

Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma

Review

Reviewed Work(s): Rossiya Krov'u Umytaya (Blood-Washed Russia) by Artem Vesely

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1933. 8 rubles. Binding 1 ruble 50 kopeks.—The emancipation of the Russian peasant woman, her awakening to citizenship, and her attainment of human dignity are stressed in this novel to proportions of obtrusive propaganda. The result is that artistic truth is violated; the reader has a distinct impression of gross exaggeration and of biased selection of examples; the characters become less convincing as the novel progresses.

The action begins in the eighties of the past century, in Western Siberia, and continues, skipping forty years, through the War and Revolution, to the establishment of the Soviet State. Thus, its first half has the glamor and picturesqueness of an historical novel, and the whole shows the changes undergone by society in general and the peasant woman in particular in our time.

There are here and there powerful scenes, and there is much valuable material which, if organized with greater skill and presented in a more artistic way, would be very impressive and instructive.—*Sophie R. A. Court.* Norman, Oklahoma.

● N. Kotchin. *Devki* (Country Girls). Moscow. Sovetskaya Literatura. 1933.—It was inevitable that the Russian peasant woman should hear the bugle call of awakening Russia, and this novel portrays the changes that have come about in the status and psychology of the country girls in far-away villages.

Though dealing with the same general theme as Berezovski's *Bab'i Tropy*, Kotchin's story has none of that work's obtrusiveness and clumsy plot handling. *Devki* is written with that lively verve and humor, with that mixture of naïveté and shrewdness which characterize the Russian folk speech and folk literature. It is full of the idiomatic expressions, vivid imagery, lively limericks, and pointed proverbs of which the Russian peasant is so fond. The characters are well drawn. The inevitable greedy kulak is a man of power and vision, of conviction and stamina; though a public enemy because of his mistaken social outlook and selfish philosophy of personal enrichment, he still commands our respect, even when conquered at the end.

But the real heroine of the novel is Parunka, a clever, energetic, able country girl; her chum Marya—partly under her guidance—also becomes class conscious and free from superstitions.

The lot of peasant women under the old régime is portrayed vividly—with all its bitter subservience to the men, with all the defenseless, suffering reality.—*Sophie R. A. Court.* Norman, Oklahoma.

● Mikhail Tchumandrin. *Nochnaya Ulitsa* (The Night Street). Izdatelstvo Pisateley v Leningrade. 1933.—A little book of nine short stories of Berlin life, evidently during the winter of 1932-1933. The unemployed, the evicted, the recipients of the dole, the underpaid pass here in review and allow us to see some of their intimate affairs, some of their crushing worries, some of their deep sorrows and unbearable sufferings. Here and there we see an employee or a better paid workingman, comfortably situated in his snug, banal complacency, but even here, unknown to themselves, unemployment lurks and wait only waits for the propitious moment to raise its ugly head. The last story is told simply, yet with a tremendous power to move and stimulate the reader. It tells of an unexpected, sudden attack of Nazi storm-troopers upon a Communist funeral procession, November 13, when the comrades were burying one of their workers, killed in an encounter with the Nazis.

Needless to day, all the stories are written from the point of view of the German Communists.—*Sophie R. A. Court.* Norman, Oklahoma.

● Artem Vesely. *Rossiya Krov'u Umytaya* (Blood-washed Russia). Moscow. Sovetskaya Literatura. 1933.—The sparkling Russian humor, the depth of Russian sadness, and the sincerity and naïveté of Russian pathos combine to make this novel of Civil War a brilliant, powerful work of art. It deals with the elemental peasant movements that rocked Russia from the time of the Bolshevik seizure of power in October 1917 to the beginning of the period of stable Soviet power late in 1919. The action takes place beyond the Urals, in the backward villages, in the uncultivated steppes, and in the main town of the county—Klukvin.

The author makes good use of rich Russian idioms, of beautiful folk imagery, of ditties and limericks. There are scenes of wild merry-making, of bloody and savage encounters, of willful destruction, of chaos, of unbridled passions, of demagoguery and bureaucratic mismanagement, of highest idealism and of basest self-seeking, of powerful, thorough-

going purposefulness and social service, and of primitive, short-sighted, selfish greed. Nor is all the goodness and righteousness on the side of the Communists or all the evil in the camp of their opponents.

The novel is divided into two parts, called "Wings," and is designated on the title page as "Fragments." It really is fragmentary in construction, which necessarily impairs the unity of the story; but this very fragmentary nature makes each episode, each scene stand out more independently and gives the narrative an unforgettable vividness.—*Sophie R. A. Court*, Norman, Oklahoma.

● *Gustaf Strindberg. Mörkt och ljus.*

Stockholm. Bokförlaget Natur och Kultur. 1933. 5.50 kronor.—In this book Gustaf Strindberg, the nephew of August Strindberg, relates some of his experiences as a physician in the United States. His stories, however, concern themselves less with the technical side of a doctor's life than with the purely human element in his work. They vary greatly and give us glimpses into the lives of many types of persons—rich and poor, law-abiding and criminal, happy and wretched. Told with the directness of the eye witness and with the human sympathy of the man who shares the joys and the sorrows of his fellow men, they grip and hold the reader from beginning to end.—*Harry V. E. Palmblad*, Phillips University.

● *Dagmar Berg. Egyptiska profiler.* Stockholm. Bokförlaget Natur och Kultur. 1933.—These little sketches and stories, written by Dagmar Berg, since 1925 principal of the Girl's College in Cairo, portray in an interesting and instructive manner present-day Egypt. They give a clear insight into the social, political, and religious institutions of the country and the gradual changes brought about in these by the introduction of occidental ideas. In addition to the side-lights thrown throughout on woman's position in home and society, this burning question is given special treatment in the second part of the book. With a keen understanding of Egyptian character, the author gives us an impartial and at the same time sympathetic evaluation of the faults and virtues of the people. A number of excellent photographs add to the value of the work.—*Harry V. E. Palmblad*, Phillips University.



In his first Bull addressed to the entire Armenian nation, His Holiness Catholicos Khoren I, "Archbishop and Catholicos of all Armenians by the imponderable will of God," announces that under Soviet rule "the land of Ararat and the neighboring districts are daily advancing in constructive and scientific civilization, in every kind of economic enterprise and effort."

After a good deal of ethnological research and references to great German scholars, the leaders of Germany have come to the conclusion that the Armenian race is Aryan, with certain qualifications.—*Massis*, An Organ of Armenian Interests, March-April, 1934.

"Our national honor is the cloak for an immorality that has been outlawed in private life.—*Harry Emerson Fosdick*.

"Wherever the names of Caesar, Gaius, Trajan and Vergil, of Moses and Saint Paul, of Aristotle, Plato and Euclid, have had a simultaneous significance and authority, there is Europe. Every race and every land which has been successively Romanized, Christianized and submitted to the intellectual discipline of the Greeks, is absolutely European."—*Paul Valery*.

"The first conception, to which M. von Keyserling subscribes, is that of Saint Thomas: 'Grace transforms Nature, but does not destroy it.' The other, to which I myself rally, is that of the author of the *Imitation*: 'Grace is not communicated to those who keep their taste for terrestrial things.'"—Julien Benda, speaking at a meeting under the auspices of the League of Nations.

Function of the American University, according to the foremost American poet: "It keeps a lot of nice boys out of the labor market."—*Ezra Pound*, in *Morada*.

"If the Fascists don't make Socialism for us, who will?"—*Drieu La Rochelle*.

Poems by Norman Macleod have recently appeared in translation in four Japanese reviews, *The Window*, *The Interior*, *Fushin*, and *The New Spirit*. He has also been lately translated in *Esprit du Temps* (Brussels), in *Signo* (Lima), in the Russian and German editions, as well as the English, of *International Literature* and in four Italian literary magazines: *Lyrice*, *Augustea*, *L'Orsa*, and *Espero*.

The Academia Press in Moscow has brought out a translation of the *Pickwick Papers* in an attractive two-volume edition.