comes out pure, that it comes forth fused. And it comes thus because it comes from the depths; and as such it must find response even in an Anglo-Saxon heart, provided it has not yet been eaten into by Malthusian law and scientific charity. Pushkin's sentiment extorts respect even where it finds no longer any response; and as the sight of nobility stirs a healthy soul to noble deeds, as the sight of beauty refines the eye, so the presence of true sentiment can only awaken

whatever sentiment already sleeps within us. It is for supplying this glaring defect in the English poets that a reading of Pushkin becomes invaluable. I almost fear to quote or compare. Sentiment cannot be argued about; like all else of the highest, deepest, like God, like love, it must be *felt*. Where it is understood, nothing need be said; where it is not understood, nothing can be said....

31. And yet a single example I venture to give. Pushkin's "Inspiring Love" and Wordsworth's "Phantom of Delight" treat of the same theme. Pushkin sees his beloved again, and after years—

> "Enraptured beats again my heart,
> And risen are for it again
> Both reverence and Inspiration
> And life, and tears, and love."

Wordsworth also gets now a nearer view of his "Phantom of Delight;" and the sight rouses him to this pitch of enthusiastic sentiment:

> "And now I see with eye serene,
> The very pulse of the *machine*."

In the presence of such bungling, I am almost ashamed to call attention, not to the machine that has a pulse, but to that noble woman who, purified, clarified in the imagination by the heat of a melted heart, can only become to the poet, a—machine. And this is the poet (whose very essence should be sensitiveness, delicacy, *sentiment*) who is ranked by Matthew Arnold as the greatest poet since Shakespeare....

32. I have given only one example, though there is hardly a volume of English poetry, with the possible exception of those of Burns, which does not furnish

dozens of examples. If I give only one, it is because I have in mind Æsop's lioness, who gave such smart reply when chided for giving birth to only one young....

33. There is, indeed, one poet in the English language whose pages throb with sentiment, and who is moreover singularly free from that literary vice which I have called insincerity of imagination; in purity of pictures, in simplicity of sentiment, Goldsmith is unsurpassed in any tongue, but Goldsmith was not an Anglo-Saxon. And even Macaulay's great praise of "The Traveller" has not been sufficient to give it a place of *authority* among readers. The persons that read "The Traveller" once a year, as such a possession for all times should be read by rational readers, are very few.

34. From what I have designated as the first characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon race—its rhetorical quality—springs the second, which I have designated as the superficiality of sentiment; since the rhetorician needs no depth, and when he does need it, he needs it only for the moment. And from this same rhetorical quality springs the third characteristic of English writers which appears in literature as a vice. I mean their comparative lack of the sense of form, of measuredness, literary temperance,—the want, in short, of the *artistic* sense. For architectural proportion, with beginning, middle, and end in proper relation, English poets have but little respect, and it is here that Pushkin is again master. It is the essence of poetry, that which makes it *not-prose*, that it is intense; but intensity to produce its effect must be short-lived. Prolonged, like a stimulant, it ceases to act. Hence, one of the first laws of poetry is that the presentation of its scenes,

emotions, episodes, be brief. Against this law the sins in English literature among its masters are innumerable. Take, for instance, the manner in which Pushkin, on the one hand, and English poets, on the other, treat an object which has ever affected men with poetic emotion.

35. Many are the English poets who have tried their voices in singing of birds; Wordsworth's lines to the Skylark, the Green Linnet, the Cuckoo, Shelley's piece "To a Skylark," Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale," Bryant's "Lines to a Waterfowl," attest sufficiently the inspiration which tender birdie hath for the soul of man. Now read these in the light of Pushkin's twenty lines called "The Birdlet." Bryant alone, it seems to me, holds his own by the side of Pushkin. Shelley and Keats are lengthy to weariness; and Wordsworth is almost painfully tame. What thoughtlet or emotionlet these are stirred with at the sight of birdie is like a babe in the swaddling-clothes of fond, but inexperienced parents, suffocated in its wrappage.

36. This measuredness Pushkin displays best in his narrative poems. His story *moves.* His "Delibash" is the finest example of rapidity of execution combined with fidelity of skill. And the vividness of his stories in "The Drowned," "The Roussalka," and "The Cossak," is due not so much to the dramatic talent Pushkin doubtless possessed as to the sense of proportion which saved him from loading his narrative with needless detail. Gray's "Elegy," for instance, matchless in its beauty, is marred by the needless appendage of the youth himself. This part of the poem seems *patched on* Wordsworth's "Lucy Gray" seems to justify Goldsmith's bold metaphor,—for it does drag a lengthening chain at each remove.

Longfellow's "Prelude" has like "Sartor Resartus" a most unwieldy apparatus for getting ready. The poet there is ever ready to say something, but hardly says it even at the end. And even Tennyson, who at one time did know what it was to keep fine poise in such matters, is frequently guilty of this merely getting ready to say his say.

37. These, then, are the three great virtues of Pushkin's poems: They have sincere imagination, which means pure taste; they have true sentiment, which means pure depth; they have true measure, which means pure art. Pushkin has many more virtues which are common to all great poets; but of these three I thought necessary to speak in detail.

Poems: Autobiographical.

MON PORTRAIT.

X. 35.[1]

Vous me demandez mon portrait,
Mais peint d'après nature:
Mon cher, il sera bientôt fait,
Quoique en miniature.

Je sais un jeune polisson
Encore dans les classes:
Point sot, je le dis sans façon
Et sans fades grimaces.

One, il ne fut de babillard,
Ni docteur de Sorbonne
Plus ennuyeux et plus braillard
Que moi-même en personne.

Ma taille à celle des plus longs
Elle n'est point égalée;
J'ai le teint frais, les cheveux blonds,
Et la tête bouclée.

J'aime et le monde, et son fracas,
Je hais la solitude;
J'abhorre et noises et débats,
Et tant soit peu l'étude.

Spectacles, bals me plaisent fort,
Et d'après ma pensée
Je dirais ce que j'aime encore,
Si je n'étais au lycée.

Après cela, mon cher ami,
L'on peut me reconnaître:
Oui! tel que le bon Dieu me fit,
Je veux toujours paraître.

Vrai demon pour l'espièglerie,
Vrai singe par sa mine,
Beaucoup et trop d'étourderie,—
Ma foi—voilà Poushkine.

[1] See Preface, § 1.

MY PEDIGREE.

IV. 66.

With scorning laughter at a fellow writer,
In a chorus the Russian scribes
With name of aristocrat me chide:
Just look, if please you ... nonsense what!
Court Coachman not I, nor assessor,
Nor am I nobleman by cross;
No academician, nor professor,
I'm simply of Russia a citizen.

Well I know the times' corruption,
And, surely, not gainsay it shall I:
Our nobility but recent is:
The more recent it, the more noble 't is.
But of humbled races a chip,
And, God be thanked, not alone
Of ancient Lords am scion I;
Citizen I am, a citizen!

Not in cakes my grandsire traded,
Not a prince was newly-baked he;
Nor at church sang he in choir,
Nor polished he the boots of Tsar;
Was not escaped a soldier he
From the German powdered ranks;
How then aristocrat am I to be?
God be thanked, I am but a citizen.

My grandsire Radsha in warlike service
To Alexander Nefsky was attached.
The Crowned Wrathful, Fourth Ivan,
His descendants in his ire had spared.
About the Tsars the Pushkins moved;
And more than one acquired renown,

When against the Poles battling was
Of Nizhny Novgorod the citizen plain.

When treason conquered was and falsehood,
And the rage of storm of war,
When the Romanoffs upon the throne
The nation called by its Chart—
We upon it laid our hands;
The martyr's son then favored us;
Time was, our race was prized,
But I ... am but a citizen obscure.

Our stubborn spirit us tricks has played;
Most irrepressible of his race,
With Peter my sire could not get on;
And for this was hung by him.
Let his example a lesson be:
Not contradiction loves a ruler,
Not all can be Prince Dolgorukys,
Happy only is the simple citizen.

My grandfather, when the rebels rose
In the palace of Peterhof,
Like Munich, faithful he remained
To the fallen Peter Third;
To honor came then the Orloffs,
But my sire into fortress, prison—
Quiet now was our stern race,
And I was born merely—citizen.

Beneath my crested seal
The roll of family charts I've kept;
Not running after magnates new,
My pride of blood I have subdued;
I'm but an unknown singer
Simply Pushkin, not Moussin,

My strength is mine, not from court:
I am a writer, a citizen.

MY MONUMENT.

IV. 23.

A monument not hand-made I have for me erected;
The path to it well-trodden will not overgrow;
Risen higher has it with unbending head
Than the monument of Alexander.

No! not all of me shall die! my soul in hallowed lyre
Shall my dust survive, and escape destruction—
And famous be I shall, as long as on earth sublunar
One bard at least living shall remain.

My name will travel over the whole of Russia great,
And there pronounce my name shall every living tongue:
The Slav's proud scion, and the Finn, and the savage yet
Tungus, and the Calmuck, lover of the steppe.

And long to the nation I shall be dear:
For rousing with my lyre its noble feelings.
For extolling freedom in a cruel age,
For calling mercy upon the fallen.

The bidding of God, O Muse, obey.
Fear not insult, ask not crown:
Praise and blame take with indifference
And dispute not with the fool!

August, 1836.

MY MUSE.

IV. 1.

In the days of my youth she was fond of me,
And the seven-stemmed flute she handed me.
To me with smile she listened; and already gently
Along the openings echoing of the woods
Was playing I with fingers tender:
Both hymns solemn, god-inspired
And peaceful song of Phrygian shepherd.
From morn till night in oak's dumb shadow
To the strange maid's teaching intent I listened;
And with sparing reward me gladdening
Tossing back her curls from her forehead dear,
From my hands the flute herself she took.
Now filled the wood was with breath divine
And the heart with holy enchantment filled.

1823.

MY DEMON.

IV. 107.

In those days when new to me were
Of existence all impressions:—
The maiden's glances, the forests' whisper,
The song of nightingale at night;
When the sentiments elevated
Of Freedom, glory and of love,
And of art the inspiration
Stirred deeply so my blood:—
My hopeful hours and joyful
With melancholy sudden dark'ning
A certain evil spirit then
Began in secret me to visit.
Grievous were our meetings,
His smile, and his wonderful glance,
His speeches, these so stinging
Cold poison poured into my soul.
Providence with slander
Inexhaustible he tempted;
Of Beauty as a dream he spake
And inspiration he despised;
Nor love, nor freedom trusted he,
On life with scorn he looked—
And nought in all nature
To bless he ever wished.

1823.

REGRET.

IV. 76.

Not ye regret I, of spring my years,
In dreams gone by of hopeless love;
Not ye regret I, O mysteries of nights.
By songstress passionate celebrated;

Not ye, regret I, O my faithless friends
Nor crowns of feasts, nor cups of circle,
Nor ye regret I, O traitresses young—
To pleasures melancholy stranger am I.

But where are ye, O moments tender
Of young my hopes, of heartfelt peace?
The former heat and grace of inspiration?
Come again, O ye, of spring my years!

REMINISCENCE.

IV. 96.

When noisy day to mortals quiet grows,
And upon the city's silent walls
Night's shadow half-transparent lies,
And Sleep, of daily toils reward,—
Then for me are dragging in the silence
Of wearying wakefulness the hours.
In the sloth of night more scorching burn
My heart's serpents' gnawing fangs;

Boil my thoughts; my soul with grief oppressed
Full of reveries sad is thronged.
Before me memory in silence
Its lengthy roll unfolds.
And with disgust my life I reading
Tremble I and curse it.
Bitterly I moan, and bitterly my tears I shed,
But wash away the lines of grief I cannot.

In laziness, in senseless feasts
In the craziness of ruinous license,
In thraldom, poverty, and homeless deserts
My wasted years there I behold.
Of friends again I hear the treacherous greeting
Games amid of love and wine.
To the heart again insults brings
Irrepressible the cold world.
No joy for me,—and calmly before me
Of visions young two now rise:
Two tender shades, two angels me
Given by fate in the days of yore.
But both have wings and flaming swords,
And they watch—... and both are vengeant,
And both to me speak with death tongue
Of Eternity's mysteries, and of the grave.

1828.

ELEGY.

IV. 85.

My wishes I have survived,
My ambition I have outgrown!
Left only is my smart,
The fruit of emptiness of heart.

Under the storm of cruel Fate
Faded has my blooming crown!
Sad I live and lonely,
And wait: Is nigh my end?

Thus touched by the belated frost,
When storm's wintry whistle is heard,
On the branch bare and lone
Trembles the belated leaf.

1821.

RESURRECTION.

IV. 116.

With sleepy brush the barbarian artist
The master's painting blackens;
And thoughtlessly his wicked drawing
Over it he is daubing.

But in years the foreign colors
Peal off, an aged layer:
The work of genius is 'gain before us,
With former beauty out it comes.

Thus my failings vanish too

From my wearied soul,
And again within it visions rise,
Of my early purer days.

1819

THE PROPHET.

IV. 19.

Tormented by the thirst for the spirit
I was dragging myself in a sombre desert,
And a six-winged seraph appeared
Unto me on the parting of the roads.
With fingers as light as a dream
Mine eyes he touched:
And mine eyes opened wise
Like the eyes of a frightened eagle;
He touched mine ears,
And they filled with din and ringing.
And I heard the trembling of the heavens
And the flight of the angel's wings,
And the creeping of the polyps in the sea,
And the growth of the vine in the valley.
And he took hold of my lips,
And out he tore my sinful tongue
With its empty and false speech.
And the fang of the wise serpent
Between my terrified lips he placed
With bloody hand.
And ope he cut with sword my breast,
And out he took my trembling heart,

And a coal with flaming blaze
Into the opened breast he shoved.
Like a corpse I lay in the desert.
And the voice of God unto me called:
Arise, O prophet, and listen, and guide.
Be thou filled with my will,
And going over land and sea
Fire with the word the hearts of men!

1826.

Poems: Narrative.

THE OUTCAST.

III. 5.

On a rainy autumn evening
Into desert places went a maid;
And the secret fruit of unhappy love
In her trembling hands she held.
All was still: the hills and the woods
Asleep in the darkness of the night.
And her searching glances
In terror about she cast.

And on this babe, the innocent,
Her glance she paused with a sigh:
Asleep thou art, my child, my grief.
Thou knowest not my sadness.
Thine eyes will ope, and tho' with longing,

To my breast shalt no more cling.
No kiss for thee to-morrow
From thine unhappy mother.

Beckon in vain for her thou wilt,
My everlasting shame, my guilt!
Me forget thou shalt for aye,
But thee forget shall not I.
Shelter thou shalt receive from strangers,
Who 'll say: Thou art none of ours!
Thou wilt ask, Where are my parents?
But for thee no kin is found!

Hapless one! With heart filled with sorrow,
Lonely amid thy mates,
Thy spirit sullen to the end,
Thou shalt behold fondling mothers.
A lonely wanderer everywhere
Cursing thy fate at all times,
Thou the bitter reproach shalt hear....
Forgive me, oh, forgive me then!

Asleep! let me then, O hapless one
To my bosom press thee once for all.
A law unjust and terrible
Thee and me to sorrow dooms.
While the years have not yet chased
The guiltless joy of thy days,
Sleep, my darling, let no griefs bitter
Mar thy childhood's quiet life!

But lo! behind the woods, near by
The moon brings a hut to light.
Forlorn, pale, and trembling
To the doors nigh she came.
She stooped and gently laid she down

The babe on the threshold strange.
In terror away her eyes she turned
And in the dark night disappeared.

1814.

THE BLACK SHAWL.

III. 83.

I gaze demented on the black shawl
And my cold soul is torn by grief.

When young I was and full of trust
I passionately loved a young Greek girl.

The charming maid, she fondled me,
But soon I lived the black day to see.

Once as were gathered my jolly guests
A detested Jew knocked at my door.

Thou art feasting (he whispered) with friends
But betrayed thou art by thy Greek maid.

Moneys I gave him and curses,
And called my servant the faithful.

We went: I flew on the wings of my steed;
And tender mercy was silent in me.

Her threshold no sooner I espied

Dark grew my eyes, and my strength departed.

The distant chamber I enter alone,
An Armenian embraces my faithless maid.

Darkness around me; flashed the dagger;
To interrupt his kiss the wretch had no time.

And long I trampled the headless corpse,—
And silent and pale at the maid I stared.

I remember her prayers, her flowing blood,
But perished the girl, and with her my love.

The shawl I took from the head now dead
And wiped in silence the bleeding steel.

When came the darkness of eve, my serf
Threw their bodies into the Danube's billows—

Since then I kiss no charming eyes,
Since then I know no cheerful days.

I gaze demented on the black shawl,
And my cold soul is torn by grief.

1820.

THE ROUSSALKA.

III. 71.

By a lake once in forest darkness
A monk his soul was saving,
Ever in stern occupation
Of prayer, fast, and labor.
Already with slackened shovel
The aged man his grave was digging,
And only for death in peace and quiet
To his saintly patrons prayed he.

Once in summer at the threshold
Of his drooping little hut
To God was praying the hermit.
Darker grew the forest.
Over the lake was rising fog.
And in the clouds the reddish moon
Was gently rolling along the sky.
Upon the waters the hermit gazed.

He looks, and fears, and knows not why,
Himself he cannot understand....
Now he sees: the waves are seething
And suddenly again are quiet....

Suddenly ... as light as shade of night,
As white as early snow of hills,
Out cometh a woman naked
And on the shore herself she seats.

Upon the aged monk she gazes
And she combs her moistened tresses—
The holy monk with terror trembles,
Upon her charms still he gazes;
With her hand to him she beckons
And her head she's quickly nodding....
And suddenly like a falling star
The dreamy wave she vanished under.

The sober monk, all night he slept not,
And all day he prayed not
The shadow unwittingly before him
Of the wondrous maid he ever sees.
Again the forest is clad in darkness,
Along the clouds the moon is sailing.
Again the maid above the water,
Pale and splendent there she sits.

Gaze her eyes, nods her head,
Throws kisses, and she's sporting,
The wave she sprinkles, and she frolics;
Child-like weeping now and laughing;

Sobbing tender—the monk she calls:
Monk, O monk, to me, to me!
Into the waves transparent she dashes;
And again is all in silence deep.

But on the third day the roused hermit
The enchanted shores nigh sitting was,
And the beautiful maid he awaited.
Upon the trees were falling shades....
Night at last by dawn was chased—
And nowhere monk could be found,
His beard alone, the gray one
In the water the boys could see.

1819.

THE COSSAK.

III. 14.

Once at midnight hour,
Darkness thro' and fog,
Quiet by the river
Rode a Cossak brave.

Black his cap upon his ear,
Dust-covered is his coat,
By his knee the pistols hang
And nigh the ground his sword.

The faithful steed, rein not feeling
Is walking slowly on,
(Long its mane is, and is waving)
Ever further it keeps on.

Now before him two—three huts:
Broken is the fence;
To the village here the road,
To the forest there.

"Not in forest maid is found,"
Dennis thinks, the brave.
"To their chambers went the maids;
Are gone for the night."

The son of Don he pulls the rein
And the spur he strikes:
Like an arrow rushed the steed—
To the huts he turned.

In the clouds the distant sky
Was silvering the moon;
A Beauty-Maid in melancholy

By the window sits.

Espies the brave the Beauty-Maid,
Beats his heart within:
Gently steed to left, to left—
Under the window now is he.

"Darker growing is the night
And hidden is the moon;
Quick, my darling, do come out,
Water give my steed."

"No, not unto a man so young;
Right fearful't is to go;
Fearful't is my house to leave,
And water give thy steed."

"Have no fear, O Beauty-Maid,
And friendship close with me"—
"Brings danger night to Beauty-Maids,"
"Fear me not, O joy of mine!

"Trust me, dear, thy fear is vain,
Away with terror groundless!
Time thou losest precious,
Fear not, O my darling!

Mount my steed; with thee I will
To distant regions gallop;
Blest with me be thou shalt,
Heaven with mate is everywhere."

And the maid? Over she bends,
Her fear is overcome,
Bashfully to ride consents,
And the Cossak happy is.

Off they dart, away they fly;
Are loving one another.
Faithful he for two brief weeks,
Forsook her on the third.

1815.

THE DROWNED.

IV. 185.

Into the hut the children run,
In haste they called their father:
"Papa, papa, oh, our nets
Out a corpse have dragged."
"Ye lie, ye lie, ye little devils"
Upon them father grumbled.
"I declare, those wicked brats!
Corpse now too have they must!

"Down will come the court, 'Give answer!'
And for an age no rest from it.
But what to do? Heigh, wife, there,
My coat give me, must get there somehow....
Now where's the corpse?"—"Here, papa, here!"
And in truth along the river,
Where is spread the moistened net,
Upon the sand is seen the corpse.

Disfigured terribly the corpse is,
Is blue, and all is swollen.

Is it a hapless sorrower,
Who ruined has his sinful soul,
Or by the waves a fisher taken,
Or some fellow, drunkard,
Or by robbers stripped, perchance,
Trader some, unbusinesslike?

To the peasant, what is this?
About he looks and hastens....
Seizes he the body drowned,
By the feet to water drags it,
And from the shore the winding
Off he pushes it with oar
Downward 'gain floats the corpse,
And grave, and cross still is seeking.

And long the dead among the waves,
As if living, swinging, floated;
With his eyes the peasant him
Homeward going, followed.
"Ye little dogs, now follow me,
Each of you a cake shall have;
But look ye out, and hold your tongues!
Else a thrashing shall ye have."

At night the wind to blow began
Full of waves became the river;
Out the light was already going
In the peasant's smoky hut.
The children sleep; the mother slumbers.
On the oven husband lies.
Howls the storm; a sudden knocking
He hears of some one at the window.

"Who's there?"—"Ope the door I say!"
"Time eno'; what is the matter?

Wherefore comes tramp at night?
By the devil art hither brought!
Wherefore with you should I bother?
Crowded my house and dark is."
So saying, he with lazy hand
Open throws the window.

Rolls the moon from behind the clouds—
And now? A naked man before him stands;
From his beard a stream is flowing
His glance is fixed, and is open.
All about him is frightful dumbness
And his hands are dropped down;
And to the puffed-out, swollen body
Black crabs are fastened.

The peasant quickly shuts the window;
He recognized his naked guest,
Is terror-struck. "May you burst!"
Out he whispered and trembled.
In great confusion now his thoughts are,
And all night he shakes in fever;
And till the morrow still the knocking
'S heard on the window and at the gates.

Report there was among the people:
Saying, since then every year
Waiting is the hapless peasant
For his guest on the appointed day.
In the morning the weather changes
And at night the storm arrives,
And the dead man is ever knocking
By the window, and at the gates.

1828.

Poems of Nature.

THE BIRDLET.

I. 171.

God's birdlet knows
Nor care, nor toil;
Nor weaves it painfully
An everlasting nest.
Thro' the long night on the twig it slumbers;
When rises the red sun
Birdie listens to the voice of God
And it starts, and it sings.
When Spring, Nature's Beauty,
And the burning summer have passed,
And the fog, and the rain,
By the late fall are brought,
Men are wearied, men are grieved,
But birdie flies into distant lands,
Into warm climes, beyond the blue sea:
Flies away until the spring.

1824.

THE CLOUD.

IV. 95.

O last cloud of the scattered storm,
Alone thou sailest along the azure clear;
Alone thou bringest the shadow sombre,
Alone thou marrest the joyful day.

Thou but recently had'st encircled the sky
When sternly the lightning was winding about thee;
Thou gavest forth mysterious thunder,
With rain hast watered the parched earth.

Enough! Hie thyself: thy time hath passed:
Earth is refreshed; the storm hath fled;
And the breeze, fondling the trees' leaves
Forth thee chases from the quieted heavens!

1835.

THE NORTH WIND.

IV. 94.

Why, O wrathful north wind, thou
The marshy shrub dost downward bend?
Why thus in the distant sky-vault
Wrathfully the cloud dost chase?

The black clouds but recently
Had spread the whole heavens o'er,
The oak on hill top but recently

In beauty wondrous itself was priding.

Thou hast risen, and up hast played,
With terror resounded, and with splendor—
And away are driven the stormy clouds;
Down is hurled the mighty oak.

Let now then the sun's clear face
With joy henceforth ever shine,
With the clouds now the zephyr play,
And the bush in quiet sway.

1824.

WINTER MORNING.

IV. 164.

Frost and sun—the day is wondrous!
Thou still art slumbering, charming friend.
'Tis time, O Beauty, to awaken:
Ope thine eyes, now in sweetness closed,
To meet the Northern Dawn of Morning
Thyself a north-star do thou appear!

Last night, remember, the storm scolded,
And darkness floated in the clouded sky;
Like a yellow, clouded spot
Thro' the clouds the moon was gleaming,—
And melancholy thou wert sitting—
But now ... thro' the window cast a look:

Stretched beneath the heavens blue
Carpet-like magnificent,
In the sun the snow is sparkling;
Dark alone is the wood transparent,
And thro' the hoar gleams green the fir,
And under the ice the rivulet sparkles.

Entire is lighted with diamond splendor
Thy chamber ... with merry crackle
The wood is crackling in the oven.
To meditation invites the sofa.
But know you? In the sleigh not order why
The brownish mare to harness?

Over the morning snow we gliding
Trust we shall, my friend, ourselves
To the speed of impatient steed;
Visit we shall the fields forsaken,
The woods, dense but recently,
And the banks so dear to me.

1829.

WINTER EVENING.

IV. 166.

The storm the sky with darkness covers,
The snowy whirlings twisting;
Like a beast wild now is howling,
Like an infant now is crying;
Over the aged roof now sudden

In the straw it rustling is;
Like a traveller now belated
For entrance at our window knocking.

With melancholy and with darkness
Our little, aged hut is filled
Why in silence then thou sittest
By the window, wife old mine?
Or by the howling storms art
Wearied thou, O companion mine?
Or perchance art slumbering,
By the rustling spindle soothed?

Let us drink, O kindly friend
Of my poverty and youth,
Away with grief,—where is the cup?
Joy it shall bring to our heart.

A song now sing me, how the bird
Beyond the sea in quiet lived;
A song now sing me, how the maiden
In the morning for water went.

The storm the sky with darkness covers,
The snowy whirlings twisting;
Like a beast wild now is howling,
Like an infant now is crying.
Let us drink, O kindly friend
Of my poverty and youth,
Away with grief,—where is the cup
Joy it shall bring to our heart!

1826.

THE WINTER-ROAD.

IV. 161.

Breaking thro' the waving fogs
Forth the moon is coming,
And on the gloomy acres
She gloomy light is shedding.

Along the wintry, cheerless road
Flies the rapid troika
The little bell monotonous
Wearily is tinkling.

A certain homefulness is heard
In the driver's lengthy lays:
Now light-hearted carelessness,
Now low-spirited sadness.

Neither light, nor a dark hut ...
Only snow and silence....
Striped mileposts are alone
The travellers who meet us.

Sad I feel and weary.... On the morrow, Nina,
To my beloved I returning
Forget myself shall by the fire
And scarce eno' at her shall gaze.

Loudly of my watch the spring
Its measured circle is completing
And us the parter of the wearied,
Midnight, not shall separate.

Sad I'm, Nina; my journey's weary;
Slumbering now, my driver is quiet
The little bell is monotonous
And darkened now is the moon's face.

1826.

Poems of Love.

THE STORM-[MAID].

IV. 146.

Hast thou seen on the rock the maid,
In robe of white above the waves,
When seething in the storm dark
Played the sea with its shores,—
When the glare of lightning hourly
With rosy glimmer her lighted up,
And the wind beating and flapping
Struggled with her flying robe?

Beautiful's the sea in the storm dark,
Glorious is the sky even without its blue
But trust me: on the rock the maid
Excels both wave, and sky, and storm.

1825.

THE BARD.

III. 43.

Have ye heard in the woods the nightly voice
Of the bard of love, of the bard of his grief?
When the fields in the morning hour were still,
The flute's sad sound and simple
Have ye heard?

Have ye met in the desert darkness of the forest
The bard of love, the bard of his grief?
Was it a track of tears, was it a smile,
Or a quiet glance filled with melancholy,
Have ye met?

Have ye sighed, listening to the calm voice
Of the bard of love, of the bard of grief?
When in the woods the youth ye saw
And met the glance of his dulled eyes,
Have ye sighed?

1816.

SPANISH LOVE-SONG.

IV. 136.

Evening Zephyr
Waves the ether.
Murmurs,
Rushes
The Guadalquivir.

Now the golden moon has risen,
Quiet,... Tshoo ... guitar's now heard....
Now the Spanish girl young
O'er the balcony has leaned.

Evening Zephyr
Waves the ether.
Murmurs,
Rushes
The Guadalquivir.

Drop thy mantle, angel gentle,
And appear as fair as day!
Thro' the iron balustrade
Put thy wondrous tender foot!

Evening Zephyr
Waves the ether.
Murmurs,
Rushes
The Guadalquivir.

1824.

[LOVE.]

IV. 152.

Bitterly groaning, jealous maid the youth was scolding;
He, on her shoulder leaning, suddenly was in slumber lost.
Silent forthwith is the maid; his light sleep now fondles she
Now she smiles upon him, and is shedding gentle tears.

1835.

[JEALOUSY.]

IV. 85.

Damp day's light is quenched: damp night's darkness
Stretches over the sky its leaden garment.
Like a ghost, from behind the pine wood
Foggy moon has risen....
All brings upon my soul darkness grievous.
Far, far away rises the shining moon,
There the earth is filled with evening warmth
There the sea moveth with luxuriant wave
Under the heavens blue....
Now is the time. On the hillside now she walks
To the shore washed by noisy waves.
There, under the billowed cliffs
Alone she sits now melancholy....
Alone ... none before her weeping, grieves not,
Her knees none kisses in ecstasy.

Alone ... to lips of none she is yielding
Her shoulders, nor moist lips, nor snow-white fingers.

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

None is worthy of her heavenly love.

Is it not so? Thou art alone. . . . Thou weepest. . . .

And I at peace? . . . . . .

. . . . . .

But if . . . . . .

1823.

IN AN ALBUM.

IV. 99.

The name of me, what is it to thee
Die it shall like the grievous sound
Of wave, playing on distant shore,
As sound of night in forest dark.

Upon the sheet of memory
Its traces dead leave it shall
Inscriptions-like of grave-yard

In some foreign tongue.

What is in it? Long ago forgotten
In tumultuous waves and fresh
To thy soul not give it shall
Pure memories and tender.

But on sad days, in calmness
Do pronounce it sadly;
Say then: I do remember thee—
On earth one heart is where yet I live!

1829.

THE AWAKING.

III. 42.

Ye dreams, ye dreams,
Where is your sweetness?
Where thou, where thou
O joy of night?
Disappeared has it,
The joyous dream;
And solitary
In darkness deep
I awaken.
Round my bed
Is silent night.
At once are cooled,
At once are fled,
All in a crowd

The dreams of Love—
Still with longing
The soul is filled
And grasps of sleep
The memory.
O Love, O Love,
O hear my prayer:
Again send me
Those visions thine,
And on the morrow
Raptured anew
Let me die
Without awaking!

1816.

ELEGY.

III. 39.

Happy who to himself confess
His passion dares without terror;
Happy who in fate uncertain
By modest hope is fondled;
Happy who by foggy moonbeams
Is led to midnight joyful
And with faithful key who gently
The door unlocks of his beloved.

But for me in sad my life
No joy there is of secret pleasure;
Hope's early flower faded is,

By struggle withered is life's flower.
Youth away flies melancholy,
And droop with me life's roses;
But by Love tho' long forgot,
Forget Love's tears I cannot.

1816.

[FIRST LOVE.]

I. 112.

Not at once our youth is faded,
Not at once our joys forsake us,
And happiness we unexpected
Yet embrace shall more than once;
But ye, impressions never-dying
Of newly trepidating Love,
And thou, first flame of Intoxication,—
Not flying back are coming ye!

ELEGY.

III. 99.

Hushed I soon shall be. But if on sorrow's day
My songs to me with pensive play replied;
But if the youths to me, in silence listening

At my love's long torture were marvelling;
But if thou thyself, to tenderness yielding
Repeated in quiet my melancholy verses
And didst love my heart's passionate language;
But if I am loved:—grant then, O dearest friend,
That my beautiful beloved's coveted name
Breathe life into my lyre's farewell.
When for aye embraced I am by sleep of Death,
Over my urn do with tenderness pronounce:
"By me he loved was, to me he owed
Of his love and song his last inspiration."

1821.

THE BURNT LETTER.

IV. 87.

Good-bye, love-letter, good-bye! 'T is her command....
How long I waited, how long my hand
To the fire my joys to yield was loath! ...
But eno', the hour has come: burn, letter of my love!
I am ready: listens more my soul to nought.
Now the greedy flame thy sheets shall lick ...
A minute! ... they crackle, they blaze ... a light smoke
Curls and is lost with prayer mine.
Now the finger's faithful imprint losing
Burns the melted wax.... O Heavens!
Done it is! curled in are the dark sheets;

Upon their ashes light the lines adored
Are gleaming.... My breast is heavy. Ashes dear,
In my sorrowful lot but poor consolation,
Remain for aye with me on my weary breast....

1825.

[SING NOT, BEAUTY.]

IV. 135.

Sing not, Beauty, in my presence,
Of Transcaucasia sad the songs,
Of distant shore, another life,
The memory to me they bring.

Alas, alas, remind they do,
These cruel strains of thine,
Of steppes, and night, and of the moon
And of distant, poor maid's features.

The vision loved, tender, fated,
Forget can I, when thee I see
But when thou singest, then before me
Up again it rises.

Sing not, Beauty, in my presence
Of Transcaucasia sad the songs,
Of distant shore, another life
The memory to me they bring.

1828.

SIGNS.

IV. 125.

To thee I rode: living dreams then
Behind me winding in playful crowd;
My sportive trot my shoulder over
The moon upon my right was chasing.

From thee I rode: other dreams now....
My loving soul now sad was,
And the moon at left my side
Companion mine now sad was.

To dreaming thus in quiet ever
Singers we are given over;
Marks thus of superstition
Soul's feeling with are in accord!

1829.

A PRESENTIMENT.

IV. 97.

The clouds again are o'er me,
Have gathered in the stillness;

Again me with misfortune
Envious fate now threatens.
Will I keep my defiance?
Will I bring against her
The firmness and patience
Of my youthful pride?

Wearied by a stormy life
I await the storm fretless
Perhaps once more safe again
A harbor shall I find....
But I feel the parting nigh,
Unavoidable, fearful hour,
To press thy hand for the last time
I haste to thee, my angel.

Angel gentle, angel calm,
Gently tell me: fare thee well.
Be thou grieved: thy tender gaze
Either drop or to me raise.
The memory of thee now shall
To my soul replace
The strength, the pride and the hope,
The daring of my former days!

1828.

[IN VAIN, DEAR FRIEND.]

III. 221.

In vain, dear friend, to conceal I tried

The turmoil cold of my grieving soul;
Now me thou knowest; goes by the intoxication.
And no longer thee I love....
Vanished for aye the bewitching hours,
The beautiful time has passed,
Youthful desires extinguished are
And lifeless hope is in my heart....

[LOVE'S DEBT.]

IV. 101.

For the shores of thy distant home
Thou hast forsaken the foreign land;
In a memorable, sad hour
I before thee cried long.
Tho' cold my hands were growing
Thee back to hold they tried;
And begged of thee my parting groan
The gnawing weariness not to break.

But from my bitter kisses thou
Thy lips away hast torn;
From the land of exile dreary
Calling me to another land.
Thou saidst: on the day of meeting
Beneath a sky forever blue
Olives' shade beneath, love's kisses
Again, my friend, we shall unite.

But where, alas! the vaults of sky

Shining are with glimmer blue,
Where 'neath the rocks the waters slumber—
With last sleep art sleeping thou.
And beauty thine and sufferings
In the urnal grave have disappeared—
But the kiss of meeting is also gone....
But still I wait: thou art my debtor! ...

INVOCATION.

III. 146.

Oh, if true it is that by night
When resting are the living
And from the sky the rays of moon
Along the stones of church-yard glide;
O, if true it is that emptied then
Are the quiet graves,
I call thy shade, I wait my Lila
Come hither, come hither, my friend, to me!

Appear, O shade of my beloved
As thou before our parting wert:
Pale, cold, like a wintry day
Disfigured by thy struggle of death,
Come like unto a distant star,
Or like a fearful apparition,
'T is all the same: Come hither, come hither

And I call thee, not in order
To reproach him whose wickedness
My friend hath slain.

Nor to fathom the grave's mysteries,
Nor because at times I'm worn
With gnawing doubt ... but I sadly
Wish to say that still I love thee,
That wholly thine I am: hither come, O hither!

1828.

ELEGY.

IV. 100.

The extinguished joy of crazy years
On me rests heavy, like dull debauch.
But of by-gone days the grief, like wine
In my soul the older, the stronger 't grows.
Dark my path. Toil and pain promised are me
By the Future's roughened sea.

But not Death, O friends, I wish!
But Life I wish: to think and suffer;
Well I know, for me are joys in store
'Mid struggles, toils, and sorrows:
Yet 'gain at times shall harmony drink in
And tears I'll shed over Fancy's fruit,—
Yet mayhap at my saddened sunset
Love will beam with farewell and smile.

1830.

SORROW.

III. 69.

Ask not why with sad reflection
'Mid gayety I oft am darkened,
Why ever cheerless eyes I raise,
Why sweet life's dream not dear to me is;
Ask not why with frigid soul
I joyous love no longer crave,
And longer none I call dear:
Who once has loved, not again can love;
Who bliss has known, ne'er again shall know;
For one brief moment to us 't is given:
Of youth, of joy, of tenderness
Is left alone the sadness.

1817.

DESPAIR.

III. 41.

Dear my friend, we are now parted,
My soul's asleep; I grieve in silence.
Gleams the day behind the mountain blue,
Or rises the night with moon autumnal,—
Still thee I seek, my far off friend,
Thee alone remember I everywhere,
Thee alone in restless sleep I see.

Pauses my mind, unwittingly thee I call;
Listens mine ear, then thy voice I hear.

And thou my lyre, my despair dost share,
Of sick my soul companion thou!
Hollow is and sad the sound of thy string,
Grief's sound alone hast not forgot....
Faithful lyre, with me grieve thou!
Let thine easy note and careless
Sing of love mine and despair,
And while listening to thy singing
May thoughtfully the maidens sigh!

1816.

A WISH.

III. 38.

Slowly my days are dragging
And in my faded heart each moment doubles
All the sorrows of hopeless love
And heavy craze upsets me.
But I am silent. Heard not is my murmur.
Tears I shed ... they are my consolation;
My soul in sorrow steeped
Finds enjoyment bitter in them.
O flee, life's dream, thee not regret I!
In darkness vanish, empty vision!
Dear to me is of love my pain,
Let me die, but let me die still loving!

1816.

[RESIGNED LOVE.]

IV. 99.

Thee I loved; not yet love perhaps is
In my heart entirely quenched
But trouble let it thee no more;
Thee to grieve with nought I wish.
Silent, hopeless thee I loved,
By fear tormented, now by jealousy;
So sincere my love, so tender,
May God the like thee grant from another.

[LOVE AND FREEDOM.]

III. 157.

Child of Nature and simple,
Thus to sing was wont I
Sweet the dream of freedom—
With tenderness my breast it filled.

But thee I see, thee I hear—
And now? Weak become I.
With freedom lost forever
With all my heart I bondage prize.

[NOT AT ALL.]

IV. 118.

I thought forgotten has the heart
Of suffering the easy art;
Not again can be, said I
Not again what once has been.

Of Love the sorrows gone were,
Now calm were my airy dreams....
But behold! again they tremble
Beauty's mighty power before!...

[INSPIRING LOVE.]

IV. 117.

The moment wondrous I remember
Thou before me didst appear
Like a flashing apparition,
Like a spirit of beauty pure.

'Mid sorrows of hopeless grief,
'Mid tumults of noiseful bustle,
Rang long to me thy tender voice,
Came dreams to me of thy lovely features.

Went by the years. The storm's rebellious rush
The former dreams had scattered
And I forgot thy tender voice,
I forgot thy heavenly features.

In the desert, in prison's darkness,
Quietly my days were dragging;
No reverence, nor inspiration,
Nor tears, nor life, nor love.

But at last awakes my soul:
And again didst thou appear:
Like a flashing apparition,
Like a spirit of beauty pure.

And enraptured beats my heart,
And risen are for it again
Both reverence, and inspiration
And life, and tears, and love.

1825.

[THE GRACES.]

III. 160.

Till now no faith I had in Graces:
Seemed strange to me their triple sight;
Thee I see, and with faith am filled
Adoring now in one the three!

Poems: miscellaneous.

THE BIRDLET.

IV. 133.

In exile I sacredly observe
The custom of my fatherland:
I freedom to a birdlet give
On Spring's holiday serene.
And now I too have consolation:
Wherefore murmur against my God
When at least to one living being
I could of freedom make a gift?

1823.

THE NIGHTINGALE.

IV. 145.

In silent gardens, in the spring, in the darkness of the night
Sings above the rose from the east the nightingale;
But dear rose neither feeling has, nor listens it,
But under its lover's hymn waveth it and

slumbers.

Dost thou not sing thus to beauty cold?
Reflect, O bard, whither art thou striding?
She neither listens, nor the bard she feels.
Thou gazest? Bloom she does; thou callest?—
Answer none she gives!

1827.

THE FLOWERET.

IV. 95.

A floweret, withered, odorless
In a book forgot I find;
And already strange reflection
Cometh into my mind.

Bloomed, where? when? In what spring?
And how long ago? And plucked by whom?
Was it by a strange hand? Was it by a dear hand?
And wherefore left thus here?

Was it in memory of a tender meeting?
Was it in memory of a fated parting?
Was it in memory of a lonely walk?
In the peaceful fields or in the shady woods?

Lives he still? Lives she still?
And where their nook this very day?

Or are they too withered
Like unto this unknown floweret?

1828.

THE HORSE.

IV. 271.

Why dost thou neigh, O spirited steed,
Why thy neck so low,
Why thy mane unshaken
Why thy bit not gnawed?
Do I then not fondle thee?
Thy grain to eat art thou not free?
Is not thy harness ornamented,
Is not thy rein of silk,
Is not thy shoe of silver,
Thy stirrup not of gold?

The steed in sorrow answer gives:
Hence am I quiet
Because the distant tramp I hear,
The trumpet's blow and the arrow's whizz
And hence I neigh, since in the field
No longer feed I shall,
Nor in beauty live and fondling,
Neither shine with harness bright.

For soon the stern enemy
My harness whole shall take
And the shoes of silver

Tear he shall from feet mine light.
Hence it is that grieves my spirit:
That in place of my chaprak
With thy skin shall cover he
My perspiring sides.

1833.

TO A BABE.

IV. 144.

Child, I dare not over thee
Pronounce a blessing;
Thou art of consolation a quiet angel
May then happy be thy lot....

THE POET.

(IV. 2).

Ere the poet summoned is
To Apollo's holy sacrifice
In the world's empty cares
Engrossed is half-hearted he.

His holy lyre silent is
And cold sleep his soul locks in;

And of the world's puny children,
Of all puniest perhaps is he.

Yet no sooner the heavenly word
His keen ear hath reached,
Than up trembles the singer's soul
Like unto an awakened eagle.

The world's pastimes him now weary
And mortals' gossip now he shuns
To the feet of popular idol
His lofty head bends not he.

Wild and stern, rushes he,
Of tumult full and sound,
To the shores of desert wave,
Into the widely-whispering wood.

1827.

TO THE POET.

SONNET.

(IV. 9).

Poet, not popular applause shalt thou prize!
Of raptured praise shall pass the momentary noise;
The fool's judgment hear thou shalt, and the cold mob's laughter—
Calm stand, and firm be, and—sober!

Thou art king: live alone. On the free road
Walk, whither draws thee thy spirit free:
Ever the fruits of beloved thoughts ripening,
Never reward for noble deeds demanding.

In thyself reward seek. Thine own highest court thou art;
Severest judge, thine own works canst measure.
Art thou content, O fastidious craftsman?
Content? Then let the mob scold,
And spit upon the altar, where blazes thy fire.
Thy tripod in childlike playfulness let it shake.

THE THREE SPRINGS.

IV. 134.

In the world's desert, sombre and shoreless
Mysteriously three springs have broken thro':
Of youth the spring, a boisterous spring and rapid;
It boils, it runs, it sparkles, and it murmurs.
The Castalian Spring, with wave of inspiration
In the world's deserts its exiles waters;
The last spring—the cold spring of forgetfulness,
Of all sweetest, quench it does the heart's fire.

1827.

THE TASK.

IV. 151.

The longed-for moment here is. Ended is my long-yeared task.
Why then sadness strange me troubles secretly?
My task done, like needless hireling am I to stand,
My wage in hand, to other task a stranger?
Or my task regret I, of night companion silent mine,
Gold Aurora's friend, the friend of my sacred household gods?

1830.

SLEEPLESSNESS.

IV. 101.

I cannot sleep, I have no light;
Darkness 'bout me, and sleep is slow;
The beat monotonous alone
Near me of the clock is heard.
Of the Fates the womanish babble,
Of sleeping night the trembling,
Of life the mice-like running-about,—
Why disturbing me art thou?

What art thou, O tedious whisper?
The reproaches, or the murmur
Of the day by me misspent?
What from me wilt thou have?
Art thou calling or prophesying?
Thee I wish to understand,
Thy tongue obscure I study now.

1830.

[QUESTIONINGS.]

IV. 98.

Useless gift, accidental gift,
Life, why given art thou me?
Or, why by fate mysterious
To torture art thou doomed?

Who with hostile power me
Out has called from the nought?
Who my soul with passion thrilled,
Who my spirit with doubt has filled?...

Goal before me there is none,
My heart is hollow, vain my mind
And with sadness wearies me
Noisy life's monotony.

1828.

[CONSOLATION.]

IV. 142.

Life,—does it disappoint thee?
Grieve not, nor be angry thou!
In days of sorrow gentle be:
Come shall, believe, the joyful day.

In the future lives the heart:
Is the present sad indeed?
'T is but a moment, all will pass;
Once in the past, it shall be dear.

1825.

[FRIENDSHIP.]

III. 201.

Thus it ever was and ever will be,
Such of old is the world wide:
The learned are many, the sages few,
Acquaintance many, but not a friend!

[FAME.]

III. 102.

Blessed who to himself has kept
His creation highest of the soul,
And from his fellows as from the graves
Expected not appreciation!
Blessed he who in silence sang
And the crown of fame not wearing,
By mob despised and forgotten,
Forsaken nameless has the world!
Deceiver greater than dreams of hope,
What is fame? The adorer's whisper?
Or the boor's persecution?
Or the rapture of the fool?

1824.

THE ANGEL.

IV. 108.

At the gates of Eden a tender angel
With drooping head was shining;
A demon gloomy and rebellious
Over hell's abyss was flying.

The Spirit of Denial, the Spirit of Doubt
The Spirit of Purity espied;
And a tender warmth unwittingly
Now first to know it learned he.

Adieu, he spake, thee I saw:
Not in vain hast thou shone before me;
Not all in the world have I hated,
Not all in the world have I scorned.

1827.

[HOME-SICKNESS.]

III. 131.

Mayhap not long am destined I
In exile peaceful to remain,
Of dear days of yore to sigh,
And rustic muse in quiet
With spirit calm to follow.

But even far, in foreign land,
In thought forever roam I shall
Around Trimountain mine:
By meadows, river, by its hills,
By garden, linden nigh the house.

Thus when darkens day the clear,
Alone from depths of grave,
Spirit home-longing
Into the native hall flies
To espy the loved ones with tender glance.

1825.

[INSANITY.]

III. 149.

God grant I grow not insane:
No, better the stick and beggar's bag:
No, better toil and hunger bear.

Not that I upon my reason
Such value place; not that I
Would fain not lose it.

If freedom to me they would leave
How I would lasciviously
For the gloomy forest rush!

In hot delirium I would sing
And unconscious would remain
With ravings wondrous and chaotic.

And listen would I to the waves
And gaze I would full of bliss
Into the empty heavens.

And free and strong then would I be
Like a storm the fields updigging,
Forest-trees uprooting.

But here's the trouble: if crazy once,
A fright thou art like pestilence,
And locked up now shalt thou be.

To a chain thee, fool, they 'll fasten

And through the gate, a circus beast,
Thee to nettle the people come.

And at night not hear shall I
Clear the voice of nightingale
Nor the forest's hollow sound,

But cries alone of companions mine
And the scolding guards of night
And a whizzing, of chains a ringing.

[DEATH-THOUGHTS.]

IV. 93.

Whether I roam along the noisy streets
Whether I enter the peopled temple,
Whether I sit by thoughtless youth,
Haunt my thoughts me everywhere.

I say, Swiftly go the years by:
However great our number now,
Must all descend the eternal vaults,—
Already struck has some one's hour.

And if I gaze upon the lonely oak
I think: the patriarch of the woods
Will survive my passing age
As he survived my father's age.

And if a tender babe I fondle
Already I mutter, Fare thee well!

I yield my place to thee. For me
'T is time to decay, to bloom for thee

Every year thus, every day
With death my thought I join
Of coming death the day
I seek among them to divine.

Where will Fortune send me death?
In battle? In wanderings, or on the waves
Or shall the valley neighboring
Receive my chilled dust?

But tho' the unfeeling body
Can everywhere alike decay,
Still I, my birthland nigh
Would have my body lie.

Let near the entrance to my grave
Cheerful youth be in play engaged,
And let indifferent creation
With beauty shine there eternally.

1829.

[RIGHTS.]

IV. 10.

Not dear I prize high-sounding rights
By which is turned more head than one;
Not murmur I that not granted the Gods to me

The blessed lot of discussing fates,
Of hindering kings from fighting one another;
And little care I whether free the press is.

All this you see are *words, words, words!*
Other, better rights, dear to me are;
Other, better freedom is my need....
To depend on rulers, or the mob—
Is not all the same it? God be with them!
To give account to none; to thyself alone
To serve and please; for power, for a livery
Nor soul, nor mind, nor neck to bend:
Now here, now there to roam in freedom
Nature's beauties divine admiring,
And before creations of art and inspiration
Melt silently in tender ecstasy—
This is bliss, these are rights!....

THE GYPSIES.

IV. 157.

Over the wooded banks,
In the hour of evening quiet,
Under the tents are song and bustle
And the fires are scattered.

Thee I greet, O happy race!
I recognize thy blazes,
I myself at other times
These tents would have followed.

With the early rays to-morrow
Shall disappear your freedom's trace,
Go you will—but not with you
Longer go shall the bard of you.

He alas, the changing lodgings,
And the pranks of days of yore
Has forgot for rural comforts
And for the quiet of a home.

THE DELIBASH.

IV. 155.

Cross-firing behind the hills:
Both camps watch, theirs and ours;
In front of Cossaks on the hill
Dashes 'long brave Delibash

O Delibash, not to the line come nigh,
Do have mercy on thy life;
Quick 't is over with thy frolic bold,
Pierced thou by the spear shalt be

Hey, Cossak, not to battle rush
The Delibash is swift as wind;
Cut he will with crooked sabre
From thy shoulders thy fearless head.

They rush with yell: are hand to hand;
And behold now what each befalls:
Already speared the Delibash is

Already headless the Cossak is!

Notes.

MY PEDIGREE. (Page 61.)

These lines owe their origin to a public attack on Pushkin by Bulgarin, a literary magnate of those days. Bulgarin disliked Pushkin and, therefore, saw no merit in his poetry. But unable to argue against his poetry, he argued against Pushkin's person, and abused the poet for his fondness to refer to his ancient ancestry. Stung to the quick by a childish paragraph in Bulgarin's organ, "The Northern Bee," Pushkin wrote these lines. But on their publication which, I think, took place some time after they were written, though they went into circulation immediately, they made much bad blood. The Menshchikofs did not like to be reminded of the cakes their ancestor sold, nor the Rasumofskys of the fact that their countship was earned by the good voice of the first of that name. And the Kutaissoffs did not like to be told that Count Kutaissoff was originally Paul's shoe-black. The very pride in his ancestors, which made Pushkin ridiculous in the eyes of his enemies, made him forget the fact that selling cakes and blacking shoes, even though they be an emperor's, is by no means a thing to be ashamed of; and that, even if it were a thing to be ashamed of, the descendants of evil-doers are by no means responsible for the deeds of their ancestors.... The poem, therefore, is an excellent document, not only for the history of the nobility of Russia, but also for

that of poor Pushkin's soul.

Nobleman by cross. There are two kinds of noblemen in Russia: those who inherit their title, and those who acquire it. Whoever attains a certain cross as a reward for his service under the government (not, alas, *the* cross of true nobility, Christ's cross!) becomes thereby a "nobleman."

Our nobility but recent is: the more recent it, the nobler 't is. This was written fifty years ago, and thousands of miles away from here. But one would almost believe these lines written in our day, and at no great distance from Commonwealth Avenue,—so true is it that man remains, after all, the same in all climes, at all times....

Of Nizhny Novgorod the citizen plain. The butcher Minin is here meant, who, with Prince Pozharsky, delivered Moscow from the Poles just before the Romanoffs were called to the throne.

We upon it laid our hands. Six Pushkins signed this call, and two had to lay their hand to the paper, because they could not write their own names.

Simply Pushkin, not Moussin. The Moussin-Pushkins of that day were a very rich and influential family.

MY MONUMENT. (Page 64.)

In its present form, this poem did not appear till 1881. After Pushkin's death it appeared only when altered by Zhukofsky in several places. The Alexander Column being the tallest monument in Russia, Pushkin, writing for Russians, used that as an illustration; but the government could not let the sacrilege pass,—of a *poet's* monument ever being taller, even figuratively, than a Russian emperor's. In

1837, therefore, the poet was made to say, "Napoleon's column." The line in the fourth stanza, which speaks of Freedom, was altered to "That I was useful by the living charm of verse," and in this mutilated form this stanza is engraved on the poet's monument in Moscow, unveiled in 1880.

MY MUSE. (Page 66.)

I originally passed over this poem as unworthy of translation, because I thought it not universal enough; because it seemed to me to express not the human heart, but the individual heart,—Pushkin's heart. But the great Byelinsky taught me better. He quotes these lines as a marvel of classic, of Greek art. "See," he exclaims, "the Hellenic, the artistic manner (and this is saying the same thing) in which Pushkin has told us of his call, heard by him even in the days of his youth. Yes, maugre the happy attempts of Batushkof in this direction before Pushkin's day, *such* verses had not been seen till Pushkin in the Russian land!" And Byelinsky is right. He *saw*. The great critic is thus an eye-opener, because he sees his author, and because seeing him he cannot help loving him. For if men truly *knew* one another (assuming them to be unselfish), they would love one another.... A hater is blind though he sees; a lover sees though he be blind. See, also, about this piece, Introduction, § 4.

MY DEMON. (Page 67.)

To this poem Pushkin added a note, which he intended to send to the periodical press, as if it were the comment of a third person. Referring to the report that the poet had a friend of his in mind when he wrote this poem, and used Rayefsky as a model,

he says: "It seems to me those who believe this report are in error; at least, I see in 'The Demon' a higher aim, a moral aim. Perhaps the bard wished to typify Doubt. In life's best period, the heart? not as yet chilled by experience, is open to everything beautiful. It then is trustful and tender. But by-and-by the eternal contradictions of reality give birth to doubt in the heart; this feeling is indeed agonizing, but it lasts not long.... It disappears, but it carries away with it our best and poetic prejudices of the spirit." [*Are* they best, if they *are* prejudices? *Is* illusion truly poetic?—I. P.] Not, therefore, in vain has Goethe the Great given the name the Spirit of Denial to man's eternal enemy. And Pushkin wished to typify the Spirit of Denial.

REGRET. (Page 69.)

See Introduction, §§ 16, 25.

THE BIRDLET. (Page 97.)

This piece is not found among Pushkin's Lyrical Poems. It is a song taken from a longer Narrative Poem, called "The Gypsies."

LOVE. (Page 113.)

This poem is Pushkin all over. In four lines he has given a whole drama with a world of pathos and tenderness in it. These four lines give more instruction in the art of story-telling than volumes on the "Art of Fiction." A magazine writer, who of the same incidents would have woven out some twenty pages (of which no fewer than nineteen and three-quarters would have been writ for the approval of

check-book critic, rather than of the art critic), would have really *told* less than Pushkin has here told,—so true is the preacher's criticism on his own sermon: "Madame, if it had been shorter by half, it would have been twice as long!"

JEALOUSY. (Page 114.)

Of this piece I have already spoken in the Preface, § 7.

IN AN ALBUM. (Page 116.)

This is an excellent example of Pushkin's *sentiment*, of which I spoke in the Introduction, Chapter III. It is all the more entitled to the consideration of Anglo-Saxon *a priori* sentiment-haters (it is so easy to keep to *a priori* judgments, they are so convenient; they save discussion!) because Pushkin wrote this piece when fully matured, at the age of thirty, when his severe classic taste was already formed.

FIRST LOVE. (Page 120.)

These lines are taken from the Narrative Poem, "The Prisoner of the Caucasus."

SIGNS. (Page 124.)

Of the more-than-Egyptian number of plagues with which poor Pushkin's soul was afflicted, superstition was one. He believed in signs, and sometimes gave up a journey when a hare ran across his road. Owing to this superstition he once gave up a trip to St. Petersburg, which probably would have cost him his

life, had he made it. For on hearing of the December rebellion, in which many of his friends took part, he started for the capital, but the hare....

ELEGY. (Page 132.)

The fourth volume of Pushkin's Works, in which this poem was first published, struck Byelinsky with the poverty of its contents. "But in the fourth volume of Pushkin's Poems," says he, "there is one precious pearl which reminds us of the song of yore, of the bard of yore. It is the elegy, 'The extinguished joy of crazy years.' Yes! such an elegy can redeem not only a few tales, but even the entire volume of poetry!" ... (Byelinsky's Works, ii. 194.)

LOVE AND FREEDOM. (Page 137.)

In the original this poem is called, "To Countess N. V. Kotshubey."

INSPIRING LOVE. (Page 139.)

In the original this piece is headed, "To A. P. Kern."

THE GRACES. (Page 141.)

Addressed to Princess S. A. Urussov.

TO THE POET. (Page 153.)

This is the only poem Turgenef quotes in his speech at the unveiling of the Pushkin monument in 1880. "Of course," he said, "you all know it, but I cannot withstand the temptation to adorn my slim, meagre prosy speech with this poetic gold."

THE TASK. (Page 155.)

Byelinsky, who has taught me to appreciate much in Pushkin which I otherwise would not have appreciated, speaks of this little piece as "especially excellent" among Pushkin's anthological poems, written in hexameter, and says, that a breath antique blows from them. Well, I cannot agree with Byelinsky. There is, doubtless, a *sentimentlet* in the piece,—a germ; but it is only a germ, incomplete, immature. I would not have translated it (since its beauty, whatever that be, it owes entirely to its form, which is untranslatable), but for the sake of the reader, in justice to whom, a poem so highly thought of by Byelinsky ought to be given, whatever my opinion of it.

QUESTIONINGS. (Page 157.)

In the original this piece is headed, "26 May, 1828."

FAME. (Page 160.)

The first cantos of Eugene Onyegin were issued with the "Dialogue between the Bookseller and the Poet" as a preface. This poem is one of the arguments of the poet in the dialogue; and, as it is an independent song in itself, I have not hesitated to treat it as such.

HOME-SICKNESS. (Page 162.)

In the original these lines are entitled, "To P. A. Ossipova."

DEATH-THOUGHTS. (Page 165.)

In the original this poem is headed, "Stanzas."

RIGHTS. (Page 167.)

In the original this is called, "From VI. Pindemonte." But this is an original piece by Pushkin; at first he called it, "From Alfred Musset." Evidently the censorship was likely to pass it as a work of a foreign author where it would not as one of Pushkin; to his political convictions Pushkin never, indeed, did dare to give free expression. He never deliberately misled the government, but he did at times lead it to believe more in his loyalty than was strictly in accordance with the facts.

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