SOLITARIA
A NOTE TO SOLITARIA

On the last page of Solitaria, after the corrigenda in the original, we find the following P.S.S. by Rozanov. (In the first edition of the book.)

P.S. "Examining my Coins." The identification, classification, and description of ancient coins demand great attention from the eye, examination (through a magnifying glass), and the labour of remembering and recollecting (analogous coins and figures). But it leaves free the imagination, thought, also anger or tenderness. Then, putting the coin and the magnifying glass aside, I used to put down what had passed in the soul, "just that moment", those "twenty minutes." . . .

P.P.S. "On the back of the lined sheet", that is, when writing an article. But during the writing, another idea would come to me, an idea which had nothing to do with the article. Then, quickly removing the lined sheet, I wrote down on the back of it that other idea.

P.P.P.S. "Fame", "popularity" and such-like terms are meant in the sense of being widely known in Russia, popular in Russia owing to my collaboration in a paper of wide circulation. (In Piatigorsk the keeper of the Lermontov house "knew me"; he was an ancient half-alive petty official in retirement. Is he still alive?).

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THE wind blows at midnight and carries away leaves. . . . So also life in fleeting time tears off from our soul exclamations, sighs, half-thoughts, half-feelings. . . . Which, being fragments of sound, have the significance that they "come" straight from the soul, without elaboration, without purpose, without premeditation—without anything external. Simply, "the soul is alive," that is, "has lived," "has breathed." . . . I have always somehow liked these "sudden exclamations." Strictly speaking, they flow in one continuously, but one can't succeed (there's no paper at hand) in putting them down—and they die. Afterwards one can't remember them for anything. Yet certain things I succeeded in jotting down on paper. The jottings went on piling up. And then I decided to gather together those fallen leaves.

What for? Who needs it?

Merely I myself. Ah, dear reader, I have long been writing "without a reader," merely because I like it so. So "without a reader" I am publishing. . . . It just pleases me to do so. And I shall neither cry, nor be angry, if the reader, having by mistake bought a copy of the book, throws it away into the wastepaper basket. (It is more profitable, without cutting the pages, but just glancing through the book,
and unfolding the sheets, to sell it to a secondhand bookshop at a 50 per cent. reduction.)

Well, reader, I do not stand on ceremony with you, so you need not stand on ceremony with me.

"To the devil!"... "To the devil!"... And *au revoir* until our meeting in the next world. With a reader it is much more tedious, than with oneself. He opens his mouth wide and waits for what is going to be put into it. In which case he has the look of an ass before braying. Not a very engaging sight... What the dickens do I need him for?... I write for "unknown friends" and perhaps even for no one...
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WHEN the decadents used to come to my house, I would let them out, the sterile ones, after midnight, but would detain the last one, the kind Vičtor Proteikinsky (a teacher with fantasies), and point to a place behind the door.

Man has two feet; but if, say, five persons leave their goloshes in the hall, it seems an awful lot. Behind the door stood a multitude of little goloshes so that I myself used to be surprised. To count them quickly was impossible. And both I and Proteikinsky would burst out laughing:

"What a lot!"
"What a lot!"

I always thought with pride: "Civis Romanus sum." There sit down to my table ten persons, including the servants. And all are fed by my labour. All of them find a place in the world round my labour. And by no means is Hertzen a civis Rossicus, but "Rozanov."

Hertzen was only having "a pleasant time." . . .

*    *    *

In respect of Proteikinsky I feel a deep and long-standing sense of guilt. He behaved irreproachably towards me, but I once said of him—although out of sheer fatigue—a rude and mocking thing. And that only because "he never can finish a speech" (his way of talking), and I was tired and could not listen to his speech to the end. . . . And the rude word I said behind his back, when he went out of the door.

*    *    *

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Our ideas come we know not whence and go we know not where.
    The first: however you may sit down to write a certain thing, you sit down and write an altogether different thing.
    Between "I want to sit down" and "I sat down"—there passes a minute. Whence then come those thoughts, on a new theme, which are altogether different from those with which I paced the room, and even sat down in order to write just them down.

    *   *   *

With his posteriors on a pile of proofs and MSS. and "letters to the Editor," M. fell asleep.

    And he dreams of the valley of Daguestan:
    There he lies with a bullet in his heart.

    Our editor's sleep is less gloomy: he dreams of the legs of the beautiful actress V., who to all his coaxings responds:

    But I belong to another,
    And shall for ever be faithful to him.

    And the problem, in his dream, is about how to overcome "Tatyana's faithfulness," granted which, what is to become of editors, airmen, sailors, and other men who can't afford to waste time.

    *   *   *

I open the door into another room. . . . Luxuriously furnished. It is the General's [Souvorin's]. In a chair, covered with wonderful leather, of a dark colour, sits Borya [Souvorin's son]. He sits in his shirt sleeves, with vest and tie. Perspiration rolling down his face. . . . He remembers how Varya Panin sang and how his Annoushka danced. A long galley proof lies before him.

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"What is it you are reading, Borya?"
"Letters from the provinces."
"Why do you hesitate over them? 'Pass' them all in one go."
"I can't. There's no space."
"Then send it all to the devil." . . .
"I can't do that either. The readers will be cross."
It is a hard job, that of an editor. Who am I to go with then?

(At our office.)

* * *

It is as though that damned Gutenberg has licked all writers with his copper tongue, and all of them have lost their souls in print, they have lost their face, character. My "I" is only in manuscript, as is the "I" of every writer. This must be the reason why I have a superstitious fear of tearing up letters, note- books (even my children's exercise books), manuscripts—and I don't tear up anything. I have kept intact all the letters from my school friends; with regret, as the pile ever grows bigger and bigger, I tear up only mine, and that only rarely.

(In a railway carriage.)

* * *

Newspapers, I think, will pass away just as the "eternal" wars of the Middle Ages, as women's "tournures," etc. They are still kept up by "universal education," which is even going to become "compulsory." A fellow with a "compulsory education" is certainly interested to read something "about Spain." It will begin, I think, with dis-accustoming oneself to newspapers. Then people will begin to regard reading papers as simply indecent, cowardly ("parva anima").

"What do you live by?" "Well, by what the
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*Voice of Truth* declares” (they have invented such a title!), “or *The Final Truth*” (they’ll invent such a title to-morrow). He who hears that reply will smile, and those smiles will gradually see them to the grave.

If people must read newspapers, then let them read the *Kolokol* [The Bell], as Vasili Mikhailovich, imitating Hertzen, contrived to call his paper.

Vasili Mikhailovich is picturesque in every way. At his house, I hear, there is a standing order that if the children, coming from school, ask “Where is papa?” the servants must not say: “The master is not at home,” but “the General is not at home.” If I remember this on the day of judgment, I shall laugh, I assure you.

I always somehow liked Vasili Mikhailovich. I intervened on his behalf with Tolstoy. And the amazing thing is: he is simple, *simple with everybody*, not fussy, not proud, and generally has “Christian virtues.”

One problem remains unsolved, *i.e.*, in his head: What earthly rank do angels hold? For he cannot imagine a single creature without some rank. It is like Pythagoras’ “there is nothing *without its number*.” And with Vasili Mikhailovich—“without its rank,” without a grade in some hierarchy.

Note this: “General” gives him so much disinterested pleasure. Russia it costs nothing. For V.M.’s sake alone I should not permit the abolition of titles. To whom do they do any harm? There are plenty of “civilians,” and indeed, no one is forbidden to bear a “barrister’s badge.” Why is not the latter a “title” or “order”? “It has been earned and gives a social standing.” Allow then V.M. to have the one which he so much desires. What despotism!

People think at times that V.M. is an “arrivist.”
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Not in the least. He loves his rank, office, and service as being *inseparable from his soul*. Of him a certain wise man said that “in thinking *what is a Russian*, one has always to take into consideration *also V.M.*” *I.e.*, a Russian is certainly not only “Skvorzov,” but *among other things* he is also “Skvorzov.”

*(Examining my coins.)*

* * *

“The end crowns the work”... shows its *power*. Lord, shall I speak to the end: “and also shows its *truth*”? What then has become of the “Russian Reformation”?!! One has bought a yacht, another has gone into numismatics, a third is wandering about in foreign lands.... The Bishops have hurried away to their places of service and it is said that in place of the former “Benediction,” they have recourse to the latest circular of the Ministry of the Interior. Lord, what does all this mean? Others still have gone in for sectarianism, but keep on surreptitiously sending articles to the *Novoye Vremya*, without differing from that paper on the acute question of *Church v. Literature* (on occasion of Tolstoy’s death). What does it all mean? What does it mean?

Are they to be punished?

Or shall we say with Turgenev: “Thus ends everything Russian.”...

*(Examining my coins, 1910.)*

* * *

You look at a Russian with a sharp little eye... He looks at you with a sharp little eye.... And everything is understood. And no words are needed. That’s just what is impossible with a *foreigner*.

*(In the street.)*

* * *
ROZANOV

Our literature began with satire (Kantemir), and then the whole of the eighteenth century was fairly satirical.

The middle of the nineteenth century was sentimental.

And then, from the 'sixties, satire reigned again supreme.

But never was it so predominant as in the eighteenth century.

Novikov, Radischev, Fonvizin, and, half a century later, Schedrin and Nekrasov had such a success, as even Pushkin had never enjoyed. During my school years Pushkin was not even mentioned, let alone read. But Nekrasov was read to the verge of craziness, every line of his was familiar, every verse was caught up. I had an unaccountable taste for not reading Schedrin, and up till now I haven’t read a single "thing" of his. Provincial Sketches I haven’t even seen. Of his History of a City I read the first three pages and gave it up in disgust. My brother Kolya (a teacher of history in a public school, a man of positive ideals) was always reading Schedrin, and loved to read him aloud to his wife. And, in passing, I heard: "Gloomov said"..."Balalaikin answered," hence I know that those are characters from Schedrin. But I was never interested to hear what Gloomov said, nor to see it for myself. I think that thereby I spared my soul a great deal.

That abusive Vice-Governor is a loathsome phenomenon. And it needed the sheer tastelessness of our public to endure him.

I’ll allow myself to be a bit inquisitorial. Indeed, young Schedrin did not choose to be a clerk, a magistrate, a teacher, but like Chichikov¹ or Solakevich¹) "he chose a stool which doesn’t tumble down,"

¹ Characters from Gogol.
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that is, a post at the Ministry of the Interior. And he kept on being promoted till he became a Vice-Governor—not a paltry job. Then “he had a difference with the authorities,” “interceded on behalf of the Old Believers” or “defended the young students,” and was given the sack.

He became a famous writer. Loris Melikov himself sought his friendship, and as to Governors—they were “mere nobodies” to him.

How different from the fate of Dostoevsky!

(Examining my coins.)

*    *    *

With a little beard, with a tender, girlish face, A.P.U. was arranging his cassock, fingerling it here and there.

“Do you want any pins? What are you doing?”

“No, I took some with me from home. I’m fastening on my medal with the portrait of Alexander III so as to go to the Metropolitan Bishop. Here’s also my order.”

At last he’s ready: with the cross and the portrait of the Tsar. He stands, smiles, just like a girl.

How I love him, and I do love him unceasingly, this wisest priest of our time—with his word firm as iron, with his thought direct and clear. It is he who ought to compose the “catechism.”

And how many centuries old he is—he’s all “ours,” a “Russian priest.”

And in addition to this he comes from a prophetic family, and is all apocalyptic. A perfectly wonderful phenomenon.

I desire that after my death his letters to me (which I preserve to the very last one) should be published. Then will people see what a righteous and honour-
able man he was. I thank God for having given me
this friendship with him.

(Examining my coins. On A. P. Ustinsky.)

*   *   *

I took a cab to the editorial office. I was in a good
mood.

“How much?”

“Thirty-five copecks.”

“Thirty will do.”

I seated myself and, nudging the driver’s back, said:

“How could you ask such a capital?”

He drives and laughs all the while, shaking his
head. He’s a boy about eighteen. He turns his head
to me, his face all in smiles.

“How is it, sir, that you say I asked a ‘capital’? Thirty-five copecks—a capital?!”

He shakes his head and can’t forget it.

“You are still young, but I have done a good
deal of work. Thirty-five copecks is a large capital
if you yourself have to make it. Some have to work
hard all day long to earn thirty-five copecks.”

“Yes, just so,” he became grave, and flicked his
whip. Phew!

His horse ran on.

*   *   *

(In the street.)

Nina Rudnev (a relation), a girl of seventeen, said
in reply to the masculine, manly, strong in me:

“The only masculine thing in you . . . are your
trousers.”

She cut her words short. . . .

I.e., apart from the clothes, is it all feminine? I never
was liked by women (except by “my Friend”), and
this gives the explanation of women’s antipathy to me

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which always (from my school days) worried me so much.

* * *

Live every day as though you had lived all your life just for this day.

(In the doorway, coming home.)

* * *

The secret of authorship consists in the constant and involuntary music in the soul. If it is not there, a man can only "make a writer of himself." But he is not a writer.


(Examining my coins.)

* * *

Lines like these two of Nekrasov's

Driving at night through the dark street,—
Oh, my lonely friend! . . .

have not yet been surpassed in the whole of Russian literature. Tolstoy, who said of him that "he was not at all a poet," manifested not only little "Christian meekness," but did not even manifest the impartiality of a mere magistrate. Verses like:

Uncle James' house is not a little cart

smack more of the people than all the books Tolstoy has written. And altogether Nekrasov has quite ten pages of verse more truly national, than any of our poets and prose writers have ever succeeded in producing. These approximately two tenths of his poems are an eternal deposit on our literature and they will never die.
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Certainly his importance was extremely exaggerated ("above Pushkin"). But in his case, too, a nota-bene should be added: he was "the moulder of thought" for a generation extraordinarily active, energetic, and pure-hearted. Not the worst of Russian generations, and this is a historical fact—which no malice can brush away and no blindness can ignore. "Catilina may be bad or good, but mentioned he shall be," and every Ilovaisky [a compiler of historical text-books for schools] will mention him, while Ilovaisky will not be mentioned by anyone. That is one thing. But then there are the two tenths of his poems: they are of the people, genuine, natural, powerful. "The Muse of Vengeance and Sorrow,"¹ is strong after all; and where there is strength, passion, there also is poetry. Not even a madman could deny the poetry of his Vlas. His Gardener, Driver, Forgotten Village are charming, wonderful, and were quite new in tone in Russian literature. Nekrasov, generally, has created a new tone of verse, a new tone of feeling, a new tone and timbre of speech. And there is a surprising amount of the Great-Russian, even of the Yaroslavian, in him: such a speech—somewhat cunning and impudent, blinking and elusive—is certainly not spoken either in the Penza or the Ryazan province, but only in the Volga harbours and bazaars. And this local trait he has introduced into literature, into prosody, having made in this too a tremendous and bold new departure, for a time, for one generation having fascinated and carried away everyone.

(Examining my coins.)

*   *   *

¹ This is how Nekrasov's talent has generally been described.
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The pain of life is much more powerful than the interest in life. That’s why religion will always conquer philosophy.

(Examining my coins.)

*   *   *

They say fame is “desirable.” Perhaps—in youth. But in old age and even in middle age there is nothing more disgusting and intolerable than fame. Not “more wearisome,” but just more sickening.

Napoleon, who “loved fame,” surely died almost young.

How I admire Pobedonoszev, who, when he was told: “this will arouse unfavourable comments in society,” stopped, and did not spit even, but somehow dropped the spittle on the floor, rubbed it, and without saying a word, turned away. (Father Petrov’s indignant story of him.)

(Examining my coins.)

*   *   *

In the idea of prostitution—“the fight against which is hopeless”—enters incontestably “I belong to all,” i.e., that which also enters in the idea of a writer, orator, advocate, official in the service of the State. Thus, on one hand, prostitution is the most social of phenomena, to a certain extent the prototype of sociality—and it may even be said that rei publicae natae sunt ex feminis publicis, “the first states were born of the instinct of women towards prostitution.” . . . At any rate it is not worse than “Rome grew great through its vicinity to the river Tiber” (Mommsen), or “Moscow grew great owing to the geographical peculiarities of the river Moskva.” And, on the other hand, there indeed enters into the essence of an actor, writer, advocate, even of a
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"Father who officiates for everybody"—the psychology of the prostitute, \textit{i.e.}, the indifference to "all" and the kindness to "all." "Funeral or Wedding?" asks the priest of a caller, with an equally smooth, vague smile, ready to pass to "congratulation" or to "condolence." A scholar in so far as \textit{he is published}, a writer inasmuch as \textit{he is printed}, are certainly prostitutes. Professors are most certainly only \textit{prostitués pécheurs}. Hence does it not follow that "prostitution is indispensable," like the State, the Press, etc., etc. And, on the other hand, does it not follow: "they should be forgiven" and "they should be left alone." Prostitution, evidently "so understandable," cannot indeed be grasped by the mind by reason of the extent of its motives and essence. That it is more \textit{deep-rooted} and more \textit{metaphysical} than, for instance, "professorship-in-ordinary" need not even be discussed. "Professorship" is a mere sparrow . . . whilst prostitution, damn it, is perhaps like the mysterious bird Gamayun . . .

Essentially, "\textit{the most intimate I give to all}"—is a notion utterly metaphysical. . . . Damn it all; it could make you murder out of sheer indignation, or make you . . . ponder over it without end. "As you like it," to quote the title of Shakespeare's play.

\textit{(Examining my coins.)}

* * *

Tiptoeing, and with a happy face, Schwarz or Schmidt used to come up to us and tell us in his German accent:

"There are brains to-day."

This as a change from the eternal "goose's wing," \textit{i.e.}, a bone, with a tightly drawn rough skin, which we used to gnaw

Without adoration, without inspiration. . . .
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And we used to laugh with Konstantin (Voznesensky) at those "brains." The proprietor of the eating-house was glad to treat us to something "elegant."

To the German it was a delight, but to us a grief. Well, we used to eat the brains. But once at his place I was nearly poisoned by a piece of meat (in the soup), evidently rotten. No sooner had I swallowed it than something extraordinary happened: as though I had eaten a toad. And for a whole day, for almost two days, I was sick.

(When I was at the University.)

* * *

What a false, pretentious life R.'s is; what a false, lying, unbearable personality his is. And yet he's a genius. I don't speak of the pain; but how unbearable, physically even, to see this combination of genius and monstrosity.

Does it worry him? I did not notice. He seems always happy. But how painfully must he feel it in his soul.

With him is that fat, pretty woman who swallowed him, as the whale swallowed Jonah; she's ambitious, fond of power, and at the same time rapturously sugary. Both of them are absorbed in democracy, and dream only of receiving an order from the Court. More exactly, their democratic views spring from the fact that they do not receive orders from the Court. (A few lines in her Memoirs.)

And yet he is a genius beyond comparison with others who lived before him, or with his contemporaries.

How sad and terrible this is. Surely, there are a
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great many things I don’t understand, but this seems to me terrible. “A peep into hell.”
(On the back of the lined sheet.)

* * *

Giving birth to a blade of grass is more difficult than demolishing a stone building.

During the many years of my literary activity I have observed, seen, noticed from my memoranda (dealing with my publications), also from Press notices, that no sooner had I written something funny, spiteful, destructive, murderous, than everyone eagerly rushed after the book or the article. . . . But with whatever love, from whatever pure a heart, I wrote a book with a positive content, it lay dead, and no one gave himself even the trouble to glance at the article, to cut the brochure, to open the book.

In one case: “I don’t want to. I’m bored, sick of it.”

“But what are you sick of? You haven’t read it?”

“Never mind, I’m sick of it. I know beforehand.” . . .

In the other case: “Let us run. Catch him. Thank you!” . . .

“But what are you ‘thanking’ me for? Surely it came down and has crushed someone, or it will come down and crush someone!”

“Never mind. . . . It’s lively. It’s more amusing.”

People love a fire. They love a circus. Shooting. Even when someone is drowning people really love to look on: they come running.

That is where the whole point is.
And literature has become disgusting to me.
(Examining my coins.)

* * *

Certainly not to make use of such a boiling energy as Chernyshevsky’s, for the good of the State, was a
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crime, bordering on murder. To Chernyshevsky I always applied different criteria: he was not a thinker, a writer . . . not even a politician. In all these respects he stands for nothing particular, and at times he even stands for something ridiculous and pretentious. But the point is not that, but this: that never since Peter the Great have we come across such a figure, whose every hour is breathing, whose every minute is alive, and whose every step is tinged with "solicitude for the country." All his "foreign books" were nonsense; his emendation of J. S. Mill's Political Economy is the bungling of a seminarist. All this tosh might have been and should have been forgiven him; and use should have been made not of his head, but of his wings and legs, which were perfectly wonderful, beyond comparison with anyone else's; or, to be more exact, only the boiling, non-stop Peter possessed such "legs." It is inconceivable how our flabby, lifeless state-mechanism, which knows not where to find the energies and workers, did not avail itself of that "steam engine," or rather that "electric motor." What are all the Aksakovs, Samarin and Khomyakov, or the "famous" Mordvinov, compared with him as a worker, i.e., a potential worker, who was buried alive in the snows of Vilyusk? But here we must upbraid him too: why did not he, feeling such a store of energy in his breast, for the purpose of breaking through to work, kiss the hands of all the generals and, for the matter of that, "kiss everyone's shoulder," provided they let him help the people, let him come close to the people, gave him a "department." Ignoring completely his Communist and Social-Democratic ideas, permitting him personally to live with half a hundred student girls and even to choke himself with Mme. Zebrikov—yet as a character and as an energy I would have placed him
not only at the head of a ministry, but at the head of a cabinet of ministers, having given him the rôle of Speransky and the “immunity” of Arakcheev... Such characters are born one in an age: and to throw him into the snow and wilderness, into the marshes and forests... damn it... it is the devil knows what. Reading his style (I read his Lessing; his beginning) you must feel: he will never get tired, he will never stop still; of ideas there is only a handful, but of promise there is a whole sheaf of lightnings. Indeed, there are Peruns, gods of thunder, in his soul. Now (after the publication of the correspondence with his wife and his relations to Doborbyubov) it is all explained: he was an intellectual, spiritual “S”; well, such eagles don’t droop their wings, but go on flying, until killed, until death or victory. I don’t know his experiences, but this is of no importance. In the main, as a State worker (a social and State worker) he is above Speransky, above anyone of “Katherine’s eagles,” above the braggart Pestel, and the absurd Bakunin, and the ambitious Hertzen. He was indeed unique. The absurd situation of complete practical impotence threw him into literature, journalism, philosophizing, even into fiction: where, having no vocation at all (quietude, contemplation), he smashed all the chairs, knocked down all the tables, soiled all the comfortable living rooms and, generally, committed “nihilism”—and could achieve nothing else... He is a Disraeli, who was not allowed to go further than being a “novelist”; or a Bismarck, who, for his duels with students, was condemned to spend all his life “fighting duels with swords” and “forbidden to do any other work.” Damn it: it is destiny, fate, and not so much his as Russia’s.

But he too: why couldn’t he have given up his
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nihilism and his "seminarism." For the sake of the people. For the sake of the peasants, the horseless, cowless peasants. . . .

It is astonishing: indeed, it is the straight road to Tsusima. More astonishing still: had he entered into practical life, we should not have had theoretical nihilism. In this truly remarkable life-story we reached the Tree of Life: but—we just cut it down. We cut it down "in order to make clogs" for the lazy Oblomovs.

(Examining my coins.)

* * *

The secret of her sufferings is in this that with her amazing intellectual brilliance, she, however, had only half-talents in everything. Neither a painter, nor scholar, nor singer, although also a singer, also a painter, also (mainly and most easily) a scholar (the years of study, mastering languages). And she faded away, faded irretrievably.

(Examining my coins. On Marie Bashkirtsev.)

* * *

Surprisingly disgusting to me is my name. Always with such a strange feeling I sign my articles "V. Rozanov." Would it were "Rudnev," "Bugayev," anything. Or the common Russian "Ivanov." Once I walked in the street. I raised my head and read:

"Rozanov, German Bakers."

Why, so it must be: all bakers are "Rozanovs," and therefore all "Rozanovs" are bakers. What else could such fools (with such a stupid name) do? Worse than my name is only that of (professor) Kablukov: that is utterly disgraceful. Or Stetchkin
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(the critic of the Russky Vestnik): that is sheer infamy. But it is awfully unpleasant to bear such a name as mine. I think Bryussov (the poet) is always delighted with his name. Therefore,

"THE WORKS OF V. ROZANOV"

don't tempt me. It is even ridiculous.

"POEMS BY V. ROZANOV"
can't possibly be thought of. Who will "read" such poems?

"What do you do, Rozanov?"

"I write poems."

"Fool. You'd better bake bread!"

Quite natural.

This unnaturally disgusting name is mine in addition to a miserable appearance. What a lot of times, as a schoolboy (when the boys went home) I stood before the large mirror in the school hall and "what a lot of tears I stealthily shed." A red face. An unpleasant complexion, shiny (not dry). The hair simply offiery colour (and that in a school boy!), and it stands erect, but not in the noble, "hedgehog" fashion (a manly style), but in a rising wave, perfectly absurdly, I never saw anything like it. I would grease it, but it would not lie down. Then I would come home—and again look in the glass (a small, handy one): "Well, who could like such an ugly face?" I used to be seized with horror. Yet I was remarkably loved by my chums, and I always was the "ringleader" (against the authorities, teachers, particularly against the head master). In the glass, looking for beauty "with my protruding eyes," I naturally did not see my "expression," "smile," generally the life of the face; and I think
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that that very part in me was alive and after all made me remarkably loved by many (as I always absolutely loved in return).

But in my heart I thought:

"No, that's settled. Women will never love me, not a single one. What remains then? To retire into myself, to live with myself, for myself (not egotistically, but spiritually), for the future. Certainly, in a round-about and "foolish" way, my external unattractiveness was the cause of my self-fathoming."

Now I am even pleased that "Rozanov" is so disgusting. And I may add that from my childhood I loved ragged, worn, well-worn clothes. New clothes always squeezed me, embarrassed me, were even unbearable. And, in a word, as in the case of wine, the older the better... The same I thought of boots, hats, and of "what takes the place of a jacket." And now it has all begun to please me.

Simply, I have no sense of form (Aristotle's *causa formalis*). I am a "clod," a "loofah." But that is because I am all spirit, and all subject: the subjective in me is indeed developed in me to an extent which I don't find and don't imagine in anyone else. "Well then?" ... I am the least "born man," as though I still lay (as a clod) in my mother's womb (I love her endlessly, I mean my dead mother) and heard "paradisical melodies" (I always seem to be hearing music)—my peculiarity. "Well then, splendid, excellent!" ... Why the deuce do I need an "attractive face" or "new clothes," when *I myself* (in myself, as the "clod") am infinitely attractive; and in my soul—I am infinitely old, experienced, as though I were a thousand years old, and along with this I am young as a young baby... Right! Righto!...

(Examining my coins)

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Azure Love.

... And each time I ascended the hill and approached that large stone house I heard music. Much later I learnt that it was "scales." They seemed to me magical. Slowly, thoughtfully I walked up the terribly solemn drive, entered the enormous hall-vestibule, and, taking off my school overcoat, I always passed through to see my chum.

My chum did not know that I was in love with his sister. I saw her once—at tea, and once—in the drive up to the Hall of the Nobility (there was a symphony concert there). At tea she spoke French with her mother; I blushed terribly and my chum and I talked in a whisper.

After this tea used to be sent in to his room. But through the wall, not a very thick one, I at times heard her silvery voice—about the tea or something... . . .

And in the drive up to the Hall of the Nobility it was like this: I missed the concert, or something happened. . . . It does not matter. I stood near the drive through which continuously people, many people, drove up, in a stream. And behold, she and her mother—an unpleasant, pompous old lady—got out of a sledge. Besides the pale thin face, the extraordinarily elegant figure, the wonderful outline of the ears, of the straight small nose, so very refined, my heart "took" in also this that she always held her head a little bent down—which, together with the contour of the breast and the back, formed a fascinating line to me. "A gazelle drinking." . . . I believe the chief fascination consisted in her movements, magically light. . . . And yet the supreme, the final fascination to me was in her soul.

And yet what sort of notion could I have of her?
But I imagined that soul to be proud—and all her
SOLITARIA

movements confirmed my idea. Not haughty: but she was so absorbed in her inner charm that she did not notice people. . . . She only passed by people, things, took what she needed from them, but had no other connection with them. When alone she must be sitting down to her music. I knew that she took lessons in mathematics from the local public-school teacher—higher mathematics, for she had completed her high-school course. "There are such lucky fellows!" (the teacher).

Once my chum committed some offence; he forged the marks in his school report; and with absurd naïveté telling me about it, he let fall:

"My sister said to mother: 'I ascribe it all to the fact that Volodya is a friend of that Rozanov. . . . That friendship has a bad influence on him. Volodya was not always like that.' . . .

Volodya was a silly, nice little boy—somewhat "irresponsible." I wrote compositions for him in class, and after that we "chatted." . . . But I had no "bad influence" on him, for owing to his childishness, naïveté, and nonsensicalness, it was impossible to have any "influence" on him.

I listened in silence. . . .

But how I longed then to be dead.

And not "then" only: it seemed to me all the while—always—that "I was being run over by horses in the street." And she drives by. The horses are stopped. And seeing that it is "me," she says to her mother:

"Poor boy. . . . Perhaps he was not as bad as he seemed. He's probably hurt. After all I am so sorry for him."

* * *

One may both fall in love with terrorism and get to hate it to the very bottom of one's soul, without
any insincerity at all. There are matters, *per se* dialectical, radiating (themselves) now one, now another light, seeming on one side one colour, and on the other side a different colour. We, people, are terribly unfortunate in our judgments in face of these dialectical matters, for we are terribly helpless. "God has taken the ends of things and tied them into a knot, not to be untied." You can't disentangle them, and if you cut them—everything will die. And one has just to say—"blue, white, red." For all these are there. No one will condemn Morosov's "Letters from the Schlisselburg Fortress" (in the *Vestnik Europa*), but his *Thunder in the Storm* is absurd and pretentious. Hessya Helsman is fine—but that bloodthirsty woman Frumkin is organically revolting to me, just as Berdiagin who, *out of spite*, pricked himself to death with a table fork. They are all consumptive Hippolits (from Dostoevsky's *Idiot*) with consumption in their nerves. No harmony of soul, no grandeur, no spiritual "decorum," as the old fellow in *The Adolescent* calls it.

(Examining my coins, 1909.)

* * *

Terrible as the confession is, all our "splendid" literature is, essentially, awfully insufficient and not deep. It depicts "superbly"; but that which it depicts is by no means superb and is hardly worth this masterly embossing.

The eighteenth century—is all "assisting the government": satires, odes—everything. Fonvisin, Kantemir, Sumarokov, Lomonosov—everything and everybody.

The nineteenth century, in its golden phase, reflected the life of the landlords:

Tatyana's lovely family,
Tatyana's lovely ideal . . .

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Well, good.... Still what is there of the universal? Of what good is it to a Roman, German, Englishman? Strictly speaking, except to the Russians themselves, it is of no interest at all.

What came after that and especially now? All these palpitations of Belinsky and Hertzen? Ogariov and the rest? Bakunin? Gleb Uspensky and we? Mikhailovsky? Apart from Tolstoy (who as an exception to this rule is great) all this is derived from the students' 'smoking room' (a room in which there is a good deal of smoke) and from the meagre bed of the prostitute. All this is an anecdote, an incident which exists and does happen—the devil knows why and wherefore. The discussions between the girl and the student about God and about the social revolution—is the substance and soul of it all. All these 'socialist-girls' and 'socialist-students' are charming, attractive, romantic; but how is all this important?! Nothing important emerges from it.... What are the student and prostitute about in discussing God? Only an object of grief to the principal when he sees the youth not studying, and an object of amusement to the lady of the brothel when she sees her girl not "working." All this is simply not needed and not interesting, except perhaps as a pretty subject for a story. The craftsmanship of the story exists and remains: "there is literature." Just so, but only as reading matter. Schedrin's complaint that "the reader is merely reading".... is quite absurd as regards Russian literature, which indeed serves no other purpose but that of being "merely read," since indeed it is "written" solely for this purpose....

Indeed, it is all just "sweet illusions."

Not for our dire miseries
Are we granted wonderful illusions...
as Karamzin has so finely put it. And all our "realists," Mikhailovsky included, are dreamers on paper—in the best case, dreamers of "perfect honour" ("an honest writer").

Six years ago "my Friend" told me as she returned home from the Church of All the Sorrows: "There came in a woman, not old, neither young. Poorly dressed. Had six children, all small ones, with her. She prayed fervently and cried bitterly. She is sure not to have lost her husband—hers were different tears, a different tone. Most probably her husband either drinks or has lost his job. Such grief, such prayer I have never seen."

This could not possibly "occur" to Gleb Uspensky, for Uspensky's is a "different tone."

Generally, family life, not "social-fiancés," but social workers, has by no means occurred in Russian literature. Indeed Russian literature does not describe work, but only "young people" discussing work. Just fiancés and students. As a matter of fact the work is actually done not by them, but by their fathers. But all fathers are contemptible, "reactionary," and to students their fathers are what partridges are to sportsmen.

Here Tolstoy represents the great exception, he treated the family, the man who works, the fathers, with respect... His is the first and sole case in Russian literature, without imitators or followers. That is why he did not finish his Decembrists, simply because of the great emptiness of the subject. All the Decembrists are just the same "social-fiancés," the fore-runners of the prostitute and student, discussing heaven and earth. Though they wore shoulder-straps and were counts. But it was not working Russia: and Tolstoy abandoned the theme. This was serious and noble on his part. That he did not finish
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*The Decembrists* is as significant and noble, as original and great as the fact that he hewed out and finished *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenin*.

* * *

"Well now, you have criticized everyone. . . . But *yourself*, are you any better?"

"No. But this is what I am saying, that we must lament not the *circumstances* of our life, but *ourselves*.

What I am concerned with is a completely different theme, a different direction, a different literature.

*(Examining my coins.)*

* * *

In Russia all ownership arose from "he begged," or "a grant was made him," or "he stole." Of *labour* as the basis of ownership there is very little. And that is why it is not strong and is not respected.

*(Luga-Petersburg, in a railway carriage.)*

* * *

Always dreaming, and always one thought: how to avoid *work*.

*(About Russians.)*

* * *

All literature is babble. . . . Or nearly all. Exceptions are killingly few.

* * *

Cynicism through *suffering*? Did it ever occur to you?

*(1911.)*

Would I like fame after my death (which I feel I have deserved)?

For many years a ceaseless pain has been racking
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my soul, the pain stifling the desire for fame. Which pain (if the soul be immortal), I feel, would be intensi-
ified if I achieved fame.
Therefore I do not want it.

* * *

I should like a few people to remember me, but by no means praise me: and only on condition that they remembered me along with those near to me.

Unless they, and their goodness, their honour are remembered, I too do not want to be remembered.

* * *

Whence such a feeling? From the feeling of guilt, and also from the deep, sincere consciousness that I am not a good man. God has given me talent: but that is a different thing. The more terrible question —am I a good man, is answered in the negative.

(Luga-Petersburg, in a railway carriage.)

* * *

Two angels sit on my shoulders: the angel of laughter and the angel of tears. And their eternal dispute constitutes my life.

(On the Troitsky Bridge.)

* * *

Literature has soared up like an eagle to the skies. And has fallen down. Now it is quite clear that literature is not the “sought-after invisible city.”

(On the back of the lines.)

* * *

Rebecca N.N. started coming to see us. On the third evening when I began talking to her about the details (unknown to me or not quite clear) of the mikvah, she gave me a few answers, and then, after a silence, she remarked:
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"This name I pronounce aloud for the first time."
"Mikvah?"
"But it is an obscene word, and among Jews it is not admissible to speak it aloud."
I grew agitated.
"But the mikvah, isn’t it sacred?"
"Yes, it is sacred... So we were told... But the name is obscene, and isn’t pronounced aloud or in the presence of others...."

But, really, this is the “discovery of the Pythagorian theorem”: it means then that the Jews possess that very conception, that the “obscene” and the “sacred” can be compatible! coincident! one!!! Nothing of the kind do Christians possess, nor is it possible with them. Hence a vast historical consequence:

1) With Christians everything “obscene,”—and inasmuch as the “obscenity” grows—becomes “sin,” “evil,” “filth,” “disgusting”: so that without comments, evidence, and demonstrations, without theory, the sphere of sexual life and of the sexual organs—this domain of universal shyness, of universal reserve—has sunk down into the infernal regions of “Satanism,” of “Devilry,” and has for its foundation the “terrible, unbearable, abomination,” “universal stench.”

2) But among Jews thought has been so trained that what is “obscene” (for the tongue, the eye, and the mind) does not at all appraise the inward properties of the object, does not say anything of its content; since there is one thing, always “close at hand,” familiar, the weekly ritual, which being “the height of obscenity” in name, never pronounced aloud, yet is at the same time “sacred.”

It is not amplified, it is not pointed out; it simply is, and all know it.
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In this way nothing has as yet been said to the Jews, but there is given them a thread, holding on to which and walking with which everyone may himself-herself approach the idea, the conclusion, the identity that “this” (the organs and functions), though not shown to anyone, and though the name is “obscene” and not pronounced, is nevertheless sacred.

Hence a direct deduction respecting the “secret sacred” that is in the world; “the sacred that must be hidden” and which should never be named; the mysteries, mysterium. There is disclosed the origin of the very name, and there is cleared up the very body of the mystery. Surely, all our sacraments are open, performed in daylight, before the people; and it is patent that the ancient mysteries, which some people wished to connect with ours—and those people were theologians—have indeed nothing in common with them, except the name and pseudo-name.

* * *

I go on to ponder over the mikvah: here is a girl who blushes and frowns (she is a very well-read Moscow student, about twenty-six), and yet admits: “with us this name is never pronounced aloud; . . . this name is considered obscene. Yet called by an obscene name, the thing itself is sacred.” . . .

It is necessary to know the “particulars” of the mikvah.

It is not deep—about three or four feet. If deeper it is “trepha.” Why? What’s the reason? It is “no good,” for a something sacred that is occurring there, but about which not a single word has been written or uttered. Only the Rabbis looked at it, measured it; and if it is not deeper than three or four feet, they say “kosher”—good. Why?—this has not been explained to the people.
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The immersion is watched by members of the synagogue; in the case of women—by old women; and they shout to the women who immerse for the first time that the hair must not be visible on the surface of the water. Given a depth of three or four feet, it is obviously necessary to sit right down, and this is hard to do and it costs an effort. And they all obediently fulfil it without understanding why. But the Rabbis say “kosher!” If she sits right down—“kosher”; not low enough—“trepha.” And in a cavity not deeper than three or four feet!

The water is not fetched from outside, is not poured into the cavity, but springs from the soil, is water from the soil. But water from the soil is water from a well. Thus, to sit down in the mikvah always means “to sit down at the bottom of the well.” They go down a very long and narrow staircase, which allows only two or three to walk abreast. The steps, as I saw at Friedberg, are “cyclopian,” about two feet thick, and in descending it is necessary “to open the legs wide.” . . . They do not go, but “step,” “crawl,” making an effort, straining themselves. . . . The descent is very low and deep, and it takes about ten minutes to ascend. And the woman (in her refreshment and joy)—a permanent feeling after immersion—naturally as she comes upstairs just perceptibly throws her head back; before her eyes for ten minutes is presented the spectacle of “widely opened” legs, rounded bellies, and clean shaved modest parts (according to ritual). “All in man is the likeness and image of God” crosses the mind of those ascending during that ecstatic religious minute. “Kosher! Kosher!” the Rabbis pronounce.

And in order that all this should be done slowly, leisurely, according to the law, “there may not immerse in the mikvah two simultaneously.”
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Thus, breathless and happy, they (men) descend and ascend, and they (women) ascend and descend.

But now they are all gone. Empty water, a basin. And an old Jew, like Moses, like Abraham, is the last to come up to the shallow basin of water. And, suddenly, placing wax candles on the edges of the basin, he lights them all!! Here is the “miserly knight” of Judaism in front of his “treasures.” . . . Yes, to everyone it is revolting, a shame, “it shall not be pronounced aloud.” But it was I who built the mikvah and I know what and wherefore: all Israel will live by this for ever, if only he does not give this up; and I light the sacred light here, for nowhere else is the air so charged with the bodies of Israel, and all have breathed in this air, breathed in and swallowed it, and now it is flowing in an aromatic and visual current in the veins of every man and begetting images and desires, by which Israel is agitated, individually and collectively.

* * *

“Lighted wax candles”—this is a translation into our language, into our ritual of what the law says to Israel: “the mikvah is sacred.” In the Talmud is found the saying: “God is mikvah, for He purifies.” I don’t remember if it says there “the souls of” Israel.

But let us leave the old Jew and come to ourselves, into our setting, into our mode of life, in order to explain this ancient institution of the Jews and to make us realize its soul. Let us imagine one of our dances. Movement, conversation, news, politics. The elegance of everything and the ladies’ dresses. . . . Room opening into room, with white pillars and walls. And, behold, one of the guests who has danced, tired by the dancing, goes into a remote side
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room; and seeing a basin of cold water on the table, left there forgotten and unheeded, he circumspectly looks round, shuts the door, and taking out the excited and agitated part, immerses it in the cold pure water . . . until it cools down.

He does what the Jews do in the mikvah and the Mussulmans in their ablutions.

And he comes out. All hot, a woman rushes in there. . . . She is hot, because men pressed her hands, because she made an assignation, she fixed it for to-night, immediately the ball was over. On seeing the basin, she takes it, places it on the floor—and also with a circumspect glance round and closing the door, she does the same as the man has just recently done.

It is what the Jewesses do in the mikvah.

And many guests, in the end all of them, do the same, assured that not a single eye saw them.

If one saw it they would die of shame. That is the exclamation which Rebecca N.N. uttered: "the name is obscene."

So far—we and what we did, coolness and cleanliness. All rational.

Let us return to Judaism.

Let us imagine that through the garret window, from a dark corner, a Jew has seen all that has taken place. We should turn away and pay no attention. But he would not act like that: his "circumcision" has given him a different vocation, has placed him differently. Opposed to our disgust, his eyes kindle. He crawls out. He doesn't need the dance, and won't go to the ball. His place is here. He takes the basin to his quarters, very careful not to spill the water. And shutting himself in so that no one can see him, he places the basin on the table and lights a number of image lamps (the origin of lamps is in
ROZANOV

Egypt) and, covering his head with a veil, as though there stood before his eyes a something he dare not look at, he begins to murmur words in an unintelligible language.

He utters prayers and incantations.

This is Judaism.

And the prayers are good ones. The Jew prays: “Let them dance. These follies will pass. I pray for that which they will need in old age—for health, for prolongation of their life; that life itself may be fresh and strong; that they shall not ache, and what they have immersed and washed here shall never ache. Ah, they know not now, for they are in love, and speak of their work and promotion. I have gone through all promotions and I want nothing. I know how happiness depends on this that in these parts nothing shall be soiled, dirtied, weakened, but that it all shall be bright and honest, as a good bill, and as promising as a new-born babe. I am a stranger to them, but I pray my Secret God that he may preserve in the whole world, in them all, and bless these parts for the eternal fecundity of the world and for the blossoming of the whole earth which He, the Gracious, hath created. Amen.”

* * *

...And all are running, running... in a monstrous crowd. Whither? What for?

“ You ask why the universal volo?”

But there is no volo here; rather legs climbing, bellies shaking. And no one attached to anything. It is a skating-rink, not life. ... (In bed at night.)

* * *

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SOLITARIA

Laughter cannot kill anything. Laughter can only crush. And patience overcomes laughter. (On nihilism.)

* * *

Technique, applied to the soul, gave it omnipotence. But it also crushed the soul. There appeared a “technical soul” — a contradietio in adjetio. And inspiration died. (On the Press and everything “modern.”)

* * *

Satan seduced the Pope by power; and literature he seduced by fame . . .

But Herostrates had already pointed out the surest way of “preserving a name unto posterity.” . . . And literature which only lives by the desire of “preserving a name unto posterity” has naturally in our times been penetrated throughout by Herostrateses.

No one finds it so easy to burn down Rome, as Dobchinsky. Catilina would hesitate over it. Manilov1 would feel sorry; Sobakevich1 won’t stir; but Dobchinsky would run his legs off: “By Jove! Rome only waited for me, and surely I was born to set Rome on fire. Look, good people, and remember my name.”

The essence of literature . . . her very soul . . . is a “little lady.”

(Examining my coins.)

* * *

I have been reading about the terrible, martyrlike life of Gleb Ouspensky: he was crushed by a debt of 1700 roubles; then the woman moneylender dogged his heels without leaving him in peace either in Moscow or in Petersburg.

He was the friend of the great radical poet

1 All these are characters from Gogol.
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Nekrasov and of the great radical critic Mikhailovsky. They obviously not only respected him, but loved him. (Mikhailovsky in a letter to me.)

But then, why didn’t they help him? What a dark mystery is this! The same almost was the attitude of the almost millionaire Alexander Hertzen towards Belinsky. I am not a defender of the bourgeois; I have nothing to do with the bourgeoisie, nor with their destinies; but plain morals and common sense shout: “Why should manufacturers hand over their factories and machines to workmen—when they handed over absolutely nothing either Hertzen to Belinsky, or Mikhailovsky and Nekrasov to Gleb Ouspensky?

It is a sort of judgment on all proletarian doctrines and on all the proletarian ideology.

* * *

And the hungry are so hungry, and yet the revolution is right. But it is right not ideologically, but as an impact, as will, as despair. “I am not a saint and perhaps I am even worse than you; but I am hungry, I’m a wolf, hungry and agile, and also my hunger has given me courage; and you have been an ox for a thousand years; if once upon a time you had horns and hooves to kill me, now you are old and feeble, and I’m going to devour you.”

Revolution and the “old order” are simply “old age” and as yet “undiminished strength.” But it is not an ideal, not by any means an ideal!

All social-democratic theories are reduced to the thesis—“I must eat.” Well, the thesis is correct. Against it even the Lord Almighty has nothing to say. “He who gave me a stomach must also provide me with food.”” Cosmogony.

* * *

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Yes. But the dreamer walks away: for he loves his dream more than food. And in revolution there is no room for the dream.

And perhaps just because revolution has no room for the dream, it will not succeed. There will be a lot of broken crockery, but there will be no new building erected. For only he alone builds who is capable of an overpowering dream. Michael Angelo, Leonardo da Vinci—they did build, but the revolution will "play them a most prosaic trick" and will strangle them in their youth, at the age of eleven or thirteen, when they suddenly discover something "of their own in their soul."

"Oh, you are proud; you don't want to mix with us, to share, to be chums... Oh, you have a soul of your own, not a communal soul... The community that gave life to your parents and to you—for both you and they, without the community, would have died from starvation—is now taking back what you owe it. Die!"

And "the new building," with the features of the ass, will crumble to pieces in the third or in the fourth generation.

* * *

Every movement of the soul in me is accompanied by utterance. And every utterance I want without fail to write down. It is an instinct. Was it not from such an instinct that (written) literature was born? For the idea of print does not occur to me and, consequently, Gutenberg came "later."

With us literature has become so confused with print that we forget altogether that it existed before print, and essentially not at all for publication. Literature was born "by itself" (silently) and for itself; and
ROZANOV

only afterwards it began to be printed. But that is mere technique.

* * *

Remove prayer from the very substance of the world—remove it so that my tongue, my mind should unlearn the words of prayer, the work of prayer, its essence; so that I should not be able to pray, so that people should not be able to pray—and with protruding eyes and with a terrible howl I would run out of the house, and run, run, run until I dropped down. Without prayer it is utterly impossible to live. . . . Without prayer—there is madness and horror.

But all this is understood when one is about to cry. . . . Yet he who does not cry, who did not cry—how explain this to him? He can never understand. And surely there are many people who never cry.

As husband he did not love his wife; as father he did not care for his children; his wife was unfaithful, and he "waved his hand"; his son was expelled from school, he abused the school and sent the boy to another school. Tell me, what can religion say to such a "positivist"? He will shrug his shoulders and smile.

"Yes, but he is not everybody."

Positivism is true, necessary, and even eternal, but only for a certain group of people. Positivism is necessary for "positivists," the point is not in positivism, but in the positivist: man here, as in anything else, comes before theory.

Yes. . . .

A religious man comes before all religion, and the
SOLITARIA

"positive" man was born a long time before Auguste Comte.

(Examining my coins.)

*  *  *

In "my Friend" there has been given me a guiding star.... And for twenty years (ever since 1889) I have followed it: and all the good that I have done, or what was good in me during that time, it all came from her; and all that is bad in me came from myself. And I was obstinate. Only my heart always cried when I deviated from her....

(Examining my coins.)

*  *  *

And mere bragging only, and only the one question in everyone: "What part am I to play in this?" If he is not to play a "part in this," then it may go to the devil.

(Examining my coins. On politics and the Press.)

*  *  *

What nice things you meet in a man when you don't at all expect it. And what a lot of vicious things—also when you don't expect it.

(In the street.)

*  *  *

Create spirit, create spirit, create spirit! Look, it has all crumbled to pieces....

(In the Zagorodny Square at night; prostitutes all round.)

*  *  *

The point of the matter is that our talents are somehow bound up with vices, and our virtues—with colourlessness. Well, try and get out of this "hole."

In ninety-nine out of a hundred cases "virtue" is
ROZANOV

simply this: "I do not want to," "I have no desire," "I want it so very little." . . . A virtuous biography, or an epoch of good morals (in history) is merely a personality quite unoriginal, and a time quite "timeless." All "wanted so very little." Thanks!

(Driving in a cab to Zelenino.)

* * *

I am happy alone, and also with people. I am neither a solitary nor a sociable. But when I am by myself I am complete, and when with others I am not complete. Alone, I am after all happier.

Alone I am happier for this reason that when alone I am with God.

I could give up my talents, literature, the future of my "I," fame or popularity—I could do that rather too readily; but happiness, well-being . . . I wonder. But I should never be able to give up God. To me God is the "warmest." With God I am most warm. With God I am never bored or cold.

After all God is my life.

I only live for Him, through Him. Apart from God I am not.

What is God to me? Am I afraid of Him? Not in the least. Will He punish me? No. Will He give me future life? No. He feeds me? Through Him I exist and was born? No.

What then is He to me?

My perpetual sadness and joy. A peculiar one related to nothing.

Is not God then "my mood"?

I love the one who makes me grieve and rejoice, who speaks to me, comforts me.

It is a Some One. It is a Personality. God to me is always "he." Or "thou"; always close to me.

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My God is my peculiar one. He is only my God, and nobody else’s yet. If He is somebody else’s, then I do not know Him, and am not interested in knowing Him.

“My God”—is boundless intimacy and boundless individuality. This intimacy is like a little funnel, or even two funnels. From my “social I” goes out a funnel, narrowing down to a point. Through that point-aperture issues only one ray: from God. Beyond that point there is another funnel, no longer narrowing down, but extending into infinity: this is God. There is God. So that God is

(1) my intimacy, and

(2) infinity, in which the universe itself is but a part.

* * *

I myself always abuse Russians. I do little else save abuse them. “I am a most unbearable radical Schedrin.” But why do I hate everyone who also abuses them? And the only people I hate are those who hate and those particularly who despise Russians.

Yet without a doubt I do despise Russians to the point of loathing. Anomalous.

(Examining my coins.)

* * *

From my polemics with the fool P.S. I have after all made 300 roubles. This is a third of the price of the tetradrachm of Antiochus VII Grippa, with Pallas Athene encircled by phalli (2,400 francs). At Nuribey’s there was also for sale a tetradrachm with Aphrodite, between a lion and a bull, seated on a throne and smelling a flower. This I could not afford to buy. (Both are unique.)

* * *

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ROZANOV

From the foundation of the world there have been two philosophies: the philosophy of the man who for some reason longs to give someone a flogging; and the philosophy of the flogged man. All our Russian philosophy is that of the flogged man. But from Byron’s Manfred and up to Nietzsche the Western philosophy has been suffering from the “Sologubian” hitch—“whom shall I give a little flogging”?

Nietzsche was respected on account of his being a German, and also because he suffered (illness). But if a Russian, and in his own name started in the spirit: “he’s falling, push him down!”, he would simply be called a scoundrel and nobody would think of reading him.

(After reading Perzov’s Between the Old and the New.)

* * *

The victory of Platon Karatyev [a character in War and Peace] is still much more important than it was thought to be: it is indeed the victory of Maxim Maximovich over Pechorin [characters in Lermontov’s Hero of Our Time], i.e., the victory of one of the two tremendous literary currents over the other.... It might not have happened at all.... But Tolstoy gave his life for “Maxim Maximovich” (his Nicolay Rostov, the artilleryman Tushin, Platon Karatyev, Pierre Bezoukhov’s philosophy, which became Tolstoy’s own philosophy). “Non-resistance to evil” is neither Christianity nor Buddhism: but it is indeed the Russian element—the “uninterrupted nature” of the East-European plain. The only Russian rebels—are the “nihilists.” And here it will be extremely curious to see how is it all going to end; i.e., how the unique Russian rebellion will end.

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But this explains in the highest degree the power, and significance, and stability, and stubbornness of nihilism. "We must somewhere"—it doesn't matter where—"start a little rebellion": and for a people of eighty millions, of course, "it should be done." Their bones have got stiff through "sheer endurance."

(On the same occasion.)

* * *

My Lord! my eternity! Why does my soul so leap when I think of Thee? . . .
And all is held in Thy hand: that it holds me I always feel.

(Night of Dec. 25, 1910.)

* * *

I am choked with thought. And how pleasant to me to live in that choked state. That is why my life, despite its thorns and tears, is after all a joy.

(Ai Zelenino.)

* * *

Even a fool can "lead me by the nose"; and I may know that he is a fool, and that he is leading me to harm, finally to "everlasting perdition"—yet I follow him. "To my honour" it must, however, be observed that in the cases of my "being led by the nose" half relates to my profound, utter incapacity to say to the man: "you are a fool," as well as "you deceive me." I never once said it in my life. And this simply in order not to place my "fellowman" in an awkward position. I pretend, sometimes for years, that all his advice is very wise, or that he himself is comme il faut and looks after my interests. A quarter of these cases relates to my profound (from childhood) indifference to external life (if there be 89
no danger). But one quarter, however, is the manifestation of sheer minus and lack of will—without any external and subsidiary reasons...

A perfectly different thing is my dream (life): as regards that I never stirred one iota under anyone's influence whatsoever, never; it was the same in my childhood, too. In that respect I was a perfectly "un-brought up" man, utterly unyielding to "cultural influences."

Almost in proportion to the absence of will to live (to realization) I possessed a stubbornness of will to dream. I should say it was even more constant, and more persistent... Indeed, I never "stirred one iota and yielded to nothing."

To look at me—I am "all-declinable."

In myself (subject)—absolutely undecinable; non-compatible. A sort of "adverb."

* * *

I am like a baby in its mother's womb, which does not at all wish to be born. "I'm quite warm where I am."...

(In a cab, at night.)

* * *

Abraham was called by God. In my case God was called by me... That's the whole difference.

* * *

After all not a single Biblical scholar noticed this peculiarity and strangeness of the Biblical story, that it was not Abraham who was looking for God, but God who was wanting Abraham. The Bible tells clearly that Abraham declined for a long time to conclude the covenant. He ran away, but God
SOLITARIA

caught him. Only then he said: "I will be true to Thee, I and my heirs."

(Examining my coins.)

*   *   *

I longed for nothing so much as for humiliation. "Fame" at times gladdened me—with a purely piggish pleasure. But this never lasted long (a day or two); then would come the former longing—to be humiliated.

(On the back of the lined sheet.)

*   *   *

About my death: "this rubbish should be swept out of the world." And when this "should" comes I shall die.

(On the back of the lined sheet.)

*   *   *

I am not needed. Of nothing am I so convinced as of this, that I am not needed.

(On the back of the lined sheet.)

*   *   *

Dear, lovely ones! What a number of you, precious ones, I have met on my way. The first in time was J. (Julie). Simple, self-denying. But like a star among all is my "nameless" one. . . . "God has not given me your name, and I don't want to bear my former name, because. . . ." And she called herself by no name, that is, she signed her letters with the initial of her Christian name. I used to laugh: "only Queens or Grand Dukes sign like that." . . . She did not see it, did not reply, but went on signing her letters with V., the initial of her Christian name. I made it one of my noms-de-plume.

(On the back of the lined sheet.)

*   *   *
ROZANOV

Literature is the most disgusting kind of traffic. And doubly disgusting is it because certain talent is mixed up with it. And the objects of the traffic are real spiritual values.

(On the back of the lined sheet.)

* * *

In the course of a few days humiliation always passes into such a radiance of soul as cannot be compared with anything. It is right to say that certain, and the highest, spiritual illuminations are unattainable without previous humiliation; that certain spiritual absolutes thus remain for ever hidden from those who have always triumphed, conquered, been on top.

How crude, and hence also how unhappy was Napoleon. . . . After Jena he was more pitiable than a poor beggar to whom the servants of a rich house say: God bless you.

Is it not on this mystery of universal psychologicalness (if universal psychologicalness does exist) that the state of soul is based, in which it may be said that finally "he wishes to suffer"? . . .

How very much better we are after suffering! . . . Is it not on this that democracy's "gain without loss" is based? Democracy is not at all born in golden swathing bands of morality; it is frail like all. But democracy is in the "lowly estate," and its moral aureole has attracted everyone to it. . . .

(On the back of the lined sheet.)

* * *

Truth is higher than the sun, higher than the heaven, higher than God: for if God too began not
SOLITARIA

with truth, then he is not God, and heaven is a swamp, and the sun a brass plate.

*(On the back of the lined sheet.)*

* * *

G. [God] as it were pointed out to man for ever and anon where it is possible to meet him.

"Look for me not in the woods nor in the fields, nor in the wilderness, not on the peak of the mountain, nor in the valley below, nor in the waters, nor under the earth—but . . . where I made the covenant with Abraham your father." . . .

Astonishing. But whither does this lead one who thinks, searches, divines?

But, in that case, how understandable it becomes why asexualists are at the same time also atheists: they do not meet with God, do not see him, do not hear him, do not know him. . . .

* * *

The soul is passion.

* * *

And hence remotely and sublimely: "I am the fire that consumeth." (God about Himself in the Bible.)

Hence also: talent increases when passion increases. Talent is passion.

*(In a cab, at night.)*

* * *

"Vasili Vasilievich, do vote for the Octobrist party," asked Borya [Souvorin-fils, editor of the Novoye Vremya], puffing at his pipe.

"Your Octobrists, Borya, are blockheads; but since your wife has won-der-ful shoulders, and your sister is chaste and inaccessible, I will vote for the Octobrists."

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And I voted for them (in the Third Duma): since I could not find the address of doctor Sokolov (the leader of the Petersburg Social-Democrats—somewhere in the Grechesky Prospect), and the damned voting paper I lost of course the very same day I received it.

*   *   *

"What events! What events! Vasili Vasilievich, you ought to write something about them!" said the secretary of "our paper," kind N. I. Afanasiev, as he crossed the room.

His wife is a Frenchwoman and speaks no Russian at all. I can't understand how they converse "in moments of endearment": surely it can't be done in utter silence....

"Which events, damn it?" I thought. For I was looking for "subjects for articles." In reading the newspaper, I certainly look for matter in small type, where it is more amusing: one surely does not want to read these leading articles and feuilletons, the perusal of which wastes a whole day.

"Which 'events,' Nicolay Ivanovich?"

"Why," he replied, almost from the doorway, "freedom of conscience, the abolition of the poll-tax, and the almost complete revision of all laws."

"Indeed, these are 'events': with some effort one could write any amount of leading articles on them."

This was at the time when Father Gapon and Witte were booming. But to me it seemed that there was nothing particular happening. But that talk of his: "what events"—how it worried me.

*   *   *

It is astounding that at times I look with widely opened eyes at an "event," and even write articles about it; finally, I utter about it most distinct words
of a clear, significant meaning, precisely to the point
and core of the event; and yet I do not see it at all,
do not know it at all, I don’t think anything definite
about it, and don’t know “whether I want it or
not.” I myself became glad (in my soul) when
my ear caught my own words: “Gentlemen! We
ought to rejoice not at that the Manifesto [establi-
shing a parliamentary system in Russia] has been
issued; but that it could not be otherwise, that we
have exacted it!”

This I said when Stolypin, entering the room
where we all sat, announced that “the Tsar had
signed the Manifesto (of October 17).” All became
excited and champagne was ordered. Suddenly I
became solemnly attuned, with something “grand
in my soul” (I just felt a warmth in my heart) and
I said those words which indeed struck to the core
of the event. . . .

And yet it did not occur to me that it had to do
with the Constitution. So much so that when I
went home I had only the idea that for three or
perhaps even for five days I might have a rest from
writing articles. I came home and said this, and
also said that for the next two days I should not have
to go to the office. Accordingly I asked them to
prepare my linen, and I went off to the Turkish
baths to lie there on the upper bench in vapour,
“with all my cares gone.” And in the evening I was
rummaging among my papers and coins and drink-
ing tea.

Suddenly the day after I learnt that “yesterday
the people marched in the Nevsky with red flags!!!
the sole and first time in Russian history!!! A unique
moment, a unique sensation and experience.”

Surely I can understand this.
Oh, yes!
But I lay in the vapour baths. I have a cumcla-
toriness of soul. An "event" I realize as deeply as only very few do, but I realize it three years later, months after I saw it. When I see it I think absolutely nothing about it. But I think (passionately and ardently) about what happened three years before. It has always been like that with me, from my youth, from my childhood.

* * *

People, would you like me to tell you a stupendous truth which not a single one of the prophets told you? ... "What! What!"
It is that private life is above everything.
"Ha-ha-ha! He-he-he! Ha-ha-ha!" ... Yes! Yes! Nobody has said it. I am the first.... Just sitting at home, and even picking your nose, and looking at the sunset.
"Ha-ha-ha!" ... I swear to you: this is more universal than religion. ... All religions will pass, but this will remain: simply sitting in a chair and looking in the distance.

( July 23, 1911.)

* * *

Lord! Lord! Why hast Thou forgotten me? Doest Thou not know that every time Thou forgettest me, I lose myself.

( On my experiments.)

* * *

... Lord, I have divined the tetragram, I have divined it. It was not a name like "Paul" or "John," but it was an invocation; and it was not always pronounced even by the same person perfectly identically, but slightly-slightly changed in its 96
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nuances, in its guttural breathings. . . . And not absolutely identically by various high priests. Through that variation in pronunciation the secret of its utterance has been lost in the ages. But, in truth, pious Jews even now pronounce it at times, but they know not when. In complete correspondence with my divination is this that “he who knows how to utter the tetragram possesses the world,” i.e., through God. Indeed, the mystery of this call and invocation consists in this that God cannot help responding to it and “appears then in all his glory.” On the consciousness of the Jews there also flashes, like a shadow, the mysterious idea that it is not only they who need God, but that He, too, needs them. Hence their ethnological and religious pride, and their asking from God, and not always only praying to Him. . . .

But all this is contained in the invocation, in the breathing. . . . It consists only of vowels and aspirates.

*   *   *

Strictly speaking, Tolstoy has spent a profoundly banal life. . . . To him this has never even occurred. No suffering, no “crown of thorns,” no heroic struggles for convictions; and even no particularly interesting adventures. Perfect banality.

Well, he had adventures “with his ideas.” . . . But this is a mere literary entourage—the same banality only sprinkled with scent.

*   *   *

It seems to me that Tolstoy was little loved, and that he felt it. After his death, to say nothing of his lifetime, not a single agonizing cry was heard, not a single mad act committed—the signs by which genuine attachment is recognized. “Everything
ROZANOV

was reasonable in the highest degree”—and that is just the stamp of banality.

* * *

I am not yet such a scoundrel as to think of morality. A million years passed before my soul was let out into the world to enjoy it; and how can I suddenly say to her: “don’t forget yourself, darling, but enjoy yourself in a moral fashion.”

No, I say to her: “enjoy yourself, darling, have a good time, my lovely one, enjoy yourself, my precious, enjoy yourself in any way you please. And towards evening you will go to God.”

For my life is my day, and it is my day, and not Socrates’ or Spinoza’s.

(In a railway carriage.)  

* * *

It is well to move about with a store of great calmness in one’s soul; for instance, in travelling. Everything then seems bright, significant, everything shapes to a good end.

But to sit in one spot is also well, but only with a store of great movement in the soul. Kant sat all his life long; but there was so much movement in his soul that through his “sitting” worlds moved.

* * *

Happiness is in effort—says youth
Happiness is in rest—says death.
I shall overcome everything—says youth,
Yes, but everything will end, says death.

(In a railway carriage, Eidtkunen-Berlin.)

* * *

I don’t even know how they spell “morality”—with one l or two.

* * *

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And who her father was—I know not; and who was her mother, and whether she had children, and what is her address—I don’t in the least know.
(On morality. St. Petersburg-Kiev, in a railway carriage.)

*   *   *

Merezhkovsky always builds from other people’s material, but with a sense of something native to himself. In this consists his honour and magnanimity.

Why did my ideas produce on Mikhailovsky the impression of being ridiculous, so that he declared: “this is stuff like Kifa Mokievich’s”; why did it produce on Merezhkovsky the impression of being tragic, so that he said: “this is as turbulent as Nietzsche’s; this is the end of, or at any rate a terrible danger to Christianity.” Why? Merezhkovsky (obviously) perceived with a strong and honest mind what Mikhailovsky did not grasp both through the impotence and unfairness of his mind, a mind too lazy to work through themes which are not his, themes not of his camp. Yet the “family” and “procreation,” on which I base everything, are more remote and unnecessary to Merezhkovsky than to Mikhailovsky; they are even hostile to Merezhkovsky.

But Merezhkovsky has grasped with his soul—not with his heart or mind—but with his whole soul, that idea of mine, and has made it his own; he opposed it to the world of Christianity, to the core of this world—to asceticism; and he has grasped whole worlds. In that way he has “discovered the family” for himself, inwardly discovered it—under my impulse, under my indication. And this is in its full significance his “discovery,” new to him, fully and utterly his independent discovery (why did not Mikhail-
ROZANO

ovsky discover it?). I furnished the compass and as it were said: "there is land in the West." And he discovered America. In this consanguinity with other people's ideas consists his magnanimity. And God has rewarded him.

(Luga-Petersburg, in a railway carriage.)

* * *

Oh, my sad "experiments." And why did I want to know everything? Now I shall not die in peace as I expected.

(1911.)

* * *

"Man talks amusingly about a great many things, but with relish—only about himself" (Turgenev). At first we smile at this expression, as at a very felicitous one. But then (in a year's time) we grow rather sad: poor man, they want to deprive him even of the right to talk about himself. He must not only undergo pain, suffer, but . . . he must also keep silent about it. And this witticism by Turgenev, who meant by it to convict man of cynicism, itself appears cynical.

I, on the contrary, have observed that good people can in no other way be distinguished from bad people than by the way they listen to a man's talk about himself. If one listens willingly, without being bored, it is a true sign that the listener is a good, clean, straight man. One can be friends with him. One may trust him. But do not trust the friendship of the man who is bored when he listens to you: he thinks only of himself and is preoccupied with himself alone. Just as good a sign is talking about oneself: it means the man senses fellow-men in those around him. Talking to another person of oneself is an expression of sympathy with the other.
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I am very sorry to confess that I neither loved to listen to such talk or to utter it. I am incapable even of doing so. This is the sign by which I consider myself a bad man.

* * *

Shyperk said to me once: “not in your intentions, nor in your ideas, but in you as man there is something wrong, an impure alloy, something muddy in your organization or in your blood. I don’t know what it is, but I feel it.” He was very fond of me (I believe, more than anyone else save my own people). He was very penetrating, he knew “the roots of things.” And if he said so, it must be true.

* * *

The bad in us is our fate. But it is necessary to know the measure of that fate, its direction, and to reckon “the degrees,” as we do with thermometers. Which also lie, all of them, but learned men cope with this, making corrections.

Should I like to be only good? It would be so tedious. But what I should not like to be for anything on earth—is to be evil, harmful. In such a case I should prefer to die. But I was always clumsy. There is in me a terrible monstrosity of behaviour, to the point of not knowing “how to get up” or “how to sit down.” I simply do not know how. And I do not understand when it is best to do all this. No awareness whatever of planes. Hence in life the nearer I get to people the more uncomfortable I become to them: their life through my approach becomes uncomfortable. And very many have suffered through me and very much so: without the slightest wish on my part.

That too is fate.

* * *

101
ROZANOV

On the problem of man’s being *out-of-place*. Once I stood in the little chapel, near the Square by the Vladimir Church. Perhaps I was inside the church, I forget now—it was fourteen years ago. And I noticed that I did not hear what was being sung and read—that I did not even listen. And yet I had come with the *intention* of listening and worshipping. A thought flashed through me then: “like a *foreigner*—at every place, at every time, whenever it was, wherever I was.” Everything is foreign to me, with a strange, as it were, predestined estrangement. Whatever I do, whomever I meet—I can’t fuse myself with anything. A non-copulative man—spiritually. A man—*solo*.

All this was expressed in the word “foreigner,” which came out within me in a whisper, as the greatest condemnation of myself, as the greatest grief for myself and within myself.

That too is fate.

“As we are born so we go down to the grave.” Involved in this must be some particular laws of conception. Heredity. When my parents conceived me they must have been afflicted by some hiatus of thought, by some fog of thought, or lapse of thought: and in the child this has become irreparable.

“The inevitable” . . .

“Foreigner.” . . . “Where one has been hurt there one feels pain”—is it not because of this that I boundlessly love human *connectedness*, people in *connection*, in mutual *fondling*, *caressing*? Here my feeling towards them breaks down as it were all barriers. I hate nothing so much and am most hostile to everything that *separates* people, that prevents them from *fusing*, being *connected*, “becoming one flesh.” Whether for a long time, or for a short while—I don’t even raise that question.
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Certainly it is better that it should be for ever; but if that be impossible, then let it be for a moment of time. This, of course, is goodness in me; but is it not remarkable that it sprang from non-goodness, from personal unhappiness, from vice? Mark the connection of things. And how can one help saying: Fate! Destiny! . . .

* * *

Do you know that religion is the most important, the most essential, the most needful? With the person who does not know this, not the alpha of discussion or conversation should be entertained.

Such a person should simply be ignored. Passed over in silence.

Yet who does know it? Are there many who do? That is why in our time there is almost nothing to speak about, nor anyone to speak to.

* * *

The connection of sex with God—greater than the connection of the mind with God, greater even than the connection of conscience with God—is gathered from this that all a-sexualists reveal themselves also as a-theists. Such gentlemen, as Buckle or Spencer, as Pisarev or Belinsky, who have said about "sex" no more words than about the Argentine Republic, are at the same time so astoundingly atheistical as though there had not been before them or near them any religion. They are literally "unbaptized" in a strange, peculiar sense. The "Maeterlinckian catharsis" for the last twenty or thirty years consisted in this, that very many people began to look into the root of things: one's sex, one's personal sex became of interest to all. Probably something must have happened in the semen (and in the ovum); it is remarkable that now human beings have already
begun to be born quite different from those of sixty or seventy years ago. There is being born a "new generation." . . . One sensible woman, the wife of a priest (A. A-va), said to me once: "The crisis among the clergy is now manifested in a great number of young wives of priests who are barren." She did not finish her thought then, but a year later I heard her say that "it was not the priests' wives who don't conceive, but that their husbands have not the strength to conceive in them." Astonishing.

Well, something of the kind has taken place in the whole "Maeterlinckian generation." It took place not in the mode of thinking, but in the sex; and only afterwards also in the mode of thinking.

*    *    *

Do I wish my doctrine to be widely known?
No.
A great agitation would arise, and I love peace so much . . . and the sunset, and the quiet evening pealing of bells.

*    *    *

The defects which I have not got are indeed revolting to me. But my own defects, when I meet them in others, are not in the least revolting to me. And I would never condemn them.
Here is the bound of any judgment: i.e., whether it is "competent" or "incompetent," in how far "one can rely on it." We all have little tails, only facing different directions.

_(Examining my coins._)

*    *    *

What is fine in my writings came not from me. Like a woman I could only conceive it and bring it
SOLITARIA

forth. Everything belongs to a much better person than myself.

My understanding and heart were expressed in this only that I could always place and see another above myself. And that was always easy and pleasant. Thank God, there is no envy in me at all, just as "rivalry" was always alien to me, unnecessary, beside the point.

* * *

Always doing something, planning something. . . .

(About Jews.)

* * *

The family is the most aristocratic form of life! . . . Yes! Despite misfortunes, mistakes, "accidents" (surely "accidents" have happened even in the history of the Church)—yet it is after all the only aristocratic form of life.

* * *

For twenty years I have been living in a continuously poetic state. I am very observant, although I am silent. And I do not remember a single day when I did not notice in "Her" something profoundly poetic; and when I see or hear something of hers (with one ear—during my work), inwardly a tear of ecstasy or admiration comes to my eyes. And that is why I am happy. And through that I even write well (it seems so to me).

(Luga-Petersburg, in a railway carriage.)

* * *

Do I want to react on life? To have an influence? Not particularly.

* * *

105
ROZANOV

Your Mother.
(To my children.)

And we lived peacefully, day in day out, for many years. And it was the best part of my life.

(Feb. 25, 1911.)

*   *   *

I feel somehow sad (and frightened) at the thought that being dead (and moreover "an author") people will start praising me.

Perhaps this will be well-founded, but that appreciation will ignore my "regrettable incidents." And receiving not according to my deserts, I shall be ashamed, tormented, guilty there, "in the other world."

*   *   *

After my death if someone loves me, let him keep silent about it.

(Luga-Petersburg, in a railway carriage.)

*   *   *

My soul is interwoven of dirt, tenderness, and sadness.
Or:
It is like gold fishes, playing in the sun, but placed in an aquarium filled with dung-impregnated water. And they are not suffocated there. Quite the contrary. . . . It does not sound like truth. And yet it is so.

*   *   *

God has gilded me all over.
I feel it. . . .
Lord! How much I feel it!

*   *   *

Every line of mine is holy writ (not in the scholastic, not in the ordinary sense), and every thought
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of mine is a holy thought, and every word of mine is a holy word.

"How dare you?" shouts the reader.

"Don't you see, I dare," and I laugh at him in reply.

* * *

When—I believe it was at Hoffman's concert—I heard "Francesca da Rimini" for the first time, in a trance, I thought: "that is my soul."

That passage in the music where there is so clearly audible the movement of wings (astonishing!!!).

"That is my soul! That is my soul!"

I never dreamt even of such a mass of inner movement within myself, of which are woven my years, hours, and days.

I rush like the wind, I do not tire like the wind.

"Whither? What for?"

And finally:

"What do you love?"

"I love my dreams at night," I shall whisper to the wind I meet.

(Late at night.)

* * *

Old age in its gradualness is a loosening of attachment. And death is final coldness.

Nearing old age one is above all worried by one's irregular life—not in the sense of "one enjoyed it so little" (this does not even enter one's mind), but that one did not do what was needed.

To me at least the idea of "duty" only began to occur towards old age. Before I always lived by "motif," i.e., by appetite, by taste, by what I wanted and what I liked. I can't imagine even such a "lawless" person as myself. The idea of "law"
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as "duty" never even occurred to me. I only read about it in the Dictionary, under letter D. But I did not know what it was, and was never interested enough to know. "Duty was invented by cruel men to oppress the weak. And only fools obey it." Something like that. . . .

But I always had pity. Yet this too is my appetite, and gratitude—my taste.

* * *

It is surprising how I managed to accommodate myself to falsehood. It has never worried me. And for this odd reason: "what business is it of yours what precisely I think? Why am I obliged to tell you my real thoughts?" My profound subjectivity (the pathos of subjectivity) has had this effect that I have gone through my whole life as though behind a curtain, irremovable, untearable. "Nobody dare touch that curtain." There I lived, there with myself I was truthful. . . . And with the truth of anything I said on the other side of the curtain—it seemed to me that no one had anything to do. "I must say what is useful. Your criticism should go only as far as this: am I saying what is useful? And even that on the condition: "If it is harmful then don't take it." My aphorism at the age of thirty-five: "I write not on stamped paper," that is, you can always tear it up.

If nevertheless I did in most cases (I should say nearly always) write sincerely, it was not because of my love for truth—a love I not only lacked, but could not even imagine—but because of carelessness. Carelessness is my negative pathos. To tell a lie—for which purpose it is necessary to "invent," to "make ends meet," to "build up"—is more difficult than to say "what is." And I have simply put on 108
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paper what is: which constitutes my whole truthfulness. It is natural, but it is not moral.

"I grow like this," and if you don't like it, don't look at it.

And therefore it often seemed to me (and perhaps it was and is so) that I am the most truthful and sincere of writers: although there is not a single grain of morality in this attitude.

"So God has made me."

* * *

The fusion of my life, fatum, especially of my thoughts, and above all of my writings with the divine volo, was always in me, from my very childhood, from my adolescence. And hence may be sprang my carelessness. I was careless for this reason that an inner voice, an invincible inner conviction, told me that everything I said God wanted me to say. This conviction was not always equally intense; at times this conviction, this belief approached a kind of white heat. I became, as it were, strung up, my soul became strung up, my thoughts acquired a perfectly different flow, and my tongue spoke of itself. Not always in such cases had I a pen close at hand; and then I uttered what was in my soul. . . . But I felt that in what I uttered was such a propulsion of force that walls would not endure, that institutions, laws, other people’s convictions would not remain safe. . . . At such moments I felt that I was saying the absolute truth, and exactly under precisely the same angle of inclination, as it is in the universe, in God, in truth qua truth.

In most cases, however, it was not written down (I had no pen).

* * *

The feeling of criminality (as Dostoevsky had it)
ROZANOV

I have never had: but there always was in me a feeling of my boundless weakness. . . .

Weak I began to become ever since the age of seven or eight. . . . A curious loss of will power over myself, over my actions, over the "choice of an activity," of a "job." For instance, I entered the Faculty of the University because my brother was at that Faculty, without any intellectual or other connection whatever with my brother, at the time. I always went through "the open door," and it was no matter to me which door was open. Never in my life did I make a choice, never did I hesitate in that respect. It was a strange lack of will, a strange impassivity. And always the thought: "God is with me." But whatever door I passed, I went not in the hope that God would not desert me, but through my sole interest "in God who was with me," and hence the resultant lack of interest as to what door I went in by. I went through the door where there was "pity" or "gratitude." Thanks to these two motives I still think that I was a good man; and God will forgive me much.

* * *

In Russia what a number of reputations, if not literary (there's not a single literary reputation) then journalistic reputations, are soaked in the blood of the young. Oh, if the young could ever believe that those who never pushed them into that bloody business [political terrorism] love and respect them—their priceless eternal souls, their dark and lovely "futures" (their whole world)—much more than these "sycophants" to whom they have trusted themselves. . . . But they will never believe it! They think that they are lonely in the world, deserted: and the only "near ones" left to them are those
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who whisper to them: "Go forward, we are already old and useless, but you—you are heroic and noble." Never has this devilish whisper been understood. Nekrasov, a member of the English Club, who played cards with millionaires, urged them more than any others with his poem:

Take me into the camp of the perishing. . . .

This poem, indeed, is all soaked in blood. People more unhappy than our young people it is really impossible to imagine. Therein is manifested all our actuality (in its absurdity) "like a nightmare," which has sustained in our young this black and bitter idea ("we are deserted by all"). Indeed, what did our young people see and hear from the cast-iron Generals, from the frozen State Councillors, from the dry-goods' merchants, from (almost) the whole Russian people. But perhaps they will remember their old grannies, their old aunties. . . . Therein perhaps is a hope. Lord, how terrible our life is, how gloomy indeed.

*   *   *

Chukovsky is after all a very good writer. But what is "fine" in him, literature gets from him (his burying of corpses); but it won't remain for himself. The point is that he is very useful, but he is not a fine writer; and in literature this is everything.

But he is not a bad man as I have tried to show (my criticism of his portrait by Riepin).

(Petersburg-Kiev, in a railway carriage.)

*   *   *

Man relies on two anchors. His parents, "home," his childhood—that is one anchor. "First love," the age of thirteen-fourteen, is a crisis; a presage of the "other anchor's approach." . . . Setting out and—
ROZANOV

haven: the harbour from which you are "unmoored" and the harbour in which you are "moored." The final "mooring" is the grave; and it is remarkable that love is already leading up to it. But love is "I give birth again," and shall be for my children the harbour from which they are "unmoored."

From this composition of life how evident it becomes that our genitalia are more important than our brain. "The brain" is the captain; the steersman. But for "navigation" what is important is evidently not the captain, a replaceable and hired person, but the eternal "unmoorings" and "moorings." The East India Company at any rate does not exist for the benefit of the captains, any more than the Volga river navigation and the grain trade do.

I.e., "beauty of face," damn it, is more important to a girl than "intellectual capacity." And so it must be. So they feel. But it is they only. But what about the school? the whole organization of education? "Learn by heart square equations" and "the rivers of South America"; "don't forget the tributaries of the Rio de La Plata." But how understandable and how nice even it is that girls don't take them in.

(Luga-Petersburg, in a railway carriage.)

Like a "sturdy old wolf" he gorged himself on Russian blood and, satiated, dropped into the grave.

(On Schedrin, in a railway carriage.)

She gave birth, therefore she had the right to give birth. "Can" nowhere else coincides so well with "I have the right" as in giving birth.

Your old fellow said: "I can, therefore I must."

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He surely had in view Hofrats setting off in the morning to their various offices, and also young men who can ("and therefore . . .") abstain from girls. Let us suppose it is so. But surely not different would be the reasoning of young men. "I can beget a child on her, therefore I must beget it on her." What would your Königsbergian sage say to this?

(*Luga-Petersburg, in a railway car.*)

* * *

What is the pathos of égalité? Standing (in my own opinion) rather high in literature, I would never dream of rushing up to her, or of avoiding her (égalité). "It is all the same to me." But Popryscchin\(^1\) would rush to égalité so as to feel the equal of the King of Spain, and Bobchinsky\(^1\) would certainly long to be on égalité with the Governor-General. What does it mean then? Shall we say that the spirit of égalité is the longing of all that is abased, self-pitying, of all that is "halved" trying to be on a level with an entity?

* * *

Darwin in pronouncing the égalité of the chimpanzee to man has done much more for the French spirit than for the English (so people thought; so did N. Y. Danilevsky think).

(*Luga-Petersburg, in a railway carriage.*)

* * *

Look, I too am ending by beginning to hate everything Russian. How sad, how terrible. It is especially sad at the end of my life.

* * *

\(^1\) Characters from Gogol.
ROZANOV

Those sleep-worn faces, unswept rooms, unpaved streets. . . . Disgusting, disgusting.

(Luga-Petersburg, in a railway carriage.)

* * *

And why have a friendly reader? Do I write for the reader? No, I write for myself. "Why then do you publish?"
They pay for it.
The subjective has coincided with an external circumstance.
Thus occurs literature. And only thus.

(Luga-Petersburg, in a railway carriage.)

* * *

And what was the arrow I always felt in my heart? And from which, in the main, comes all my literature.
It is my sin.
Through sin I got to know everything on earth, and through sin (repentance) I was related to everything on earth.

(Luga-Petersburg, in a railway carriage.)

* * *

Every love is beautiful. And only it alone is beautiful.
For the only thing on earth "true in itself" is love.

* * *

Love excludes falsehood; the first "I lied" means: "I love no longer," "I love less."
If love is extinguished, truth too is extinguished. Therefore to "carry truth on earth" means to love always and truly.

* * *

Fame is a serpent. May her bite never touch me.

(Examining my coins.)

* * *
SOLITARIA

To lie in the warm sand after bathing is in its way worth any philosophy.
And the lazzaroni, always lying in the sand, they are a splendid school of philosophy.
(Examining my coins.)

* * *

The Russian Church represents a remarkable phenomenon. Lutheranism and Catholicism are in many respects more remarkable, but there are aspects in which the Russian Church is more remarkable than they. Let us consider that quiet minds, such as Bouslayev, Tikhonravov, Klyuchevsky, such as S. M. Soloviov, never tried to correct anything in it, and were perfectly satisfied with it. And yet these were believing, religious men, men of pious life in the best sense of the word, in the quietly-Russian sense. Of religion they never thought specially, but worked all their lives, behaved nobly, and created. Religion to them was a kind of side foundation which supported all that mountain of noble work. There is no doubt that had they been "unbelieving," they would have been neither so noble, nor so active. Religious scepticism they would have met with the greatest contempt. "Cross-examination" of Orthodoxy all started below (or away from) that floor—by minds more caustic, mobile, and petty. Tolstoy, Rozanov, Merezhkovsky, Hertzen are no longer a Bouslayev with his calm sunset. They are a hubbub and storm, spitefulness and nerves. Maybe there is here and there something remarkable. But not quiet, not clear, not harmonious.

Orthodoxy fits in in the highest degree with a harmonious spirit, but does not fit in in the highest degree with a disturbed spirit. Allegorically speaking, there is Zeus in it; in Alexander Nevsky (alle-
ROZANOV
gorically again) it even admitted "Mars." During the "Petersburg period" (that of the Slavophiles) they kept on building temples to Alexander Nevsky, to this "Ares" and at the same time "Romulus" of Russia, having brushed aside the Kiev martyrs. Thus, Mars and Zeus (their elements)—that is Orthodoxy; but there is not in it Aphrodite, or Juno, "the mistress of the house," or Saturn and remote mysticism.

(On the blank sheet of a letter received.)

*   *   *

If you fail to give something, there is anguish in the soul. Even if you fail to give a present.

(About a little girl at the railway station in Kiev, to whom I wanted to make a present of a pencil; but I hesitated, and she and her grandmother went on.)

The little girl came back and I gave her the pencil. She had never seen one like it, and I could hardly explain to her what a "wonderful thing" it was. How happy she was, and I too.

*   *   *

Who goes down with a pure soul into the earth? Oh, how much we need purification.

(Winter, 1911.)

*   *   *

I may be a "fool" (there are rumours), perhaps even a "swindler" (there is gossip to that effect); but the width of thought, the incommensurability of "horizons revealed"—no one has had that before me in the way I possess it. And all of it came from my own mind, without borrowing an iota even. Wonderful. I am simply a wonderful man.

(On the sole of my slipper, bathing.)

*   *   *

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SOLITARIA

My mind got entangled, utterly entangled. . . .
All my life I have devoted to the destruction of what alone I love on earth. Is there a destiny sadder than that?

(Summer, 1911.)

*   *   *

Fate preserves those whom it robs of fame.
(Winter, 1911.)

*   *   *

They imagine that “I played up to the authorities.” Whereas the peculiar trait in my psychology consists in such a strong feeling of a void around me—a void, silence, and non-living around and everywhere—that I hardly know, hardly believe, hardly admit that there are other people contemporaneous with me. It seems impossible and absurd, yet it is so.

*   *   *

Why is it that I so little desire fame or influence, and yet feel (at times) so anxious (although at moments it makes my soul happy) that nothing has come of my literary activity, that no one follows after me, that I have no “school”? Simply because of a strange desire that people should be happy. One always judges “by oneself” (one can’t do otherwise). And “by myself” I judge that it is impossible to be happy otherwise than by just having my ideas. I should be very glad if I could be dispensed with; and in that case, though I would have written everything just in the same way as I have done, I should be perfectly indifferent as to whether people read me or not.

*   *   *

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ROZANOV

In this sense the "desire of influence" is privily a very noble feeling: to have oneself as the friend of all and to have the whole world as one's friends.

* * *

But then there is no need to sign one's name, and yet I do it. It is strange. But, so far from having had a good time of it, "Rozanov" was more abused than praised. And the abuse was more crushing, and I believe more penetrating (in certain respects), than the praise.

(In arranging these notes.)

* * *

He was not clever, nor educated; to be more correct, he was not intelligent: but astonishingly talented. Whether he "got" money from Witte or not I do not know. But he was an absolutely honest man; for with one tenth of his talent people have ended by being "Privy Councillors" and living comfortably on their investments and pensions. And he died, if not a pauper, a poor man.

But not only because of this was he absolutely honest: there was in him something indefinable, by virtue of which, if even I had caught him by the hand with the handkerchief he had just picked from my pocket, I would have shaken his hand and said: "Serge, this is something inadvertent; indeed, I knew and do know this very minute that you are one of the most honest men in Russia." And he would have burst into angel's tears, into which the "honest" Kutler, enjoying a pension of six thousand roubles, could never burst.

(About Sharapov, at his death.)

* * *

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SOLITARIA

I don’t argue with God and I shall not betray Him for His withholding grace from me in answer to my prayer: I love Him, I am devoted to Him. And whatever He does I shan’t utter a blasphemy, but shall only cry over myself.

(The sad summer of 1911; her hand does not move.)

*   *   *

The soul of Orthodoxy is in the gift of prayer. Its body is—the rites, the cult. But whoever thinks that apart from the rites there is nothing in it (Harnack, the professor) he, with all his cleverness, understands nothing about it.

*   *   *

He who loves the Russian people can’t help loving the Church too. For the people and its Church are one. And only with Russians—the people and the Church are one.

(Summer, 1911.)

*   *   *

No interest at all in self-realization, a lack of all external energy, of the will to live. I am the most unself-realizing man.

*   *   *

I have had several superb letters from Maxim Gorky, in the course of this year. He is a splendid man. But if all the other “advanced” look at and see things in that light, then first of all, as compared with our horizon, what a limited horizon theirs is! Is it really true that the difference between radicalism and conservatism is the difference between a narrow and a wide field of vision, between shortsightedness and farsightedness? If so, does it then mean that we shall conquer? And yet there is no hope of this.

(Summer, 1911.)

*   *   *

119

1
ROZANOV

Gorky's fatum is that he is in fame and in the "higher estate." Yet by nature he is a fighter. With whom then can he fight, if all are knocked out? Surely not with Gringmut, nor with Katkov? Nor with Count Meschersky, whose very existence Gorky hardly suspects.

And his arms hung down.
The fighter has died far removed from the fight. I have written him about this, but strangely enough he has not understood anything in that idea.

* * *

Three men I have met more understanding, or, rather, more gifted, more original, more unusual than myself. Shperk, Rzy, and F—y. The first died when still a boy (at twenty-six), not having expressed himself in anything; the second was "Tentetnikov," who warmed his little belly in the sun. "Ivan Ivanovich, who plays the fiddle," so he once defined himself (metaphorically, in a certain article). The remarkable thing in their intellect, or truer—in their soul, in their metaphysical (prenatal) experience, was that they knew no mistakes; their opinions could be taken "blindfolded," without verification, without reflection. Their words, ideas, opinions, the most summary ones, often illuminated a whole domain of the universe. They were all almost Slavophiles, yet essentially—not slavophiles, but—"singles," "I's." . . .
The other famous men whom I have met—Rachinsky, Strakhov, Tolstoy, Pobedonoszev, Soloviov, Merezhkovsky—were not stronger than myself. . . .

I have felt something very strong and independent in Tigranov (his book on Wagner). But we met only once. And then I was in trouble and I could not attentively listen or look at him. Of him I could
SOLITARIA

say that "perhaps he was more gifted than myself." . . .

Stolpner was very wise, and in individual judgments stronger than myself; but on the whole he was not stronger than I. . . .

Yes. . . . I also felt Konstantin Leontiev (my correspondence with him) stronger than myself.

But over all those enumerated I had the advantage of cunning (the Russian "keep your own council"), and perhaps because of that I was not wasted (in a literary sense), as those unfortunate people ("failures") were. From my childhood, from my frightened and harassed childhood, I have adopted the practice of keeping silent (and of ever thinking). I kept on being silent . . . and kept on listening to . . . and thinking. . . . And listening to fools, and to the words of the wise. . . . And it went on ripening in me, slowly and quietly. . . . I did not hurry anywhere. And through that unhurriedness, whilst with them everything "broke off" or "did not ripen," with me it did not break off, and, I think, did ripen. Compared with Rzy and Shperk how extensively has my literary activity unfolded itself, what a number of books I have published. . . . But throughout my life no Press opinions, no dithyrambs (in the Press) gave me that quiet, just pride as the friendship and (I felt it) the respect (and from Shperk also love) of these three men.

But what a destiny is that of a literary man: why are they so unknown, rejected, forgotten?

Shperk, as though anticipating his fate, used to say: "Have you read Gruber (I believe)? You haven't? I am awfully keen on finding something by him. I am generally fascinated by unknown writers, by those who remained unnoticed. What sort of men were they? I am so delighted when I
ROZANOV

find in them an idea unusual and before its time.” How simple, profound, and charming this is!

I also remember his aphorism about children: “Children differ from us in this that they apprehend everything with a power of realism which is unknown to grown-up people. To us a ‘chair’ is a detail of ‘furniture.’ But a child does not know the category ‘furniture’; and to it a ‘chair’ is huge and alive as it can’t be to us. That is why children enjoy things much more than we do.” . . .

Another wonderful opinion: “The rule that children should respect their parents, and the parents should love their children ought to be reversed: it is the parents who must respect the children—respect their peculiar little world and their ardent nature ready to feel hurt at any moment. But children ought only to love their parents, and they will love them certainly, as soon as they feel that respect is paid to themselves.” How profound and how new.

Tolstoy . . . When I spoke to him, among other things, about marriage and the family, about sex—I saw that he was muddled in all that like a schoolboy who is not sure of his spelling; and that, essentially, he did not understand anything in all that except that “one must abstain.” He did not know even how to disentangle that little thread—“abstain”—from the fabric into which it is woven. No analysis, no ability to combine, nor even thought; mere exclamations. One can’t react to that, it is something imbecile . . .

In Soloviov only this is interesting that “a little devil was sitting on his shoulder” (in the Baltic Sea). That was worth while speaking of. Mysterious and profound is his nostalgia; that of which he kept silent. But his words, what he has written—is the most ordinary journalese.
SOLITARIA

He carried his pride before him. And it was nothing. The best in him, his sadness, on that he kept silent.

Pobedonoszef was a splendid man; but he has not revealed in anything that he had a splendid, distinctive Russian mind. He was so ordinary that he has not worn out his professorship.

In respect of Pobedonoszef I feel a guilt: I ought not to have written evil of him after his death. Although objectively I was correct in what I wrote, but in writing like that I was not noble.

Rachinsky's was a dry and accurate mind, without anything new or original.

* * *

... and essentially—God! God!—there always was a monastery in my soul.

* * *

Did I really need the market place?
Brrrr... *

* * *

Ah, people—enjoy each evening which falls out bright. Life passes quickly; it will pass and then you will say: “I would enjoy,” but it is no longer possible: there is pain, there is sadness, there’s no time! Numismatics—well, engage in your numismatics; a book—all right, let it be a book.

But only write nothing, do not “try”: you will miss life, and what you have written will turn out “folly” and “unwanted.”

* * *

My head is rocking in the sky.
But how weak my legs are.

* * *

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ROZANOV

In many respects I understand paganism, Judaism, and Christianity more fully, more to the core than they were understood in the classical time of their bloom by their own adherents.

And, yet, I am only an "ordinary man of the passing day," with all his weaknesses, with all his great anti-historic "I don't want to." . . .

But there is here a dialectical mystery: "my to-day's day," to which I cling with such a force, as no one I think has had before me, gave me all the force and all the penetration. So that "out of weakness issued strength," and from "that strength there issued weakness."

*   *   *

This generation not only lacks great importance, but has absolutely no importance. Sixty years will pass, "a single breath of history," and there will remain of it no more than of the mummies of the time of Sesostris. What do we know of the men of the twenties (of last century)? Only what Pushkin has told us. Now, his every line we know, remember, ponder over it. And his "contemporaries" existed only for their own time, but to us they just do not exist at all. Hence the conclusion: live and work as though there was nobody, as though you had no "contemporaries" at all. And if your work and thoughts are valuable they will overcome all that hates you, despises, tries to trample you down. The strongest is the strongest, and the weakest is the weakest. My ("Friend's") mother used to say: "truth is brighter than the sun."

And live for its sake: as to people—let them go where they like.

*   *   *

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SOLITARIA

"What do you love then, queer fellow?" My dreams.

(In a railway station, about myself.)

* * *

This is what I utterly and finally do not know: "am I something or nothing?" A vapour puffs me up and then it seems that I am "something." But . . . "When the long scroll is unrolled" (Pushkin), then it appears I am "nothing."

(Petersburg-Kiev, in a railway carriage.)

* * *

"Why are you thinking of yourself? You'd better think of others."

No, thank you.

(Petersburg-Kiev, in a railway carriage.)

* * *

Yes, perhaps the "plan of the building" is not correct, but it keeps us from the rain, from the mud; and how can we start pulling it down?

(In a railway carriage, about the Church.)

* * *

When I am at the doctor's I always sit on the edge of the chair, and mentally whisper: "would not you like to pull my ears, please do"; or "would not you like to punch my head, please, please do so, I can stand it, even enjoy it; only after this try to cure her." For some reason I have a notion that all diseases are incurable; and that is why I was always afraid to call in a doctor. A temperature of 104, delirious—"well, it is nothing, it's a cold, five grains of aspirin, a rubbing with vinegar, a purge," any "domestic remedy" as a matter of fact, and "it will pass." But "calling in a doctor"—that's already a disease,
ROZANOV

and always the idea with me is that "it is incurable."
And at Doctor Renteln's, before my wife's third
operation, I only bent my body to give myself the
appearance of sitting, quite close to the door, but
I did not even touch the seat. He spoke slowly:
"It is a fistula . . . and the cervix of the uterus
has to be cut off. . . . The uterus has to be made
smaller, cleaned" (by cutting? !!).

But, my God; cancer always appears on the
"cervix of the uterus," and if it is to be cut off, then
it is cancer. . . .

How I managed to drag myself home then, I don't
remember. . . .

* * *

And now life has completely gone. . . . There
remain several gloomy years, old, painful, unneces-
sary. . . .

How everything is becoming unnecessary. This is
the chief sensation of old age. Particularly—things,
objects: clothes, furniture, establishments.

What then is the sum total of life?

Terribly little meaning. I lived, once upon a
time I was happy: that's the chief thing. "And what
has come of it?" Nothing particular. And it is not
particularly necessary that anything should "come
of it." Obscurity—is almost the most desirable.

* * *

What is the very best in one's past and in the
past of long ago? One's good or moderately good
act. And also—a good meeting: i.e., getting to
know a nice, congenial, dear man. This indeed, in
old age, flashes out like a bright, bright gleam, and
one looks with such comfort at these gleams, alas,
so few.
SOLITARIA

But noisy pleasures—so-called "enjoyments"? They were pleasant only at the moment of receiving them, and have no importance for "after times."

Only in old age one realizes that "I ought to have lived well." In youth this does not even occur to one's mind. Nor does it occur in maturity. But in old age the recollection of a good act, of a kind relationship, of a sensitive regard—is the only "bright guest in the room" (in the soul).

(Late at night.)

* * *

What is precious then in Russia apart from the old churches? Surely not government offices? Not editorial rooms? But the church is old, very old, and the sexton—he "is not up to much," we are all weak, all little sinners. But only here is it warm. Why then is it warm here while it is cold everywhere else? Here they buried my mother, my little brothers; they will bury me here; here my children will get married; everything is here. . . . All that is important. . . . And people have breathed in their warmth here.

* * *

In "my Friend" God has granted me to meet a person whom I never doubted, in whom I was never disappointed. It is curious, however, that not a day passed in which one of us did not "shout" at the other. But never did our difference last longer than the evening. Usually I or she came up in half an hour's time with an apology for the rudeness (shouting).

Never, never was there between us anger or disrespect.
ROZANO

Never!!! And not for a single whole day. Not once during twenty years did our day end "in division." .

(Late at night.)

* * *

Still, dark nights . . .
The terror of crime . . .
The anguish of loneliness . . .
Tears of despair, of fear, and of the sweat of labour . . .
Here thou art, religion . . .
Help to the drooping . . .
Help to the tired.
Faith of the sick . . .
Here are thy roots, religion . . .
Eternal, miraculous roots.

(Correcting the proofs of an article.)

* * *

"It has all happened because of the placenta," said Doctor Chernval. And this occurred when she was seventeen and a half, while in these matters she is even now, at the age of forty-seven, a mere child. "Why is my arm stiff?" — and no other anxiety except the arm. The doctor said laughingly: "She is most worried about her arm. But it does not matter, does it, it is the left arm which is stiff." . . .

And he smoked his cigarette thoughtfully.

* * *

My soul is aching, my soul is aching, my soul is aching.
And what to do with that pain—I don’t know.
But only with the pain I can go on living . . . This is the dearest to me and within me.

(Late at night.)

* * *

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SOLITARIA

About three years before 1911 my nameless and faithful “Friend,” to whom I owe everything, said:
“I feel I shall not live very long now. Let us live these few years well.” . . .
My heart sank within me. Hardly audibly I said: “certainly, certainly!”
But that “certainly” was not actually realized.

* * *

Your Mother
(to our children).
“I had my plait cut off, for I do not need it.”
A wonderful, chestnut-coloured plait. Now her hair sticks out like a mouse’s tail.
“Why did you do it? Without asking me! I am hurt. It is as though you have thrown away something of yourself, and a something which made others happy.”
“I’ve lost everything. What do I need the plait for? Where’s my neck? Where are my arms? There’s nothing left. And so I rid myself of the plait.”
(On sacrament day, late in the evening.)

* * *

But to me it seemed, as everything seems to me now, a sort of premonition of death.
(Fez. 25, 1911.)

* * *

At the age of fifty-six I possess 35,000 roubles. But “my Friend” is ill. . . . And I want nothing.

* * *

Her “friend” after all was only myself: in me alone tears are flowing, flowing, and can’t stop. . . .
The children. . . . How little they need their parents when they themselves are growing up: their chums, their own life, their future—it all excites them so much. . . .

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When my mother died I merely realized that I could smoke cigarettes openly. And I lighted a cigarette at once. I was thirteen.

*   *   *

For twenty years like "a fresh purling rivulet" I have been running round a coffin. . . .

And used to get into a temper: why is there no merriment going, why are not flowers blooming. And to learn it all so very late. . . .

*   *   *

. . . Yes, I've attained "fame." . . . Oh, how I long to tear with my teeth, to scratch with my nails that fame, to set my last, rotten tooth into it. . . .

And it is all too late. . . .

Oh, how I should like to live again, with the sole object—of not writing anything.

Those columns—they have robbed me of everything; they have taken me away from "my Friend," for whose sake I ought to have lived, have wished to live, and do wish to live.

And my "talent" drove me on all the while to write and write.

(Late at night.)

*   *   *

And my rambler keeps on rambling on the stairs, advancing with her right leg only; because of the bend in the stairs she does not see me, but I see her: her face is flushed and with animation she is saying to the maid who supports her: "To-day I have to take a hundred roubles to pay the doctor. I've completely robbed my Vasili Vasilievich." "Completely robbed," I laugh from the top of the stairs, running down. "What hundred roubles are you speaking of? It is I who am going to pay the doctor, and not to-day, but some day this week."
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But she has only this worry, which she meets seven days ahead, that a lot of money is being spent on her illness. She laughs, and we merrily and painfully enter the hall. Ah, my rambler, my dear rambler: for a firm walk I would give thousands . . . and for complete health I would give all.

* * *

Terrible loneliness throughout life. From childhood. Lonely souls are hidden souls. And this hiding springs from viciousness. The terrible burden of loneliness. Is it not that one’s pain is due to this? Not only to this.

* * *

On 27 November, at the age of eighty-five, died, in Eletz, “our granny,” Alexandra Andrianovna Rudnev, née Zhdanov. For full seventy years she had borne labour for others—having made up her mind at the age of fifteen to a marriage which would be advantageous to a young brother under her care. Both were complete orphans. And ever since she, always merry, only “running to Church,” teaching the little children of the locality “to read and write, to serve God, the Tsar, and the country,” like the undying candle of the catacombs, lighted, warmed, fondled, laboured, cried—cried a great deal—and only with the “Church service” did she dry her eyes (consolation). Let this book be dedicated to her; and along with her—to my poor mother, Nadezhda Vasilievna Rozanov.

* * *

She was quite different. All tormented—by helplessness, by a whirl of confused feelings. . . . But she did not know that, when she used to get out quietly from her bed, where I slept with her (about the age
ROZANOV

of six—seven—eight), I was not yet asleep and heard her pray for us all, silently; then her whisper would be heard . . . louder, louder . . . until exclamations would burst out in a sort of (slight) hiss.

And in daytime she was again stern and always stern. Throughout our house I never remember a smile.

* * *

Distractively, but not loudly, the ventilator hums in the passage; I (almost) cried: “Just to hear it I want to live longer, and above all ‘my Friend’ must live longer.” Then came the idea: “won’t she (‘my Friend’) hear the ventilator in the other world”; and a longing for immortality seized me so keenly by the hair that I nearly dropped down on the floor.

(Late at night.)

* * *

The goodness of our clergy! What a lot of tricks I played on them. And yet those who knew me, and many even who did not know me, behaved towards me, rejecting my ideas, fighting against them in the Press and orally—not only kindly, but also lovingly. (Ustiynsky, Filevsky, Lebedev—the censor, Pobedonoszov, S. M. Soloviov, Father Drosdov, Akimov, Zelikov, Professor Glubovsky, Mmes. N. R. Scherbov and A. A. Albov.) The exception was only S. A. Rachinsky, he alone got “to hate his brother” (after my articles on marriage in The Russky Troud and in The St. Petersbg Vedomosti. Again: Father Hermogines who in the summer demanded that I should be excommunicated, in November and December asked twice to meet me. The Archbishop Sergius (of Finland) who knew (from a letter of mine sent him by Fiodorov) “of my revolting ideas,” nevertheless,
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when "my Friend" was lying ill in the Evangelical Hospital after the third operation, came to visit her, and came by the request of the Metropolitan Antonius, who had never seen her, and who has met me only twice or three times—and not at all on intimate terms. And delicacy everywhere, refinement everywhere: and this after my terrible hostility towards them, after my perfectly intolerable accusations. But now take laymen: what abuses did they not shower on me ("he's a Peredonov," "a trickster," "one can't sit with him at the same table and work," etc., etc.), when I only quite gently stroked them (their party) the wrong way. From this I realized how much warmer the Church is than worldly people en masse: sincerer, heartier, more placable, more forgiving. And if there was fire there (the inquisition), yet it was not the stake of the positivists: cold, and with cold iron. . . .

And I threw myself on the Church (1911, the end): the Church: the only warm, the last warm place on earth. . . .

Here is my biography and destiny.

(Dec. 9, 1911.)

* * *

P.S.—A religious man is above a sage, above a poet, above a conqueror and orator. He who prays will conquer all, and saints will be the conquerors of the world.

I am returning to the Church! I am returning! I am returning.

(Dec. 9, 1911.)

P.P.S.—Never shall my foot be on the same floor with positivists—never! Never! And never will I breathe the same air with them in one room!

P.P.P.S.—Better superstition, better silliness, better
ROZANO

ignoreance, but with prayer. Religion, or nothing. It is the struggle and the cross, the staff and the stick, the spear and the grave.

But I believe the saints will conquer.

P.P.P.P.S.—The best people whom I have met, nay, whom I have discovered in life: my "Friend," the great "granny," "uncle," Mme. N. R. Scherbov, Mme. A. A. Albov, Father Oustyinsky—all of them were religious; the most profound intellects—Florinsky and Rzy—are religious. Surely this must mean something. My choice is made.

Prayer—or nothing.

Or:

Prayer—and play.
Prayer—and feasts.
Prayer—and dances.

But in the core of everything—prayer.

If there is a "praying man"—everything is permissible.

If he is not—nothing is permissible.

That is my credo—and may I go down with it to the grave.

I shall begin the great dance of prayer. With long trumpets, with music, with everything: and everything will be permissible, for everything will be forgiven through prayer. We shall do everything, because after all that we shall bow to God. But we shall not do what is superfluous, nothing "Karamzovian": for even in our dances we shall remember God and shall not want to grieve him.

"God is with us"—that is eternal.

* * *

Traffic, traffic everywhere, in literature, in politics—traffic in fame; traffic in money; and yet the priests are criticized for "selling wax candles" and "church
SOLITARIA

oil.”  But their “trade” forms only one-tenth and they are not enlightened, while the laymen’s trade forms nine-tenths, despite their being “enlightened.”

(Dec. 13, 1911.)

*  *  *

Why am I so angry with the radicals?
I don’t know myself.
Do I love the conservatives?
No.
What’s the matter with me?  I don’t know.  I can’t make it out.

(Dec. 14, 1911.)

*  *  *

On August 26, 1910, I became old all at once.
For twenty years I had stood in the “sunlight.”
And all of a sudden it was nine o’clock at night.
Now I want nothing, long for nothing.  Only the grave is in my mind.

(Dec. 14, 1911.)

*  *  *

No interest whatever in the future.
For no interest will be shared by “my Friend.”
An interest is possible for “a couple”; for one—there is no interest.
For one there’s only the grave.

(Dec. 14, 1911.)

*  *  *

Indeed, I am too monstrously lazy to read.  For instance, of Filosopov’s article about me (in the Annual) I’ve read only the first page; and only this year, looking through my books (to dust them, to arrange them) I came across that book, opened it and read the end of the article, without getting up from the floor (he says many true things there).  But why, I ask myself, do I read so little?
ROZANOV

A thousand reasons; yet the main reason is this: reading prevents me from thinking. My head is essentially "dizzy," and I have not the power to escape from that dizziness.

I greedily (madly) read when at school; but even at the University I never went further than the beginning of a book (Mommsen, Bluntschli).

Essentially I was born a pilgrim—a pilgrim-preacher. So in Judea a whole street used to start prophesying. Now I am one of those; i.e., of the men in the street (average men) and yet "a prophet" (without the mission to change, for instance, the destiny of the people). Prophecy in my case has no reference to Russians, I mean, it is not a circumstance in our people's history; but is my private concern, and it refers only to myself (having no significance or influence); it is a detail of my biography.

I decidedly cannot stop, cannot abstain from speech (writing): and all which prevents me from doing so I impatiently brush aside (business matters), or I let it drop from my hands (books).

This speech (whispering) constitutes my "literature." Hence so many mistakes: to go up to a book and to open it with the idea of consulting it is much more difficult for me than to write an article. "Writing" is pleasure, but "consulting" is disgusting to me. In the former case my "wings soar up," in the latter—I must work; and I am an eternal idler.

And I found comfort in this acknowledged position, to which all have given their consent: that "the world, on the whole, is my conception." According to that premise I am not at all bound to "make certain" and to write history and geography correctly but to write "as I conceive it." If there had been no
SOLITARIA

Schopenhauer, I should perhaps feel ashamed; but as there is Schopenhauer I am "all right."

Of Schopenhauer (Strakhov's translation) I have read only the first half of the first page (having paid three roubles for the copy); but there on the first line it says: The World as my Conception.

"That's fine," I thought idly. Let us "conceive" that it is very difficult to read on any further, and for me altogether unnecessary.

(Dec. 14, 1911.)

* * *

The grave . . . do you know that its meaning will conquer a whole civilization. . . .

That is, here is a plain . . . a field, no one and nothing there. . . . Save a little mound of earth, under which a man is buried. And these two words: "man buried," "man died," with their overwhelming meaning, with their great meaning, with their mournful meaning . . . overcome whole planets—and are more important than all the Atillas and their historians.

Those were just trampling over one spot. . . . But a man has died, and we don't even know—who: this is so terribly sad, desperate . . . that our whole idea of civilization is as it were tumbling down, and we don't want "Atillas and their historians," but only to sit down on the little mound (on the grave) and to howl on it humbly, like a dog. . . .

Oh, it is here that pride vanishes.
A cursed quality.
It is not for nothing that I have always hated thee.

(Dec. 14, 1911.)

* * *

An expensive coffin was being carried along and the crowd stepped over "puddles" and over the
ROZANOV

flowers, which dropped from the hearse: the mourners were being hurried and jolted along. And I, driving by in a cab and also being jolted, thought: "this is how they will carry you too, Vasili." I vividly imagined my rather stupid face, pale then (now it is always red), and parched lips, and my little beard with its miserable hair, and the public trying to "avoid the puddles," and cursing when they stepped into them; and one of them is dreadfully upset because he cannot smoke; and I from my coffin sympathize awfully with him for not "being allowed" to smoke; and if the service had not been held on me and were it not such an official moment when "I am obliged to lie down," I would quietly push a cigarette into his hand.

I know from personal experience that it is just at a funeral that one wants to smoke so dreadfully.

And the hearse went on, went on for a long time. "Well, good-bye, Vasili; it is rotten, old boy, in the earth; and you lived rottenly, old boy. It would be easier for you to lie in the earth if you had lived better. And this in a state of iniquity too." . . .

Lord, how can I die in a state of iniquity. . . .

And I am in a state of iniquity.

(Dec. 14, 1911.)

* * *

Yes: perhaps we live all our life long in order to be worthy of the grave. But we become aware of this only when approaching the grave: before "it never even occurs to us."

(Dec. 14, 1911.)

* * *

Sixty times only, in the luckiest possible case, could I have stood "with candles" through the all night service of Christmas: how could I miss then even one Christmas?!!

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Also: sixty Easters!!! So few. Only sixty Christmases!!! How then could even one be missed?!!
This is the reason for "going to Church" and for a "regular course of life," with parents, with a wife, with children.
I am fifty-six; and I have hardly stood twelve times "with the candles."
And it is all too late now: I am fifty-six!

(Dec. 14, 1911.)

* * *

How hollow is my rebellion against Christianity: I ought to have lived a good life, and I had been given (for twenty years) very favourable conditions. But I spoilt everything with my "works." A miserable writer, not needed by anyone—and it serves me right that I am not needed.

(Dec. 14, 1911.)

* * *

The Church is the only poetic, the only profound thing on earth. God, what madness it was that for eleven years I made every possible effort to destroy the Church.
And how fortunate that I failed.
What would the earth be like without the Church? It would suddenly lose its meaning and get cold.
Chinizelli’s Circus, the Little Theatre, the Moscow Art Theatre, the daily newspaper Ryetch, meetings and their orators, "one could flirt with an actress," one died, the other was born, and we all "drink tea": and I actually could think that that was enough. Directly I did not think so, but indirectly I did.

(Dec. 14, 1911.)

* * *

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ROZANOV

Let God give me another three, or four, or five years (and “her” too): I will light my “Church candle” and will not drop it out of my hands until I reach the grave. My former life was madness; not for nothing did “my Friend” object so much to my friendship with the decadents. Empty people; without meaning; not needed by Russia. “May the fame of authors blow on them.” A few of them may be talented, but it is no matter. It is no matter from the point of view of Kostroma, of Yeletz, of what is concrete, vital. I ought to have been with Peredolsky, with Titov, Maksimov: those were men, those were Russians. But “poems” will vanish, even before the paper rots away.

(Dec. 14, 1911.)

* * *

Carry on, carry on, dear fellows: there is no help, I am dead. Don’t jolt me very much. Still, never mind if you do. I have been jolted all my life long. I should like to smoke, but it is rather inconvenient: an official situation. A corpse in his coffin must lie “at attention.” I have been standing “at attention” all my life long (the devil knows before whom). Dig me in quickly please, and go to the devil with your officialism. I am bound to crumple my shroud in the earth and kick out my knee. They will say to me: “Come along to the last judgment.” And I shall say: “I won’t go.” “Why, are you afraid?” “Not in the least, but I simply don’t want to go. I want to smoke a cigarette. Give me a coal from hell to light a cigarette.” “Have you got Stamboli’s cigarettes?” “Certainly, Stamboli’s.” “Here they smoke mostly Asmolov’s. A national tobacco.”

(Dec. 15, 1911.)

* * *

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SOLITARIA

"Well, and would not you like to have a few girls?"
"No."
"Why not?"
"What a reputation they have given me: even 'there' (on earth) if I did indulge in that way, I did it really for the sake of 'experiments.' I mean, I observed and studied. But that I did it 'for my own pleasure' was hardly the case."
"Well, and what is the conclusion?"
"The conversation has nothing to do with this department. Change the subject."

(Dec. 16, 1911.)

* * *

For the last year and a half I have been half-alive. Depressing, sad. Terrible. For several months I have not got out my coins (to look at them). Am only making a weekly fifty or eighty roubles: but no interest whatever in what I write.

(Dec. 16, 1911.)

* * *

The Press. The Press is a machine-gun fired by an idiotic non-com. And what a number of Don Quixotes he will have killed before they get at him. Or perhaps they will never get at him. Finis and the grave.

(Dec. 16, 1911.)

* * *

"Social ideals!" they are shouting all round; "the emergence of the social element in literature;" "the awakening of the social interest."

Perhaps I understand nothing; but when I meet a man with "a social interest," it is not that I am bored, it is not that I bear ill-will towards him, but in his company I am simply dying. "I feel wet all
ROZANOV

over” and melted away: neither mind, nor will, nor words, nor soul.
I am dead.
And I awake, and open my eyes, when I guess or suspect that “social interest” has jumped out of the man (my neighbour, fellow-man).
At school when I wanted to punch someone’s head, or to trick someone—I wanted it without any “social interest,” but simply because I felt sad and things were uncomfortable.
And a “social order” I wanted without any “social interest,” but merely: “we shall move into another street” and “I shall provide myself with a girl” (when at school I always longed for a girl).
Why then am I so stifled when people talk of “social interest.” It is as though they were talking about the migration of jackdaws. “They fled to the north,” “they fled to the south.”
“Oh, do fly, dears, wherever you like; I don’t want to know.”
Or: “Men march to their goals”; but I know that a “march” is conditioned by the road, and not by the men who march. And that’s why these little jackdaws are so boring.
And again—I can’t bear the mere noise. And where there are jackdaws there is always a noise.

(Dec. 18, 1911.)

* * *

How God loves me that he has given “her” to me.

(Dec. 19, 1911.)

* * *

Life is setting, setting. And this setting can’t be arrested. And I have no desire to arrest it.
How everything has changed in meaning in accordance with this situation.

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I no longer want merriment, pleasures. Oh, not in the least. An hour has come in which virtue is sweeter than enjoyment. I never thought it, never supposed it.

(Dec. 21, 1911.)

*   *   *

I've finished the Christmas article. "My Friend" has fallen asleep. . . . Past four in the morning. And there is Good Friday in my soul.

(Dec. 23, 1911.)

*   *   *

If anyone will say a word of praise at my open grave, I'll get out of my coffin and smack his face.

(Dec. 28, 1911.)

*   *   *

No man is worthy of praise. Every man is only worthy of compassion.

(Dec. 29, 1911.)

*   *   *