

spheres that were now cribbed and confined and commonplace. In either he was imprisoned beneath a low ceiling — the ceiling of his home, or the scarcely higher ceiling of the mapped mechanism at the other end of his telescope.

And like the stars, Lolita, that other celestial body, became but one more prisoner in the world's meshes.

The stars? What were the stars now for him? That depended. In the geometry of the heavens they were points; in physical astronomy they were suns and worlds. By a simple

change of mental attitude they were converted from mere points to enormous spheres plunging at incredible speed through space. But the stars as he first knew them were now but vague memories of his ignorant youth. He no longer saw the firmament except through complicated and delicate apparatus which it required great skill to manipulate and which served only to confirm or correct some formula in that great dome that is the firmament on a clear night. But the stars themselves he had ceased to see, now that he had become an astronomer at last.

## JUST MEMORIES<sup>1</sup>

BY E. D. KUSKOVA

ONCE, back in the nineties, a hard-headed, unsentimental publisher said to me: —

'I do not see why I stay in this business. We've got plenty of people in Russia, more than a hundred million, but if I print a hundred thousand copies of a book I am worried day and night wondering how I am going to dispose of them. If I sell a thousand copies, I call it fair business. Yet we have such a multitude of people!'

A year or two ago I was talking to another Russian publisher, who said to me: —

'Do you know, a good book is fairly snatched out of our hands. If we had capital enough to do it, we could print and sell hundreds of thousands. Not long ago an old economist printed his

work in an edition of eight thousand copies. We sold it out within a month. The second edition was fifteen thousand copies, and it is already nearly gone.'

'Who reads such books?' I asked.

'Mostly students in the Workmen's Study Courses. You know, they resent the patronizing way the "real" students treat them. The latter say to them: "Go and learn your multiplication table!" That makes these young working people study to the limit. They labor all day long unloading wood barges or driving garbage wagons, and pore over their books all night. They're half dead by morning, but they learn something.'

People from the poor tenements at the back of the house where we lived in Moscow in 1917 crowded around me in the yard. It was in October. The

<sup>1</sup> From *Sovremennaya Zapiski* (Paris Russian-language Liberal bimonthly)

Bolshevist revolution was already in full swing. I had been away for several months, and was startled by the change in the manner of the people. First of all was their attitude. They looked like a different race. Our yard-boy stood leaning against the door, his legs crossed, his whole position and expression indicating conscious independence and self-confidence. His manner of speaking also was different.

'The Provisional Government blundered badly, lady — blundered badly. No doubt about it. They ought to have called upon the people for advice. If they had done so, I have no doubt that the people would have prevented this disorder.'

I did not understand at first what he meant by the people and by disorder. The fellow had hitherto been simply 'Peter' to me. But who was he now? A Bolshevik? I asked him a few questions. He explained: —

'Certainly it is disorder. They've invented a Constitutional Assembly. Nobody can understand that. They ought to have called in the people and said to them, "Help us!"'

'But, Peter, the Constitutional Assembly means calling in the people. Whatever they said would have been done.'

'But what can our people say? Their minds are dark. They've no education. And you thought up some Constitutional Assembly for them! All you ought to have done was to say: "Come and help us. We've done a common job, and if you help us we'll give you so-and-so."'

The bystanders listened and nodded their heads in assent. One or two said: 'He's talking sense, Peter is. Your Constitutional Assembly only mixes things up. People go to meetings and shout, and nothing comes of it.'

'But what do you think ought to come of it? What's the job we want done?'

'First of all, the authorities ought to have ended the war. They didn't want to. Well, that's why they're now — hm! — out of it. Again, the peasants grabbed the land, everyone for himself, without any order or system, and what kind of government allows that? If thou art a minister of the Government, thou must show people how each should take his piece of land in a regular way. What order can there be unless you do that? Yes. And as to your Constitutional Assembly — the Constitutional Assembly is no surveyor, is it?'

I have seldom found myself in a position harder to defend; and this was in the very heart of Moscow. What were the people saying out in the villages? I remembered the sober faces of the members of some country coöperative society who had come to Moscow and had said to me: —

'This is bad business. The people do not understand. The other day the peasant women harried us half to death at the zemstvo elections. "How much will they pay us," they asked, "for walking all the way down here to vote? We cannot wear out our shoes for nothing. Filling out blanks! They want blanks! What do I know about blanks? Fuddling our brains for nothing! If they gave me a cow, I'd understand that." Then, the speakers sent out to the villages are no good. One of them came to our place and spoke about self-determination for small nationalities, and counted out five or six liberties to us. Suddenly an old peasant got up, stroked his beard, and asked: "Well, brother, why don't you tell us about hanging horse thieves? What good are your liberties if they don't stop stealing horses?" To this the speaker answered: "All right, let's write down a paragraph about stealing horses and sign it. Then the Constitutional Assembly will do what you want." "What non-

sense is that?" the old fellow with the beard continued. "What do you mean by paragraphs? I tell you, we want to hang them, and you talk about paragraphs." So you see, every Russian village has become a Tower of Babel. The people don't understand your big words and formulas. They want something simple and direct and practical.'

A half-starved government clerk with a big family and a salary of thirty-seven rubles a month lived for years in the basement of one of our tenements. He used to rent each corner of his rooms to a different lodger. His children were pale and puny. His quarters were filthy beyond description, alive with vermin and black with soot. Then the Bolsheviks seized power, and my government clerk put on new plumage overnight. He got a job in a paper factory, where he used to steal quantities of tissue paper, and his boys sold it on the sly at fabulous prices. The two eldest sons enlisted in the Red Army. He either sold or burned his old, broken-down furniture; he had new paper put on the walls, and the kitchen white-washed. Two of the rooms were finished in fiery red. He also had electric lights installed, and bought new clothes for the children, had flowers on the window-sills and rugs on the floors. But the family remained in their basement quarters. I never learned the source of all their opulence. They had meat every day, even in the worst times. When I questioned the clerk's wife about it, she answered modestly: 'It's from our rations.' I well remember the talk I had with this old clerk at the time when Denikin was said to be approaching Moscow. He asked me anxiously:—

'Is it possible, Ekaterina Dmitrievna?'

'Is what possible?'

'Denikin! Is it really true that he is getting close?'

'Perhaps.'

'Against the working people! Won't the Western proletariat help us?'

'How long have you been a member of the proletariat?' I asked.

'All my life. Every time my chief in the government office used to speak to me, I would hang my head and think: "Just wait, you scum. You'll get your deserts some day." And so help me God he did!'

A little later this fellow was appointed president of the house committee, as he was considered a reliable Communist. Every night an automobile stopped at the door. Many a time I felt a thrill of fear when I heard it. I imagined it might be a requisition party. But no! The driver would hastily unload firewood, kerosene, alcohol, and carry them into one of the poorer tenements. Every morning there was secret trading at incredible prices, and the people grew visibly richer daily. One day I stopped the elegant, highly painted young Anna Petrovna as she was fluttering out of their apartment and asked her to request her nightly guests not to make so much noise with their motor, as my husband was ill.

'I could n't speak to the man that way,' she said mysteriously and naively. 'He's one of the biggest fellows in the Red Cross.'

'Are n't you afraid you'll be stood up against the wall for speculating?'

'No, they won't shoot us. He's one of the biggest.'

One night the gate creaked. There was no automobile, but several men entered the yard and knocked at the door of the former government clerk.

'We are from the Cheka. Show us immediately into the most expensive apartments.'

'Believe me or not, comrades, there are poor people everywhere here—'

little tenements — proletarians every one of them. Perhaps you might call at Numbers 1 and 2. They are bourgeois apartments.'

Number 2 was where we lived. They promptly appeared, eight men or so, with revolvers and rifles.

'Give us whatever valuables you have, and be quick about it.'

I took them into the library and showed them our books.

'Don't try to make a joke of this. What do we want of your waste paper.'

'But they are the only valuable things we have.'

'Nonsense. You probably got something under the floor. I imagine, some seventeen poods of family silver.'

'Search for yourself. We sold everything.'

They immediately began tearing things to pieces in their quest for what they sought.

'Citizen,' I said, 'where is your warrant?'

'You'll get your warrant in the future life.'

'Would n't you like a cup of tea? The samovar is ready.'

The invitation simply struck them dumb. They stared at each other, shuffled their feet, and stopped hunting.

'Well — please — We're tired out walking all over the town every night.'

So we sat down together at table. Their faces assumed an entirely different expression — they were simply broad, childish, Russian peasant faces. I asked them where they came from.

'Mostly from Vladimir. Land's very scarce there, so we enlisted instead.'

'Do you think what you are doing is good service? After all, you are taking away people's property.'

'Property? They ought to give us anything valuable they have of their own free will. The Red Army is fighting against the generals and landlords. We can't let them get back. They've

had their good times — now we are masters. That's the whole story. They can never put us out again. Their game is over.'

We fled from the dirt and litter of the city for an outing in the vicinity of Moscow. I went up to a peasant woman standing in the doorway and asked her to sell us some milk.

'They won't let us sell it. Everything that we don't need ourselves the Committee takes for the children and the soldiers.'

'We only want a drink.'

'Well, come in.'

It was wonderfully rich milk, and it had been so long since we had tasted any. She studied us attentively and, asking whether we were from the city, inquired: —

'Well, how are things there?'

'What do you mean?'

'Well — the Bolsheviki, the scoundrels — will they be driven out soon?'

'Not very soon. Do you care?'

'Why, of course. Those robbers have driven us into a tight corner, sure enough — the scum!'

'Why did you put them in power, then? You peasants and working people did it.'

The buxom *baba* laughed heartily.

'Sure we did. We did it ourselves. No one else had a hand. It was interesting at first.'

'What was interesting?'

'To see the people there beat it for their dear lives,' she said, pointing to a big house beyond the grove. 'A countess lived there. It served her right! In the old days she used to come here and talk, and talk, and talk, until you felt like spitting in her face — yet we had to stand her.'

'Yet you say it is bad enough now.'

'It could n't be worse. We're hiding everything underground. We have to. But it was interesting at first.'

# THE QUIANT ENGLISH OF JAPAN<sup>1</sup>

BY ISAMU SUZUNO

IF we teachers in Japan kept a notebook always with us, and troubled to jot down every charming thing that we heard expressed by Japanese students, we should soon have our book crammed full of delightful little gems of thought.

I venture to place some such memoranda before you quite uncorrected; and if my reader does not find something that touches his heartstrings in some of them, then he must indeed miss a great deal of the joy of living in Japan. The following short essays were written mostly by middle-school boys and youthful university students of Tokyo.

'I live! I bathe in sunlight, and breathe in the clear atmosphere; I live! Truly I live! See, that beautifully colored arch of a sky! And see, this black earth on which these naked feet of mine walk with firm step! Luxuriant trees and grasses, flying and frisking birds and beasts, and better still — the love of little children. Ah, I would live, I would live! Up to this day I have known many, many griefs; but it is because the more I suffer the more I like this world. Life, I cling to you!

'Lovable world! I would play in the forests of my dreams. I want to live for a thousand years, forever! May I dream on, and on forever!'

'My school broke up on the 18th of July, and I started for my home on

<sup>1</sup> From the *Japan Times and Mail* (Tokyo English-language daily), weekly edition, August 19

that day. My mother and sisters were waiting for me near the end of the village, and as soon as they saw me they ran up to me. They embraced me, and how happy was I. We were happiness itself. I stayed at my home all the summer vacation. I did not climb the high mountains, and to the sea shore I did not go. We could not delight ourselves on a ship, feeling the fanning cool breeze of the great ocean; but only in true friendship and in our love did I spend this summer vacation, and we spent a thousand times more of happy days.'

'I dream, I dream of her, a fair one of mine. She is here —

She is not as intelligent as a small bird,  
She can feel the true grief and gladness  
Even if it is a small grief.

She loves the beauty of the things in form . . .

And the things of no form.

She knows the soft words and she knows  
The manners of the people of "Yedo."  
She is pure as a pink shell at the gray sea-shore.

But, my dream wife dies; she dies  
As the morning glory's flower dies,

In the evening, before her beauty goes from her

She dies — perfumingly.

I dream — I dream.

But, Ah! — nowhere is she — in this world;

She is only the wife of my sweet dreams.'

"Hana" is the name of our maid-