

**Ilia
Chavchavadze
works**

**TRANSLATED BY
MARJORY AND OLIVER
WARDROPS**

GANATLEBA PUBLISHERS. TBILISI-1987

The book features some works of Ilia Chavchavadze translated into English by brother and sister Oliver and Marjory Wardrop. The translations have not lost their literary value to the present day. The publication is intended as a gift to the Georgian reader in connection with the 150th anniversary celebrations of the birth of the outstanding Georgian writer and public figure.

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წინასიტყვაობა

ყველასათვის კარგადაა ცნობილი მარჯორი და ოლივერ უორდროპების განსაკუთრებული ყურადღება ქართული სულიერი კულტურისადმი. მათ არა ერთი და ორი ლიტერატურული ძეგლი თარგმნეს და მრავლისმცოდნე ინგლისელ მკითხველს წარმოედნა შეუქმნეს დიდი ტრადიციების მქონე ქართულ ლიტერატურაზე. შემთხვევით არ იყო უორდროპთა სულიერი სიახლოვე ჩვენი ერის ისეთ დიდ შვილთან, როგორც ილია ჭავჭავაძე იყო. ეს გულწრფელი სიახლოვე ჩვენი დიდი მწერლის მთელი რიგი მხატვრული ნაწარმოებების მათ მიერ შესრულებული ინგლისური თარგმანებითაც დადასტურდა. სიყვარულითა და მოწიწებითაა შესრულებული ილიასეულ თხზულებათა უორდროპისეული თარგმანები. დღემდე მკითხველი საზოგადოებისათვის ცნობილი იყო ილიას «განდეგილის» მარჯორ უორდროპისეული ინგლისური თარგმანი (ლონდონი, 1895 წ.). უკანასკნელ ხანს (1981,1984 წწ.) გურამ შარაძის მიერ ოქსფორდის ბოდლის ბიბლიოთეკის უორდროპების ფონდში დაცული მთელი რიგი თარგმანების გამოლენამ ნათელი მოჰფინა უორდროპისეული თარგმანების უფრო ვრცელ მასშტაბებს. წინამდებარე წიგნში წარმოდგენილი ნიმუშებიდან «განდეგილის» გარდა, პირველად ხდება ხელმისაწვდომი მკითხველი საზოგადოებისათვის «მეზავრის წერილები», «კაცია ადამიანი?!» (ფრაგმენტები), «გლახის ნაამბობის» რამდენიმე თავი, ილიას «ავტობიოგრაფია», ხოლო ილიას პოეტური მემკვიდრეობიდან «გაზაფხული», «მძინარე ქალი», «ელეგია», «ვაი მას, ვისაც ვამლევდი მსხვეპლად», ნაწყვეტი «აჩრდილიდან» («არავს»), «ბაზალეთის ტბა» (შემოკლებული ვარიანტი).

აღნიშნულ თარგმანთა ტექსტების გამოსაცემად მომზადებულია ოქსფორდში დაცული ავტოგრაფების მიხედვით, რომელთა ქსეროასლები ინგლისიდან ჩამოიტანა და გამოსაცემად გადმოგვცა გ. შარაძემ. «განდეგილის» ტექსტი ქვეყნდება 1895 წელს ლონდონში განხორციელებული პუბლიკაციის მიხედვით, რომელიც დღეს ბიბლიოგრაფიულ იშვიათობას წარმოადგენს.

ყველაზე დიდი ღირსება ამ თარგმანებისა ჩვენთვის, ალბათ, მაინც მათი შინაგანი სითბო და სიყვარულია, რომელსაც არასოდეს დაივიწყებს მაღლიერი ქართველი ერი.

ია ფოფხაძე

PREFACE

The special interest shown by, Marjory and Oliver Wardrop for Georgian spiritual culture is well known. By translating a number of literary works they gave the versatile English reader an idea of Georgian literature with its centuries — old tradition.

The spiritual affinity of the Wardrops with Ilia Chavchavadze, a great son of Georgia, was not accidental. Their genuine sympathy was confirmed by the translation of the eminent Georgian writer's literary works, which they did with affection and reverence.

Hitherto the reading public was aware only of Marjory Wardrop's English translation of Ilia's "The Hermit" (London 1895). In recent years (1981, 1984) Prof. Guram Sharadze has discovered some other translations in the Wardrop collection of the Bodleian Library, at Oxford pointing to a broader scale of the translational activity of the Wardrops. Apart from "The Hermit", the following renderings of Ilia's prose are presented for the first time here: "Notes of a Journey from Vladikavkaz to Tiflis", "Is that a Man?!" (fragments), "The Sportsman's story" (several chapters)," Autobiography".

Chavchavadze's poetic heritage is represented by these titles: "Spring", "The Sleeping Maid", "Elegy", "Ah!... She — to whom My Dear Desires..." an extract from the poem "The Vision" ("O our Aragva"), "Bazalethi's Lake" (abridged).

The texts of these translations were prepared for publication according to the autographs preserved at Oxford, the xeroxed copies of which were brought from England by Prof. Sharadze and kindly transferred to the present writer for publication. The text of "The Hermit" is published according to the London edition of 1895, the latter now being a rare book.

Today the greatest merit of these translations would seem to lie in the inner warmth and affection with which they were done, which will always be remembered by the grateful Georgian people.

IA POPKHADZE

Autobiography

I was born on October 27 (o. s.) 1837 in the village of Kwareli^{*}, in the district of Telavi, in the province of Tiflis in the region comprising also the district of Signakh, called Cakheti. My father (Grigol) was a man of some education, he served as an officer in the Nizhegorod dragoons and had a good knowledge of the Russian language.

My mother was remarkable for her intimate acquaintance with the Georgian literature of her day, she knew almost by heart nearly all the poetry and all the ancient tales and stories then to be found in manuscript and print. She loved to read in the evenings to us her children stories and tales, and after reading would tell them over again in her own words and in the next evening whoever of us repeated best what he had heard the night before was rewarded by her praise, which we greatly prized.

I began my studies by learning my native Georgian language with the deacon of the parish at the age of eight. This deacon was distinguished for his knowledge of Georgian; he was famous as a good reader of the holy books and was especially gifted with the fascination of a splendid narrator. His stories, suited to the childish comprehension in form and substance, dealt with separate episodes of the religious, but more particularly the civic history of our country and consisted of narrations of various heroic exploits in defence of the faith and fatherland. Many of these tales left an impression on my memory and served me many years afterwards as subjects for a poem, "Dimitri the Self-sacrificing" and a short Christmas story. Some passages in my Story of a Beggar exhibit marks of this influence. I learned my lessons at the deacon's with the peasant children of my native village, of whom there were only five or six as far as I recollect. We all lived at home and only came from morning till midday. So far as I remember we only spent an hour a day learning to read and write, and all the rest of the time till noon was spent in games under the supervision and guidance of the deacon, and especially, in listening to his alluring stories.

In my eleventh year my father took me to Tiflis and sent me to Raevski and Hacke's boarding-school, then the best of all the private schools in Tiflis. I was fifteen when from this Boarding-school I proceeded to the fourth class in the Tiflis Grammar School, still remaining as a boarder in the former house, which was now managed by Hacke alone.

Hacke was a German, a thoroughly educated man in every way. He had been engaged from Germany by Neidhart, who was at that time commander of the detached Caucasian Corps, for the education of his children, and after the termination of his engagement with Neidhart he opened a boarding school with Raevski who had been previously engaged in educational work in Tiflis. Hacke, though, strict and exacting, was so paternally attentive to his pupils, so painstaking and anxious for their moral and intellectual development, that he devoted to them nearly all, his time after school hours, conversing with them, diverting them with music, giving them improvised concerts on the pianoforte, which he played to perfection.

Having gone through the eighth class of the Grammar School and not passed the final examination in 1857 I entered the University of St. Petersburg as a student of the then-existing cameral section of the Faculty of Jurisprudence, and in 1861, when I was in my fourth year of residence, I left the University in consequence of the so-called "Student Affair" (political) of that period.

In 1863 I founded the journal "Sakarthvelos Moambe" (Georgia's Messenger) which only lasted a year. In the same year 1863 I married Princess Olga Guramishvili.

At the beginning of 1864, when the reform for the liberation of the peasants in the district of the Viceroy of the Caucasus was planned, I was sent to act in the province of Kutais as official private Secretary to the Governor General of Kutais, in order to determine the nature of the

^{*} The translator's style and spelling of Georgian and Russian names are preserved intact.

mutual relations between landlords and peasants arising from the servile dependence of the latter on the former.

In November of the same year, 1864, the liberation of the peasants from servile dependence had already been effected in the province of Tiflis and I was appointed Arbitrator of the Peace in the Dushet district of the province of Tiflis and in that office I remained down to the year 1868, when upon the introduction of the new judicial organization in the Caucasus I was given the office of Justice of the Peace in the same district of Dushet. In this latter office I remained till 1874. I think it may not be superfluous to remark here that the nobility of the province of Tiflis, having received on the abolition of servile dependence an imperial grant for the personal liberation of the peasants, a part of this grant was allotted for the establishment of a credit institution, capable of meeting the need for a regularly organized system of credit, and especially with the proviso that its profits should be exclusively devoted to the education and instruction of the children of the nobility of the province of Tiflis. After much hesitation in this search for a suitable form of credit institution, the nobility in 1874, on my advice, decided upon the establishment of a Land Bank and entrusted a special Committee, of which I was elected a member, to draw up the statute. The statute formulated by the committee in accordance with the models supplied by the Government for their guidance and passed in the same year 1874 by the nobility differs from all other statutes of land banks in this noteworthy peculiarity, that all the profits of the Bank, excluding the obligatory deductions on account of sundry capital sums, are applied to the satisfaction of the common needs not only of the landowning nobility but of the agricultural population of the province of Tiflis. Thus, the Land Bank of the Tiflis Nobility is probably the only agrarian credit institution in all the Russian Empire whose statute entirely eliminates the personal interest of gain for the sake of attaining aims of a social character.

In the same year 1874 the nobility commissioned me to proceed to St. Petersburg and procure the confirmation of the statute they had passed and in consequence of this I retired from the Government Service.

The statute with the above mentioned peculiarity was confirmed by Government in 1875, From that year the Bank began its operations and from a founder's capital of only 240 000 roubles (£ 24 000) it has now (1902) reached such a position that it yields a yearly profit of over 360 000 roubles (£ 36 000), in spite of the fact that all the founder's capital subscribed by noblemen, has already been paid back to the nobility. From the day of the opening of the Bank down to the present time I have been President of the Board of the Bank. This office is elective and tenable for a term of three years.*

In 1877 I founded a weekly Georgian newspaper "Iveria", which afterwards became a monthly magazine, and from 1885 a daily political and literary paper. In 1902 I handed over the paper to another person who now edits it.

Of my works in translations by various hands there are in Russian only some short verses and one poem "The Hermit" in Mr. Tchorzewsky's version. The Russian translations of my verses are partly comprised in a separate collection published in Tiflis, and partly appeared in "Russkaya Mysl", "Zhivopisnoe Obozrenie" "Viestnik Evropy" and I forget where else.

My poem "The Hermit" was translated into English (verse) by Miss Marjory Wardrop and also into French (prose). German translations of some of my short pieces in verse were put into the collection first published at Leipzig in 1886 by Arthur Leist under the title "Georgesche Dichter" and re-issued at Dresden in 1900. Critical notices duly appeared in the local Russian newspapers "Kavkaz" and "Novoe Obozrenie", and as well as I can recollect, in the metropolitan journals "Russkaya Mysl" and "Zhivopisnoe Obozrenie", also in another Moscow periodical the name of which, to my regret I have forgotten.

Abroad, criticisms were inserted in some German periodicals including, the "Litterarisches Echo" and in the "Academy" and the Italian review "Nuova Antologia" No. VI of

* By 1907 a private Grammar school was supported from the profits of the Bank, with a boarding - house for children of the poorest among the nobility and a day school for children of all classes; also an agricultural school for children of all classes.

1900 Notices with reference to my public and literary work are found in "Le Caucase Illustre", Tiflis 1902.

In 1877 I was elected Vice President of the Imperial Agricultural Society and held that office for some time, and I was elected President of the Georgian Dramatic Society from 1881 to 1884. I am President of the Society for the Propagation of Literacy among the Georgians since 1886, I was member of the committee of the Society of the Nobility of the province of Tiflis for the Assistance of Necessitous Scholars. I have taken part, whether by invitation or election, in almost all committees charged with the ...

My literary labours began in 1857 with the printing in the magazine "Tziscari" (The Dawn) of short verses, then my works appeared in the newspaper "Droeba" (Time), "Crebuli" (the Garner), in "Sakartvelos Moambe" (Georgian Messenger) and "Iveria" both of which I founded) and partly in the now-existing magazine "Moambe".

In addition to shorter verses, I have written some poems: "Episodes from the Life of a Brigand", "The Vision", "Dimitri the Self Sacrificing"; "The Hermit" and a dramatic sketch "Mother and Son". Of my tales I may mention: 1) "Katzia Adamiani?!" (Is that a man?!) printed in 1863 in "Georgia's Messenger" and afterwards published in Petersburg by the Society of Georgian students, 2) "The Story of a Beggar" printed in the same journal and in the same year, which also appeared as a separate work; 3) Scenes from the early days "of the emancipation of the peasants", printed in 1865 in "Crebuli" and afterwards published separately. 4) "Letters of a Traveller" printed in 1864, also in "Crebuli", 5) "The Widow of the House of Otar" 1888; 6) "A Strange story" printed in "Moambe", 7) "A Christmas Story" 8) "The Four Gibbets" in "Iveria".

I translated Pushkin's "Propheth" Lermontov's "Prophet", "Hadji Abrek" and "Mary" and Turgeniev's "Verses in Prose" and some verses of Heine and Goethe. I also translated, in collaboration with Prince Ivane Machabeli, Shakespeare's "King Lear". I took part in the restoration of the original text of the famous Georgian poem "The Man in the Panther's Skin", also in editing: a) the poems of Prince Alexandre Chavchavadze, b) the poems of Vakhtang Orbeliani", for which I wrote a preface, c) The ancient Georgian story of "Vis and Ramin".

In addition to these literary works I have written many short articles of political journalistic, critical and polemical character, also articles on educational questions. Among the most bulky of the journalistic publications may be mentioned "The Khizan Question", "Life and Law", "Concerning Brigandage in Transcaucasia". Of the critical and polemical articles may be mentioned two which were printed as feuilletons in "Iveria": "And You Call that History?!" (on Rustaveli) and "Armenian Savants and Outcrying Stones" the last of these recently appeared in a ussian translation and caused much ado in the local Armenian press.

Of the edition of my complete collected works undertaken by the local Georgian Publishing Society, so far 4 volumes have appeared out of the proposed 10 or 12 volumes. The volumes already published include verses, tales, stories and dramatic sketches.

Notes of a Journey from Vladikavkaz to Tiflis

In the morning at six o'clock an unwashed, uncombed yamshtchik (Russian driver) drove up with a post cart to the door of the hotel at Vladikavkaz where I had alighted the evening before. It is wonderful how fair Russian artists make the coarse features of these thicknecked drivers, their slovenly gait and inhuman and bestial manners. They are twice as disgusting in reality as they are portrayed attractive. But the Russians say "Even the smoke of our own home is sweet and pleasant to us". Of the sweetness of smoke I know nothing but certainly I can say that it is pleasant — very pleasant — especially when it draws tears from the eyes.

When I had packed, that is when I had put my little knapsack in the chaise, I turned to bid farewell to my newly made French acquaintance.

Who invented this vehicle? He asked pointing to the postcart on which the sleepy "yamshtchik" was stupidly nodding.

The Russians, I answered.

I imagine nobody is likely to dispute the honour with them. I pity you to be forced to addle your brain and shake up your stomach on a thing like that. What's to be done? If the whole of Russia travels in this: manner why should I complain?

That's why Russia doesn't advance more rapidly. God give you a safe journey. As for me, I tell you frankly I would not risk my life by getting into it. Good-bye! If we should meet again some day I beg you to remember me.

With these words he gave me his hand and grasped it firmly as only a European can.

I entered the postcart.

The "yamshtchik" first looked sulkily round then gathered the reins together, called "gee-up" to the lean horses and raised his whip. The lean horses did not budge, not even an ear twitched. "Now, the devil, move on won't you," he shouted to the horses shaking the reins and beginning to stamp with his feet. Not a bit of it, the horses did not move a step. My French acquaintance was looking out of the window, dying with laughter. What made the silly fellow so merry?

"The whole of Russia travels like that? Ha, ha, ha," he laughed, "they travel like that?"

I saw nothing amusing in it but I laughed too. The "yamshtchik" wrath-fully turned his cow-like eyes towards me and began to scowl like a beast. Then he bent his thick neck to the horses again and gave them a couple of lashes. The horses, when they found there was nothing else to be done, managed to start from the spot and set off trotting. The tinkling bells began their unpleasing jangle, the carriage began to bump over the stones and I was shaken from side to side.

II

Thus I left Vladikavkaz behind me and set my face towards my native land. I passed over the Terek bridge so that I might not only not drink its waters but not even see it. I was afraid that my eyes might light upon some native. To us, Georgians there is something unpleasant and disagreeable in a dweller on the Terek. For this there is very good cause: first we do not like him because a dweller by Terek is really a Terek dweller, then because... because, secondly he is a Terek dweller, thirdly because... because... because... thirdly too he is a dweller by the Terek. Come now and dispute the validity of such a wise reason to our distressful Georgian people.

That baleful Terek! How two-faced it has been! See how dead it is. Whenever it turns its back to us and its face to Russia, when it gets into the plains and the flat country somehow that daemonic, heroic voice ceases. Is that our mad Terek at Vladikavkaz of which our poet sings:

"Terek rushes, Terek thunders

"The rocks give back its bass"

There it is as spiritless, as dead, as if it dwelt under the rod or had received a high official post. But perchance Terek is so silent there because the echoing rocks are not by its sides, those rocks:

"The clouds lie black upon the rocky
heights

"And wrathfully threaten the earth with
a deluge".

But nevertheless, woe to thee, my Terek! Thou my foster brother, like some men, wherever thou goest thou donnest the hat of the country. No sin is thy thunder, thine awful noise, thy fury and fretting, thine eternal strife with boulders, rock and glen, as if thy large desire could not be contained in thy narrow bed. Much is there that is worthy of thought in thee, our unsubdued Terek, in thy victorious and obstinate course. But here thou art drowned like a slain lion dragged alonge. Thou art pitiable and thou doest sin!

"Oh, fortune in what dost thou consist.

"Why dost thou turn us about, what instinct
afflicts thee?"*

It was midday when we arrived at the Lars posthouse. Up to Lars my heart had felt no particular pleasure except that the nearer I came to my native land the more familiar became nature about me and the more Terek raged and dashed.

I went into the empty room at the post house and as I wished to drink tea I told a broken-legged soldier, who stood as sentinel at the end of the post house, to bring a samovar. While he was getting the samovar ready I lay down on a wooden couch and gave myself up to thought.

For four years I had lived in Russia and had not seen my home. Four years!... What a four years these four years are dost thou know, reader? First of all it is a whole century for him who is far from his native land. Then these four years are life's foundation, life's head waters, the hair-like bridge thrown across between light and darkness. But not for all! Only for him who has gone to Russia to exercise his intelligence, to give his brain and his heart work, to move forward. It is in these four years that the tendril of life knots itself into the brain and heart of youth. This tendril it is from which may come forth beautiful, bright clusters of grapes and bilberries too. Oh, precious four years! Happy is he under whose feet the extended hair bridge does not give way. Happy is he who makes good use of you!

III

When I had left Vladikavkaz and the breeze of my native land began to blow on me my heart began to beat in another way. In the postcart my best thoughts were lost in rattling over the stones. Now, reclining like a grandfather on the couch in a room of a post house you may be well assured that I gave my thoughts all my attention and mind. All that I had left in my beautiful land adorned like a bride, all that I had seen, suffered and learnt crowded upon me. Many confused thoughts were represented before my mind's eye, but quicker than lightning one thought changed to another, so that my mind's eye could not rest on one and the same object for one moment — in a word, there was a perfect revolution going on in my brain; thoughts which had taken a low place came up high, those which had been high went down and then they quarrelled among themselves.

This was the state I was in. At last, all my thoughts took their proper in my brain. Among them one stood out more brightly, to this one followed a second to the second a third, so that at last they became an unbroken string of beads. How shall I look on my country and how will it look on me, thought I. What shall I say to my country that is new, and what will it say to me.

* Rustavel: "The Man in the Panther's Skin"

Who knows: perhaps my country will turn its back on me as on one transplanted and reared in another soil. Perhaps, though it will acknowledge me, since in any case my native rennet is in me. But what shall I do if my country listens to me and tells me her story, and I, inexpert in her "language, can not understand her tongue, her speech? It may be, though, she will receive me as her son, clasp me to her heart, and eagerly listen to me. But am I indeed able to speak her very speech, and in that tongue can I bring consolation to the hopeless, can I wipe the tears of the mourner, and lighten the work of the labourer, can I gather in one those separate sparks which without doubt animate every man? Am I able for this? Can I express what I feel? I decided that my country would receive me and acknowledge me because I am her blood and her flesh; I should understand her words and speech because a son hearkens to his father not only with his ears, but with his heart which understands even the unspoken words; I will make them hearken to my words too, for a parent always listens to the words of his child. But I say all this of words, and what of deeds? If thy country demand deeds of thee what wilt thou do? I asked myself, and again I stopped. I felt that this question made a break in the variegated string of my thoughts.

And what should I really do? I asked myself aloud. You should take some tea, replied the soldier, who at this moment brought in the samovar and placed it on my couch.

Tea!

Wasn't that why you ordered a samovar, replied the stupid orderly, and went out. A few moments after this the door opened again and an officer presented himself. His face clearly showed that he was very intimately acquainted with wine and spirits. It was easy to see that he was not a traveller.

Allow me, he said, to make myself known to you: I am, at your service, a Sub-lieutenant, I am quartered here at Lars in charge of a squad.

I am very glad to make your acquaintance, I replied, rising and offering him my ungloved hand.

Where do you come from?

From St. Petersburg.

Very pleasant! In this desolate desert I have only one pit sure and that is to meet travellers from a civilized land. It is the duty of man, who lives by reason, both to God and to the world, to meet enlightened men to talk to awaken his intelligence. I am very glad to see you. Discourse is the mind's food.

Speaking thus, he again offered to shake hands; a second time I offered him my hand.

Who are you? he asked me.

I am, at your service, an Armenian clerk.

A clerk! he said, and pursed his lips.

Yes, sir.

My new acquaintance when he learnt this immediately put on the airs of a personage of importance: he drew up his shoulders and changed the tenour of his conversation to another key.

Where do you come from? he asked me with surprise and scorn.

From Petersburg.

Hm! sneered the officer, from Petersburg. Very good!... So you have been lucky enough to see Petersburg. Petersburg!... It's a very fine city, he said, and sat down comfortably on a bench. Petersburg!... Oh, oh! It's a great city, Petersburg. It is a spacious city. It isn't like your dirty little town. What sort of a town is yours? You can spit from one end of the town to another. But Petersburg... have you seen Petersburg j! It is the heart of Russia. It is true that up to now the whole of Russia thought that Moscow was its heart, but I have dispelled that false, foolish idea: I am an author. I beg you to know me. Don't look at me like that. I affirm that Petersburg is the heart of the whole of Russia. Have you seen Izler's garden?

I listened to this officer and thought to myself that he must be mad, but I could see no sign of it except in his confused conversation.

No, have you seen Izler's garden or not? he asked me again.

How do you prove that Petersburg is the heart of Russia? asked I, giving no answer to his last question.

No, first tell me have you seen Izler's garden or not? You people are not used to intelligent conversation and that is why you jump from one subject to another. You do not understand logical, orderly reasoning. This, of course, comes from your lack of enlightenment. I suppose that you do not even know the meaning of "civilization", "association", "argumentation", "intelligent", "cassation" and "philology". But that is nothing — that is temporary. Even you will be taught. Thank God, many officers and officials come from Russia to enlighten you. No, first tell me, have you seen Izler's garden or not? If you haven't seen that, you haven't seen Petersburg.

I have seen it.

You have seen it. Then you have made a step forward on the road to enlightenment. I am very glad, delighted. Izler's garden! What a garden it is, eh! It is a paradise full of fairies, ah! Do you know what fairies are? That is a scientific word, perhaps you don't understand. If we translate it into the vulgar tongue that means that the garden is full of merry-eyed damsels. If you like you can take one by the arm, and, if you like, a second. See what civilization can do. Your women — if they even see a man — they hide. No, Petersburg... is a great city, a very enlightened city and Izler's garden is the crown of civilization, it is such a garden that "pshaw!"

At these words the scientific officer kissed his finger tips.

I hope that this samovar is standing on the table for you.

Your hope does not deceive you.

I hope too, that you, as a man who has come from a civilized country, will be polite enough to offer me tea.

That hope I will not disappoint.

Of course, you have rum too.

I am sorry I have not.

That doesn't matter. Are you an Armenian or a Georgian?

A Georgian.

I am very glad that you are a Georgian. Although our Lermontov writes that "the timid Georgians fled" yet even Georgians are better than those blackguards. You have cigarettes of course.

I have.

I hope you will give me one.

With great pleasure, take one.

Well then, you pour out the tea and then we can have some scientific conversation. It will be difficult for you, but I will translate scientific words here and there into simple language and so thus make it easy for you.

I poured out the tea and handed him a glass. When he had drunk it he smoked his cigarette and started the conversation.

Your country is not civilized, to use learned language, that is to say in the vulgar tongue it is uncivilized, do you understand.

Very clearly.

There, I told you I would simplify the learned language so that you would understand. Now I will begin from this: your country is not enlightened, that is, it is unenlightened. This tea is from Moscow?

No, I bought it in Stavropol.

It's all the same. Now let us begin as I said before with the fact that your country is not enlightened, which mean? that your country is dark.

Do you understand?

Yes, quite well.

Now when we begin by saying that your country is not enlightened it is as if we said there is no light in it. I will explain this by an exam, pie: imagine a dark room — have you imagined it or not?

I have imagined it.

No, perhaps you have left a window open somewhere, fasten it too.

I have shut it, said I, and smiled.

Very good. When you fasten the window you must let down the blind.

I have drawn it down.

When you have let down the blind the room is darkened, you can see nothing. Suddenly a candle is brought and the room is illuminated. That is enlightenment. But really, I tell you this cigarette is not bad. Is it from Petersburg?

No, I bought them in Vladikavkaz.

It's all the same. Now do you understand the meaning of enlightenment?

Very clearly.

Now, since I have explained to you the meaning of enlightenment, let me ask you how civilization is progressing among you.

I cannot tell you. I have not been home for a long time.

That's nothing: I will learn directly how it is progressing. Have you had any generals, you Georgians?

We might be able to muster about a score.

What do you say? a score. Oh, that is a great thing, said our learned officer solemnly; a score do you say? This handful of people and twenty generals. You must have a great civilization, sir. You cannot understand — twenty generals! I don't believe it. Perhaps you count as real generals what we call in learned parlance "actual councillors of state", or in simpler language "civil generals or still more simply "un-striped generals" or if we put it still more simply "unmoustached generals". This is of course what you have done.

No, by your sun! I swore; by your san! I was speaking of real generals only.

A score of real generals! Glory be to Orthodox Russia! Glory and honour. Wherever she sets her foot she establishes civilization! How many years will it be since Russia came down here?

About seventy.

Two generals for every two years. It's a great thing, that is a great civilization. And what sort of generals? Real generals. If by the power of God civilization marches like this among you in another seventy years you will have twenty more generals and that will be forty. That's a great thing. I didn't know this. But where was I to find it out? It is not yet three years since I came to this country. To tell you plainly, I have had no time to fix a learned eye on your country, I have been studying a very deep subject, I have made deep research, I have read histories and all my time has been spent on this scientific work. But my labour has not been in vain, future generations will remember my name.

What have you done?

What have I done? It is easy to tell you. You see in Russia the serfs have been taken away from their masters. The masters have no servants left. They were left at the mercy of hirelings. Sorrow came upon the land, for these hirelings began to steal everything in the house. I, like a heart-sore son, was grieved at the sorrow of my land. I said to myself: the country must be helped, said I. Thank God, I have helped it too. I have invented a means by which hirelings can no longer steal in the house. Quite a simple occurrence made me discover the cure. My orderly was a very great thief, he didn't even let the sugar in the sugar box alone. I thought and thought; what can I do, thought I, I began to lock the box, but sometimes I used to forget and when I went out of the house the orderly stole my sugar. At last I caught two flies and put them in the sugar-box, shut the lid and left it unlocked. Now you will ask me, why? This was why, — if the orderly wanted to steal sugar again he would have to open the box. When he raised the lid the flies would fly away. Then when I came in I would open the box and if I saw no flies inside then it

was evident that somebody had raised the lid. Who would do it except my orderly? Since I invented this my orderly couldn't steal from me. Now every morning when I finish my tea I catch flies in the room, I put them in the box and all night I am calm. I know that no one can steal my sugar. How do you like my idea? It is cheap, and a cure for stealing. It might be used for everything that we keep in a box. I have never told this idea of mine to anybody before, but I love your land so much that I tell you and I beg you to make it known to your unenlightened masters. There is one thing I have not found a way to stop, the stealing of vodka. I did try to put flies in the vodka bottle, but the cursed things drowned themselves in it — they know what is good for them. But I shall soon think of a cure for that. Well, how does my cunning please you? The French invent devilish sorts of things like that, but to buy their machines is dear, while my invention doesn't cost a farthing. What expense is there in catching two flies and putting them in a box? It is nothing, but now see what maybe the result of my invention: when it spreads perhaps there will begin to be a trade in flies. There will thus be a new industry in the land; some fine day you will go into your town and you will find a fly shop. That's not bad. How many hungry mouths may be filled by the help of flies! What are flies at present? Nothing. Of what use are they? None at all. Now you see of what great significance the labour and work of a learned wise man is to the land. I did come here although many entreated me not to do so. I said to myself: If God has bestowed some talent on me I should use it for my people, said I, but said I, these newly annexed countries need more enlightenment; enlightened men are needed. But wait a little and see what will happen. I, as I told you already, have invented one thing, now others may invent other things, and it may happen that there will come a man who will make an Izler's garden in your town; all things are possible to the educated man. In that case all the civilization of Petersburg would be brought here. Then some fine day you will see how there will be a promenade in your Izler's garden, your women will begin to walk boldly, you could say "Sheni Chirime"* to one or another and they will not say a word. Then the people will see their paradise, as the learned say, that is to put it simply but what shall I say, paradise is just paradise. Do you understand?

IV

That evening I came up to Stepantsminda. It was a beautiful evening so I decided to stay the night that my eyes might open on the lovely view.

Oh Georgia !

"Where is there another Georgia!

In what corner of the world?"

I went out from my room and looked over at Mqinvari, which they call Mount Kazbek. There is something noble about Mqinvari. Truly can it say: the heavens are my head-dress and the earth my slippers. It rose in the azure sky, white and serene. Not a cloud, even of the size of a man's hand, dimmed its lofty brow, its head silvered with frost. One solitary star of great brilliance shone steadily, as if marvelling at Mqinvari's noble mien. Mqinvari! Great is it, calm and peaceful, but it is cold and white. Its appearance makes me wonder but doesn't move me, it chills me and does not warm me — in a word it is Mqinvari /frozen/.

Mqinvari with all its grandeur is to be admired but not to be loved. And what do I want with its greatness. The world's hum, the world's whirlwind and breezes, the world's ill or weal makes not even a nerve in his lofty brow twitch. Although his base stands on mother earth his head rests: in heaven; it is isolated; inaccessible. I do not like such height nor such isolation nor such inaccessibility. Thank God for the desperate, mad, furious, obstinate, disobedient muddy Terek! Leaping from the black rock's heart he goes roaring and shouting on his way. I love Terek's noisy murmur, its hurried struggle, grumbling and lamentation. Terek is the image of human awakened life, it is a face mobile and worth knowing; in its muddy waters can be found

* An expletive which no Georgian gentleman uses to a lady though men use it among themselves

the lye to wash a whole world's woe. Mqinvari is the noble image of eternity and death: cold as eternity, silent as death. No, I do not love Mqinvari — all the more because it is inaccessibly high. The foundation of the earth's happiness is placed at the base, all buildings are reared from the bottom, no building is begun from the top. Therefore I, a child of this earth, am better pleased by Terek and love it more. No, I do not love Mqinvari; its coldness stings me, its whiteness ages me! It is high, you say. What have I to do with its height since I cannot reach up to it and it cannot reach down to me. No I do not love Mqinvari. Mqinvari reminds me of the great Goethe. Terek of the stormy and indomitable Byron. Happy Terek! Thy charm lies in thy restlessness. Stand still but a little while and dost thou not turn into a stinking: pool and does not this fearsome roar of thine change to the croaking of frogs! It is movement and only movement, my Terek, which gives to the world its might and life.

V

Night had fallen. Gazing on Mqinvari and the Terek, occupied with various thoughts, time had stolen on so imperceptibly that I scarcely noticed how the sun had bidden farewell to the earth which he had warmed and was hidden by the mountains. It was night, nothing could be seen, the world's din ceased, the earth was silent.

It was night, but I know not what I should have done had I not had hope that dawn was coming again. Would life have been worth living?... O, nature I love thy order by whose aid every night dawns into day.

It was night but still I stay outside the posthouse and obstinately I make my keen mind follow the sough of Terek's desperate rush. All was still, but not thou, O Terek! I assure you I hear in this voiceless world Terek's complaint not to be hushed. In human life there are such moments of solitude when Nature reveals thee. to thyself and at the same time reveals herself to thee. Therefore, canst thou say that even in solitude thou art nowhere alone. Oh, biped who callest thyself human. This night I feel that there is as it were a secret bond — a concord — between my thoughts and Terek's moan. My heart is moved and my arm trembles. Why? We must tarry for an answer.

It is dark, man's footfall is hushed, man's noisy pomp has ceased, no more is heard the moan of those disquieted by weariness and longing, earth's pain slumbers, no being save myself is to be seen. Alas! how empty were this full earth without man!... No, take away this dark and peaceful night with its slumber and its dreams and give me light and restless day with its sufferings, its tortures, its struggles and its lamentations. Dark night, I hate thee. Hadst thou not been created upon earth me thinks half man's ills had not existed. At first by thy coming thou struckest horror into the mind of man and frightened him.

Since then, terrified, he could not find his way — and lo! man struggles and even till today one in a thousand cannot accustom his once frightened mind to its terror. Oh, dark night! I hate thee. In the shelter who knows how many evil foes of mankind are lurking even now? Who knows how many smiths and tyrants are forging the chains to fix man's fate under this dark veil which covers my sight? Thou art the abettor of that craft called sorcery, which to man's terror-stricken mind makes woe seem joy; thou art the hour and time of the witches' feast when the toasts of darkness are heard. Evil one, avaunt, O day of light, approach!...

VI

At the posthouse I learnt that there was frequently much delay in travelling by post through the mountains, owing to the lack of horses at the stations. I was advised to hire a horse as far as Phasanaur and to cross on horseback. This advice suited me well, I gave myself up to sleep, intending to hire a saddle horse on the morrow and to cross the mountains thus.

The day broke. How beautiful art thou, morning dawn! How beautiful art thou, dew washed earth! It seems to me that on this morning all earth's pains should be alleviated, but Terek still roars and struggles. The earth's pain it seems is not to be calmed.

The day broke and the world began to speak with human voices. The day began its restless bustle. An awakened man is good!... But still better is that man who in sleeping sleepeth not, his heart afire for the misery of the land. My lovely land, be there such in thee? I will search, and if I find any I will do him reverence.

I went outside the station and met a glensman. I hired a horse from him on condition that he should accompany me on horseback. Not only did I not repent but I was very glad that I had arranged matters thus. My glensman turned out to be very useful. He was a grizzled? elderly man. In the end it appeared that he was an interested observer of that little land which fate had stretched round him and which was appointed to vary his colourless life.

We mounted our horses and set forth from Step'antsminda. I gave a last look at Mqinvari. He stared down in a lordly way from his height. He disturbed my morning peace, of mind. Again my heart began to beat and my arm to shake. With perfect hatred I turned my eyes from Mqinvari's greatness and with more respect I took my leave of Terek madly rushing at his feet. He, as if he ... sat on a little mountain horse which trotted almost the whole way with a comical "wolf's" trot. My glensman's longhaired fur hat slipped over his eyes, and so easily he sat astride his wide saddle, so comfortably and untroubled he suited his valiant form to the horse's trot, so peacefully and with such enjoyment he smoked his "chibukh", that you would have thought — it would be hard indeed to find another man in such fettle on the face of the earth.

What is your name, brother, asked I.

They call me G'unia of the reeds, he answered.

Where do you come from?

Where? From Gaibotani, here in the mountains on Terek's banks.

— Are you Osset or Georgian?

— Why will I be Osset? I am Georgian, a glensman.

— Your home is in a good place.

— It's not so bad: it suits our poverty.

— Water like this and air are happiness.

— Hm! laughed the glensman.

— What are you laughing at?

— I laugh at the ridiculous. An empty stomach cannot be filled wi'these.

— You should have a good harvest here.

— What for no? The place is not bad; we get a pickle, each man will have less than a two weeks harvest. We have not much room.

— This big road will give you help.

— What difference does the road make! It's only of use to him who is saved work by carrying things to sell.

— Then you do not hire yourself out?

— Why not? Of course I do.

— Then you get money from hire.

— I get it. It doesn't stay in my pocket, though; a glensman is the portion of the Armenian. Food and drink are not in the house; the money goes to the dukan.*

— Then it must be better in the plains; there the people have more to eat.

— Who knows? There too there are ills. The climate is unhealthy. The folk thereabouts have no colour, they are not strong. Here we are healthy. The Maker of the round sky has decreed it; there Satiety, here health.

— Which is better, the fat land or the healthy?

— Both are alike. No place is bad.

* Village shop.

— If you were made to choose one of them?

— One? To choose! I prefer these broken rocks. It is healthy. Adam's son is but grass, he has wants, he satisfies them, why should he suffer pain? (At this moment my glensman's rope stirrup suddenly gave way, he could not balance himself and slipped to the side of the horse. Then he recovered himself, leapt from his horse and began to mend the stirrup).

— A caparisoned horse is a necessary evil, the glensman called out with a smile; blessed is the barebacked horse; you have only to... and jump on.

I did not wait for the glensman but went on.

VII

— Tell me, by your troth, said I to the glensman when he caught me up: What monastery is that opposite Step'anstminda?

— Beyond the Terek?

— Yes.

— May God be merciful to you while living and pardon you when dead! that is the church of the Holy Trinity, the hiding place of treasure in former days, the seat of justice.

— How the hiding place of treasure, the seat of justice?

— The Georgian King's treasure was hidden here from foes, many a time has the treasury been brought here from Mtzkhet to be concealed.

— How is it the seat of, justice?

— The seat of justice? Here there is a cell, where justice was dispensed by judges. Whenever any serious affair arose in the glens it was judged there.

— Canst thou not tell me what this justice was like and what it was about generally?

— Why not tell thee? What I know I will relate to thee. When there took place among the people a great pursuit, any important affair, a big election, the people betook themselves thither, chose judges from among the wise old men, men famed for their wisdom. They set them up in that cell to judge. Whatever these mediators then, in the name of the Trinity, having asked for grace from God, speak and decide, none breaks, none infringes.

— Hast thou been present at such a tribunal?

— How should I have been present? I am telling thee tales of other days.

— Why is it no longer as it was?

— Nowadays?

My glensman was sunk in thought and gave no answer. After a short, pause he asked me:

— What countryman art thou?

— I am a Georgian, couldst thou not recognize me?

— How should I recognize thee? Thy garb is not of the Georgians; thou art dressed like a Russian.

— Can a man's Georgianness only be recognized from his clothes?

— To the eyes he is known by his clothes.

— And his tongue and speech?

— Many speak the Georgian tongue: Armenians, Ossetians, Tatars, and other people.

— And do few wear the Georgian clothes?

— The look of a Georgian's garments is quite different. In Russia a Georgian becomes a foreigner.

— A Georgian should be a Georgian at heart; or what is the use of clothes.

— Thou art right. But who can see into the heart? The heart is inside, invisible, the clothes are outside, visible.

— Although I am dressed like a Russian, believe me, I am a Georgian in heart.

— May be.

I do not know whether my glensman believed me or not. But after this a conversation of the following sort took place: Thou hast not replied to my former question, I began again: I asked thee why they no longer judge in the cell of Trinity.

Now?... Where is our nationality? We are under Russia. Now everything is destroyed, everything is changed. At the foot of Sameba (Trinity) is the village of Gergeti. The men of the village were sworn sentinels of the Church by the Kings. In return the Kings gave the whole village franchise and gave them a charter to be handed down from son to son. In days of old every night three men were sent from Gergeti to watch. The men of Gergeti still hold themselves responsible for the guarding of the church, but the Russians have taken away their franchise. Russia pays no heed to the King's charter. Gergeti now pays taxes like the rest. The old order has passed away, the justice, asked from God's grace, in Trinity is no more.

— Then the former state and time were better?

— Why not?

— How were they better?

— In those days for evil or for good we belonged to ourselves, therefore, it was better. In those days the people were patriotic, their hearts were full of courage, men were men and women women.

In those days! We leaned one on the other, we asked aid one of the other. We cared for the widow and orphan, we kept in their places the devil inside and the wicked outside, we did not trouble the calm of God and the lords judges, we hid each other from bold foes, we cared for the fallen, we comforted those who wept; and thus there was human pity and unity. Now the people are spoilt, they have fallen into adultery, avarice and greed overcome us, unity is no more, and enmity and rending to pieces have increased. Now who listens to the plaint of the widow and orphan, who makes the weeper smile, who raises the fallen? Nowadays there are no men and if there are in face and in heart they are spiritless. The people are down trodden, torn to shreds, courageless. The glory of the Georgians is passed and their supremacy. Then was our day. Our land is no more, it has perished, what now remains to us? Food and drink must be bought at a price, wood must be paid for, the road must be paid for, prayers and blessings must be paid for justice must be paid for, what is left for the poor glensman? ...

— Is there not peace now?

— What good can an empty peace do an empty stomach. Rust eats an unused dagger, frogs, worms, and reptiles multiply in stragant water. Are there trouts in the rushing, restless Terek? What is peace for a living man? What are enemies if a people is free? Peace brings us to earth.

— But enemies trod you down, laid you waste, and distressed your wives and children frequently.

— Now these Armenians who have come distress us more, waste our houses more. In former days we could at least play with our foes with shield and buckler, we could defend ourselves, but what can be done with the Armenian, there is no defending oneself against him, he is not to be played with. In former days too, in the fight with foes, we gained glory, in showing our superiority, but what glory can a man get from the Armenians. In other days, thou art right, there were foes, but there were also great rewards for faithful men: they received land, their taxes were waived. There on Terek's banks stands a fortress not built with hands. That fort is well known as Arshi's fort.

— How is it not built with hands?

— It is built by God, impregnable, not to be broken.

— Then what wouldst thou say?

— In other days Kakhetian army attacked it, fought, and took it. The glen thought to get help from the terrified lord. He could give them none. A great number of people were slain, The Kakhetians massacred man glensmen, they came into the fort, pulled down the standard. There was an old glensman there, a man famed for his wisdom. He had a daughter, not betrothed, unseen of the sun. This glensman decided to make the Kakhetian soldiers drunk. He brought

wine and sent it into the fortress. He also sent his daughter, unseen of the sun, to the drunken feast. The Kakhétians, thirsty of wine, admirers of fair women, became as swine, and were completely drunk. The maid discovered the keys of the fortress and let the glensmen know of the swinish state of the Kakhétian soldiers. The glensmen came and entered the Castle unperceived, raised cries and massacred all the drunken Kakhétians. Again the fortress fell into the hands of the glensmen. The Eristav of Aragva heard of this. He gave the castle as a reward to the maid's father, he also gave him a charter...

— What sort of bravery was there in that?

— Why not? That is cunning; where force cannot prevail, there cunning persuades.

— What canst thou say to this massacre of Kakhétians?

Now all Georgians are brothers. I am not speaking of Kakhétians in enmity. This I want thee to understand, that formerly if we gave our lives in service there were rewards, there were great gifts; we found our livelihood in glory and in deeds of heroism, a man did not live in vain. Now we have to find our livelihood in lying, immorality, perjury, and in betraying one another.

VIII

Whether my glensman spoke truth or no I will not now enquire. And what business is it of mine? I merely mention in passing what I as a traveller heard from him.

My one endeavour in this has been to give to his thoughts their own form and to his words his accent. If I have succeeded in this I have fulfilled my intention.

My glensman told me much more, but for various reasons it would not do to write down all his conversation... I will only say that in his own words he made me a sharer in his heart's woe.

I understood, my glensman, how thou art pierced with lancets. "We belonged to ourselves", saidst thou, and I heard. But as I heard a sudden pain shot from my brain to my heart, there in my heart, it dug itself a grave and was buried. How long will this pain remain in my heart, how long? How long, oh, how long?... My beloved land answer me this!...

The Sportsman's Story

What will the good backgammon
player do, if he does not throw
the six in time

I am just what is called a lover of the chase. I have a strange liking for sitting at the foot of a tree in a shady, voiceless forest waiting with bated breath for the sighted quarry. There is an untiring pleasure in this enviable occupation. I agree with you that hunting is a sin: every creature is the work of God's hands, each has an equal desire to live on this: wide earth, but what is to be done?... Holy Writ assures us, not falsely, that it was man who shed the first innocent blood of man on earth. Man is a shedder of blood, and I am a man. Many a time have I seen a deer frightened by the hounds, many a time have I seen it and many a time has my mind been captivated by its free beauty. When it has set its branching horns along its back it runs swift, beautiful and proud, while behind it barks the trained hound. The poor beast outruns the dog and falls into the clutches of man, who in these circumstances is more merciless and less to be trusted than the dog. From afar the keen-eared sportsman hears the deer's footfall. He hears, and his bloodthirsty heart beats and beats with sheer impatience. Now it comes within gun range, between the leaves and bushes is seen its sad, melancholy head. The dog draws near. The deer pauses, then darts round like an arrow into the bushes. Thou thinkest that since thou hast changed thy way thy beloved wood will give thee full freedom from danger, but no, J whistle. Then you should see with what sadness it stands, with what wondrous beauty it draws up its neck, how in terror and despair it begins to turn its melancholy eyes, to prick up its ears and to sniff with widened nostrils! It is so pretty and so tender and yet in its timidity there is such an attractive pride that you would think that it had gathered all the grace granted it by nature in order by its worth and beauty to soften the heart of the hidden foe! But man is not so tender-hearted as to be deterred by this, when it smelt the smell of man the deer resolved to flee, but the gun thundered forth and the deer, hitherto living, free and bold was stretched on that grass in whose lap he had first opened his eyes to greet the world and where he now finally closed them in an eternal farewell. It had been its cradle and at the end it was its grave. You should see how resignedly and quietly the proud free beast died. But its tearful eyes always seem to be asking me this question: My slayer, God's world is large and wide — Why dost thou grudge me, innocent and peaceful, a span's length on God's boundless earth? These words sadden the heart until, the earth has dried up the blood spilt, and when it begins to dry. then I call to mind that even we lords of creatures, the crowns: of things created, we who are made in the image of God, do not suffer each other to have room, — when I remembered that on every foot of ground trodden by man, some of man's blood had dried, then I consoled myself and, justified, I said to myself: "this at least is well, my friend, that thou diest there where thou wast born. We men sometimes are deprived even of that happiness".

II

About fifteen versts down from our village there are some good hunting grounds. But why there? Everywhere in our blest land, where — as the peasants say — "Christ God has shaken out from his generous bosom", everywhere are good places. Whatever you want is there, beginning with the graceful deer and finishing with the gentlemanly wild boar or the wise bear. Not to speak of birds. But down from our village were my favourite, hunting grounds. Well I knew their disposition and I had my game marked down and even seen. I used to go away for two or three days; when night drew nigh I turned into a little village where I had a worthy peasant gossip. I would spend the night there and in the morning when the grey dawn appeared I went down to hunt. I had not been there for two months, when at last I longed to go out. One fine, summer morning I said my prayers, took my double-barrelled gun, called my hound and

went out. At the entrance to my gossip's village where the double hedge began, on the edge of a cart road stood an old straw shed leaning against a byre. The entrance down into the stable was vaulted like the carpeted covering on a bullock cart. Round about this shed there was no trace of man. It had been, I think, abandoned to its fate and forgotten, like its owner at his removal or death. Of course, I had frequently gone up and down past this shed, for it stood on the edge of the road, but for as many times as I had passed to and fro I had not once seen a living creature here.

Perhaps at times a skinny backed peasant's horse which could go no farther from feebleness was enticed to the neighbourhood of the shed by the grass dried up with drought. But one day as I was passing, to my wonder, I saw a man lying at the door of the stable. That was nothing. In the morning when I went past I looked and saw the man still lying there. In the evening, before twilight had quite yielded to darkness, I came back again I found the man there. It surprized me all the more as there was none but he. I resolved that I would certainly ask my godsire who he was that evening. My godsire answered my question thus: What can I tell you, my son? No one here knows who he is. He is some needy peasant having no master; he is sick and came and settled there about a month and a half ago.

—Is he quite alone?

—How do I know? He has not any comforter there at any rate.'

—Then who provides for him?

—The world. On that road movement never ceases. There are always passers-by: it may be a man of God drops him a piece or two of bread. He asks for nothing more than that.

— He does not belong to these parts?

— What do you ask? If he belonged here how could he have so displeased God that his own folk would not have given to him. No, he is not of these parts.

Have you spoken to the man?

— Why not? I have spoken to him.

— Did he say nothing about himself?

— No. But the unhappy man was evidently educated.

— Perhaps you did not ask him about himself?

— How not ask him? Once he said to me: "I, says he, am a forgotten man, why dost thou want to know who I am? Look at me, my brother, and know me", — says he. He spoke no more of himself and I asked no more after that. I think he is hiding himself.

This made me wonder. By nature I am a lover of knowledge and now imagine how these fragmantary words of my godsire moved my heart to learn the man's story. What could he have to conceal? I thought to myself. I resolved that whatever might betide me, I would ask the poor man himself who he was.

One day, worn out with wandering in vain, and empty-handed, I was returning to my gossip's. The sun was still high. It was the time when the cattle are let out of the byre. I saw the wretched man still lying in the same place. My heart could endure no more. I said: whatever may be, I will go and perhaps I shall persuade him to tell me something. I am a little tired too and it is a good way to my godsire's house. If it does no more good it will let the rheumatism out of my wearied knees, I went up and wished him "Victory"*

God grant thee length of days-he replied with a weak voice, and he came forward respectfully when he saw I was of the princely class.

* * *

"Alas! O world, (Fate) what ails thee?
Why dost thou whirl us round?
What (ill) habit afflicts thee?"

* The usual Georgian salutation.

All who trust in the weep ceaselessly like me.
Whence and whither earnest thou?
Where and whence uprootest thou?
But God abandons not the man forsaken
by thee

(Rustaveli: "The Man in the Panther's Skin").

— He speaks truth who said that may thy troubles be upon me! If the world has turned to face away from me and not given me shelter, still God's lap is broad!...

When he said this he looked up to God. You may imagine how these words from "The Man in the Panther's Skin" astonished me from a beggar wrapped in rags!...

God bless the speech of that man whose words console even to the door of the grave such inconsolable ones! Peace be upon thy mighty soul, immortal Rustaveli.

— What shall I do? said I in my heart. This man cannot have been what he now is. My curiosity was unrestrained now that the man himself had prolonged the conversation with me and given me hope of learning something of him. I wished to question him, but did not dare: I recognized that a long familiar breath had suddenly inspired him with great melancholy. First I preferred that the cloud of melancholy should dissipate, then I would question him as to who he was. At last he turned towards me and for a long time fixed his black eyes upon me.

Is That a Man?!

"Blame a friend to his face, an
enemy behind his back"

Wise Saw

In Rhetoric it is written: A man should begin everything with an introduction. This is true, Let us so begin

Whoever recognizes himself in the image of Luarsab, whoever applies to himself what is written of Luarsab will of course begin to throw mud and call the simple author of this story a "fool". Let them be well assured that we have naught to do with individuals, we write of a general evil.

For the rest, I find courage in the truth of these words: "Blame a friend to his face, an enemy behind his back". Where now art thou that first spoke these wise words? I know where thou art: thou art in the people, unseen, and of the people.

I know too what thou art called, thy name is the genius of the people. And I know thy nature: thou art infallible and always right. Thou and only thou givest to him whose heart is sore for "others". Thou doest this even when those "others" hold sympathy with their sorrows to be a sin. What are we to do? Some show their sympathy by praising what is evil in a friend and some by blaming the evil. Of these two kinds of people the reader will himself perceive which has the greatest and truest sympathy and love.

I

Prince Thathkaridze's abode was a fine sight. Imagine to yourself in the midst of Kakhethi in a little village, a bare, low-lying spot and in the very heart of it a two-story stone house. And after this manner were the stories: below was a wine cellar roofed with dry branches of vine and behind this cellar against the wall a little room with a balustrade.

On the balustrade, like a swallow's nest, there, was fixed up a narrow plank which played the part of a bed. A little way off stood a fireplace also of planks, on this side of it a shed upon which was placed a lop-sided grain-basket, a miserable, forlorn-looking object. There was a little garden too, fenced round. By the fence could be seen, near a leafy tree, an old straw shed, bent and twisted on to its side by the vicissitudes of time. It was as if it would fain have lain down in the shade, but like an old woman suddenly stricken by an attack of rheumatism, it was stopped, all crooked and surly. The courtyard of this castellated mansion was fairly extensive. It was engirt by an old paling which had been broken in more than one place and it had never come into the present owner's head to mend it. Evidently he is a Georgian!

The fence was terminated at one end by huge red gates, of which one side perhaps for two years, — had been pursuing with a terrible frown a post, as if it would seize it and beat it, while the post bent still farther over as if to slip away. Beyond the red gate was a large barn. The straw of it was lying spread like a hillock on the southern side of the whole barn, so that the end of it lay on the chaff-place. The chaff-place was ludicrous, so idiotically meditative and raised on the one side, looking like nothing so much as a broken-winged goose.

In my early childhood I have seen many a fine sight on this straw: here often disported themselves, grunting from excess of sentiment, tender pigs, many a time with their soft snouts they burrowed in the fragrant straw, so energetically, with such delicacy as only pigs are capable of. Then their fondling! Their caresses! Oh, these are indescribable. However contented, these pigs treated each other to the snout. What yelling and squealing used to begin then! Thus does our peasant frequently bestow upon his newly made bride a blow of his fist as a sign of affection. Somebody has said: "Georgian love is an injury", and I say: a blow is after all, a kind of caress. In administrative matters this has yet another significance; there a blow is a means of instruction. That is not our affair.

The inside of the courtyard was as filthy as an old chinovnik's (official's) heart. It was a serious undertaking to reach the master of the house without dirtying yourself or without being saluted by some unsavoury fragrance. This is the outside, — now, readers, we invite you to enter the house of Prince T'hat'hkaridze.

But we must warn you that if we go in we must be careful. The floor is of brick. That is nothing. This is the difficulty that here and there the bricks have been pulled up and in their place remain hollowed out holes. You must keep your eyes very wide open, for if your foot slips in, woe to your enemy! A man might break his neck or else his leg. It is true indeed the host will make many apologies, but an excuse doesn't easily mend a broken neck nor is it the best remedy for a fractured limb. A man might avoid this disaster if the room were light. But alas! it is not even this. Although it has two windows, pretty small even for loopholes, still the room is dark, because on the pine window frames instead of glass some very active mind had fixed oiled paper. There is a proverb applicable to this sort of thing: "Cunning is better than force, if a man is ingenious". In ingenuity the cleverest European chatterer cannot excel a Georgian.

Many a time elsewhere have I seen such windows with ludicrous ornaments. Many a time have I seen the oiled paper on such a window pricked with patterns with a needle: sometimes a heart is portrayed, sometimes a cross: and again sometimes something like the following is written: "How did the bear go up the tree, lullaby, lullaby!"!

This of course must be a woman's work. And if it were indeed, what harm is there in it? Weary of reading her Psalter, with some sorrow on her heart, seated at the window to distract her mind and pass a wearisome day she may have taken her breast-pin and set her hand to this really entertaining work. She was idle and she acted in accordance with the proverb: "Useless work is better than useless sitting".

In T'hat'hkaridze's room there were two long divans opposite each other. So clean were the felt and carpets spread upon them, that when the Princess rose up, on every serene step of the serene foot of her serene highness the clouds of dust rose so prettily that the beholder could not gaze enough. Between the two divans on the eastern wall was seen a besmoked, from the inside and from the outside, sad, mournful fireplace, like the open mouth of a toothless old woman. Here and there as adornments to the room were scattered various objects, such as: a muddy pair of white Qarabagh riding boots, a broken-mouthed copper jug, a greasy candlestick, dried herbs boiled in a copper teapot, a piece of the back of a dried fish, etc, etc .

II

Think not, readers, that this house belonged to some poor man and that therefore it was so pitifully neglected — no, he is the master of twenty men with well-built houses so that he is able to man as many as ten carts for agricultural purposes, sheep in abundance and about a hundred horses which are of no less value to an enlightened owner than so many slaves. So much for the live stock: now let us count up the property: two well grown vineyards and land enough for a hundred and fifty days ploughing and sowing. These possessions serfs, houses and land in the hands of one who knows how to make the best of it are a choice morsel.

Then why does it stand in such ill condition, asks the astonished reader. Because he is a Georgian, we reply, fully convinced that we have given a good reason.

Yes, in that beautiful home dwells a Georgian, free from care, Prince Luarsab T'hat'hkaridze, a man of forty, with his inseparable spouse, Princess Darejan.

Prince Luarsab T'hat'hkaridze was a well-nourished Georgian of the olden time, as round — I make no apology for the simile — as a well fatted calf. His Highness had the appearance of a gentleman: a head so big that it seemed as if by its weight his thick neck was fixed in his shoulders like a nave in a wheel; his poppy cheeks were ruddy as Thurashian apples, a soft chin with triple fold, apt to kindle love great big eyes, always bloodshot as if he had a rope tied round his neck; a swelled, very considerably protruding, highly respected and respectable paunch, inert, fat, hairy hands, squat, big feet—here you have a general^ and particular description of Prince

Luarsab's "heaven-breathed soul's" worthy covering. This heaven-breathed soul was nowhere visible, as if it had been choked through being buried in His Highness's fat. A Georgian should be careful of breathing in or letting out wind. May not our prince have let this "heaven-breathed" soul escape in wind?

Of learning, by the grace of God, he had none at all. If he had he would not have been so fat. It often happens that when the soul languishes the flesh makes holiday, when the soul blooms the flesh fades. This is why, they say, that consumptives are wise. I do not think, it ever struck our Luarsab to ask why he had no education, — just for that reason:

"It is the plague of the present day", he used to say sorrowfully, just as if the country was suffering from this plague.

His Highness was right too: in his opinion man was a bottomless jar into which all day there should be poured provender and drink, but it could never be filled. His Highness saw in himself, with his serene wisdom, that an untutored man could fulfil this function perfectly well, all the more if he is lord of herds and serfs, serfs who do not differ much from the herds.

"Times have changed" Luarsab used to say with a groan, "times have changed.". Since these infernal schools have been introduced, Sir, the virtue has gone forth from the Georgian. No colour is left in our children. As for eating, they do not know how to eat, and as for drinking they can't drink. What sort of men are they?! They understand books? Though I don't know anything about books am I not a man, haven't I a hat on my head!* I don't lack flesh and colour. Books are not a trade for men, — that's women's work. Give me back the good old days ! Then everything was done in the proper way, everything was in its own place... A good horse, a good gun, a strong arm, and a man was respected then" Ah! my Luarsab! I know thou art sincere, like every old-fashioned Georgian, but thou art wrong in longing for the olden times. Dost thou not know who was desirable in the old days? Are there not horses now? Does not the gun hit the mark nowadays? Are there few strong arms? We still have all these things, but we lack that heart, that ardour, that patriotic devotion which was wont to use a good horse and a good gun in a good cause. The men of by-gone times gave beauty to horse and gun, but now it is the horse and gun that adorn the man. The olden days were good, but the poet Besarion Gabashvili was not wrong when he said. "One 'I have' is better than a thousand 'I hads?'" , — we will say this and bite our tongues, lest...

Though Luarsab lamented so much the plague of the present day, still his face always wore a smile of imbecility peculiar to him. There is a saying: "If you yoke one ox to another it will change either its colour or its temper". I never saw this proverb so justified as in Prince Luarsab's house. His dear consort, Princess Darejan was indeed her husband's other self and they were "One soul and one flesh" as it says in Holy Writ. But how? The same rotundity, the same corpulency, the same smiling face and almost the same stupidity. These two tender wood pigeons, one in soul and flesh, lived wondrous pleasantly together, far from the vapid turmoil of the world. At cockcrow the happy couple opened their eyes: Darejan immediately flew out of the nest while Luarsab, the selfish Luarsab, often indulged himself. With the coverlet thrown back from his chest to turned on the other side with a snore, a groan and other noises of the kind. It happened even that he passed the dull time until dinner in this luxurious manner.

The Georgians say: "He who has plenty of hair on his body is lucky" If this be true, then beasts should be happy! If it be false why should so many of us try to act like beasts? Because if beasts are happy they are only happy because they are hairy.

What can we say about Luarsab's body? As for his chest it was covered with bristles like a pig, so that many doubtful creatures were able in times of alarm to find shelter there, but "... but what? Was not Luarsab happy? As many healths had been drunk in his honour as a Prince of his standing could desire. The hair on his body alone was enough to rouse the envy of an unfortunate man, apart from anything else. What indeed troubled Luarsab? Did he lack colour or flesh? When did he, like any other simple man, allow thought or care to rob him of sleep or of

* In Georgian a male is a "hat wearer", a female a "mantilla wearer".

appetite? He had a good colour, the best of flesh, enough of drink, food and sleep. What more is needed by a Georgian who considers that good and bad luck depend upon hair, and for him, if it be his lot, happiness consists in fanning away flies with his hat all his days.

Reader, are you not weary? Of course you are: here there is no love intrigue, no murder, no wailing of hopeless maids, no leaping into the water, in a word nothing that adorns the story written to amuse, here there is nothing of this kind. Then you must be weary, of course. But you ought to know this, reader, that I have not written down this simple story to amuse you. I want this story to make the reader think, and if it wearies him it is because thinking and boredom are inseparable brother and sister. I want the reader to be wearied, not because it is not amusing but because he is made to think. If this simple work can succeed in doing this I want nothing more, nor did I desire more, my weary reader! If I cannot contrive to do this, what's to be done? I can console myself with this that idle work is better than idle "sitting" How many a useless man has become useful by this blessed proverb. I too perhaps...

When Luarsab was in the state of bliss above described it was death if anybody interrupted his enjoyment and luxury, that is, turning over and over in a gentlemanly and honourable manner on the divan. He was angry if a guest came, said silly people, but surely this was not because he was mean? I wonder that you should think such a thing! Can meanness and a Georgian be found together? Do not frost and fire destroy each other? If he disliked visitors it was only because he had to get up and dress. Getting up even was nothing, this had no terrors for Luarsab: but it was dressing that was the death of him. He passed the whole summer without letting anything come near his body except his shirt and its companion garment, if he was left to his own devices; if not, everything additional was a burden to him. In winter he put a fur coat over his shirt, unless any important personage was invited, for instance the district judge. At the time of which I write the judge was a big bogey: nowadays, since that weary learning has come in, the judge is not looked upon as anybody in particular, but formerly ugh! ugh! What a great man he was. He was such a big man that a proverb was made about his entertainment by the lesser nobility: "Don't think it a joke to have a judge for your guest". That entertaining a judge is no joke every peasant even knows very well nowadays, and formerly the princes knew it too.

Darejan was not as lazy as Luarsab; in this respect, 'fore God; they were certainly not alike; it turned out that they had the same colour but not the same character. Whenever the princess opened her eyes wide she flew out from the divan like a falcon, fastened her petticoat, tied a kerchief round her neck, put on a chintz 'gown — sometimes in her haste, wrong side, first — thrust her bare feet into slippers, and, with a "Now boy!" went down to the strawhouse where the servants reigned, that is in misery and only to a certain extent, and brooded wrathfully over their pent-up feelings. This useless pottering about on the part of our princess was wonderful and ludicrous. This fat, dumpy woman often stood on her feet from morning till noon and rolled about like a ball. She was not as idle as she seemed: here she poked with her elbow a bleary-eyed girl dozing over her sewing, here she slapped the head of a smoky, ragged little urchin, who yawning and lazily, was cleaning for the evening the greasy candle-sticks of the night before; here she scolded one — for what? The princess herself hardly knew why; there she abused another — why? The princess did not know this either; she cursed, swore, raged; in a word, she poured forth on her subordinates all the pent-up wrath of the night and then, weary and exhausted, went into the house; if she met the maid she could not resist giving her another nudge, with a supplementary "May a thunderbolt strike you", if she was in a good humour — and thus worn out she rolled into the room, where sometimes the bloated prince had rolled over like a wine-skin and if it was summer, counted the flies on the ceiling. On one noteworthy occasion he expressed an opinion and they started a discussion, This was in the middle of the hottest time in summer, before dinner, when Darejan had just finished a journey of the above description and came back into the room with a throbbing in her head and wet with sweat. Luarsab looked round, and seeing that the sweat flowed in beads over her ruddy cheeks said to himself with satisfaction: she is a fair tower of strength in the household, she is a fine woman! I thank thee, my Creator, that thou hast vouchsafed me such an one.

When he had said this, content with his unclouded lot, the prince pleased with God and man, turned over on the other side. This turning over and over was a sign that Luarsab was pleased at something.

"Where have you been, my dear, that you are so tired?" he then enquired of the princess.

"How can you ask me where, my dear? if you have a house, a household, a yard, you must keep a sharp look-out, may your troubles light on my head!" replied the princess.

"Just so, my Darejan, just so, I honour you for it! it is woman's work.

"Well!" replied his consort, self-satisfied with his praise: "You must keep your eyes wide open with servants or they will do nothing but eat. Young people want looking after."

"Of course, of course!" "Many a woman does not know how to attend to her business".

"No, they don't know, if they did it would be a good thing, so it would!"

"Sometimes you must rage at them without a cause. If you abuse them it won't do them any harm. Now see how I abuse them, how angry I get, how I rage and curse, and all for what? So that they may fear and respect me, otherwise! ..."

"Of course, of course, otherwise! ..."

"That's what peasants are like; like a stubborn ass, if you once give it its head, then, even if you hold a bunch of berries before its nose you cannot make it budge a foot if you don't rage at it".

"Of course you must roar at it," replied Luarsab, again enchanted at his wife's wisdom: "of course, they are like stubborn asses".

"I am right, am I not?"

"Of course you are right, quite right. Even the dream of a woman would be true," chattered Luarsab inconsequentially. He himself did not know why he had dragged dreams into the conversation.

They were both silent. Luarsab fixed his eyes on the ceiling, where swarms of flies were sitting. Darejan began knitting a sock.

In a short time Luarsab called out:

"I say", Darejan, of you are a clever woman, guess how many flies there are on that beam?"

"Where?"

"There, on that beam of the ceiling."

Now don't say that while they had been silent that ridiculous Luarsab had been counting the flies. How should Darejan know.

"How many are there?" said Darejan, "tell me, then I'll count them".

"I could find out that way. But guess, that is where the sport comes in".

"Is that how I am to do it? Very well, I say there are thirty."

"Oh! Ho! Ho! You, you can't guess.

"Well, how many are there?"

"How many? shall I tell you? No, I won't".

"Tell me if you know."

"As I am a man, there must be forty, Oh ! Ho! Ho! you ... I have guessed.

"Yes, you have guessed... you counted, as you did the other day; I could guess like that too".

"God bless you! may my good father be damned if I counted."

"Then how do you know there are forty?"

"How? because I am intelligent".

"But am I not intelligent too?"

"Yes, but how can a woman's intelligence come up to a man's? I saw by looking carefully that there were forty".

"But if there are not forty?"

"I'll bet you there are".

"Then let us count them".

The pair began to count the flies. It turned out that there were more than fifty.

"So you guessed?!" said Darejan reprovingly: "yes, you guessed. My lord has intelligence and that's why he guessed".

Luarsab was ashamed and became somewhat confused.

"They had flown away, there were forty," said the stupid fellow to justify himself; "of course they had flown away".

"All the better if they had flown away, wouldn't there have been fewer left? There are more than fifty there now".

Luarsab grew angry and said to himself: "Why did I chatter like that".

When he found himself entangled in his own net, grinding his teeth, at which the princess laughed aloud, he said:

"God damn! I am not such a child! I counted them four times"

"But you said you hadn't counted them".

"I wonder to hear you say so! If I had not counted them, I should have been another Solomon the Wise if I had guessed. Of course I counted them, God damn! I made a mistake or else I should have won, my soul's delight! By my life and by God, I should have won."

Thus spoke the deceitful Luarsab, and became sweet as sugar to his consort who had won on this occasion.

"And so you didn't count them, you imp, you?" repeated the princess with a smile.

"I have acknowledged it, my dear, what more do you want?"

"Your long life and happiness, my pet! what more should I want".

"Darejan!"... said Luarsab in an aggrieved and bashful tone; "Darejan, if you love me, don't call me pet."

"Why, my dear, why?"

"It doesn't befit a man like me, let me tell you with all due respect: people call little lap dogs "pet", it's a dog's name, but what sort of name is it to apply to a man?"

"But aren't you my little doggie? Aren't you? This is the first time I have heard you say so," replied Darejan sobbing, for she considered that if he objected to be called her little dog he must have ceased to love.

Luarsab perceived that he had grieved her, and all to no purpose,—and in order to dissipate the idea of his ceasing to love her, he said grinning his teeth:

"Oh! I give in! Oh! I am your little doggie, of course I am! What an eloquent woman she is!" said Luarsab to himself. How prettily and poetically she spoke about my being a little dog! What a mastery of language !... How could she think of it?!"

He too wanted to invent some endearing epithet, but while he was trying to think of one there swam before his eyes visions of stock fish, middle cut of sturgeon, leg of mutton with garlic and such things. With these objects in view what caressing epithet could a man think of?

Nevertheless Luarsab contrived to utter eloquent words:

"Do you know what you are to me? Cress of my soul, tarragon of my heart and my mind's — what shall I say? Let's say salt. Haven't I spoken well, if I have not may your good and renowned father be damned! Weren't they pretty epithets?"

Chattering thus Luarsab enchanted by his own eloquence gnashed his teeth as a sign of joy. Nor was Darejan unhappy. Often did our couple pass the time in this way. Would that they, O reader!

III

Luarsab well knew how to "terrorize" the servants, as he himself would say. It is true he was inclined to be lazy, but after all did not such a large estate need supervision? The cares of this estate drove him to spring from his couch. Then you should have seen what a fair sight our

Luarsab was barefooted, with a blue sheepskin hat upon his head, in a red shirt, with his inseparable companion.

THE HERMIT

I

There, where Mount Kazbek rears his noble brow,
Where eagle cannot soar, nor vulture fly,
Where, never melted by the sun's warm rays,
The frozen rain and snow eternal lie;
Far from the world's wild uproar set apart,
There, in the awful solitude and calm,
Where thunder's mighty roar rules o'er these realms,
Where frost doth dwell and winds sing forth their psalm;
There stood in former days, a house of God,
Built by devout and holy men, the fame
Of that old temple still the folk hold dear,
And Bethlehem is still, to-day, its name.
The ice-bound wall of that secluded shrine
Was hollowed out from craggy, massive block,
And, like an eagle's eyrie on the cliff,
The door stood carved in the solid rock.
Straight downward from this gate unto the path
There hung descending a rough iron chain,
And save by that strange ladder's aid alone
Man could in no wise thereto entrance gain.

II

In days of old, monks left this world of woe.
And there they dwelt devoted unto God,
In that wild wilderness they sang their songs
Of praise, and in the path of saints they trod.
There they withdrew to seek God's solitude,
There they abandoned all earth's vanity,
And, in that everlasting dwelling sought
To fit themselves for God's eternity.
Those holy fathers sacrificed this world,
And, for the pain they suffered in that shrine,
The mountaineers revered them, and they sang
The praise of good deeds, and grace divine.
And by the people still that place is held
So holy, even now, that in the chase
A refuge there the wounded beast may seek,
For there no huntsman dares to leave his trace;
None save the man whose life is given to God
Can rest within that ruin's sacred shade,
And he who breaks this law must perish there
By swift, avenging lightning's trenchant blade.

III

And there, in yon forsaken hermitage,

An anchorite took up his lone abode,
He left the fleeting world and, set apart,
Gave up the present for the life with God.
Far from the dwelling of the sinful man,
Far from the realm where wickedness holds sway,
Where e'en the just man scarcely can escape
From Satan's tempting power; where, night and day,
Man is pursued by evil, like a thief
Which tries to seize upon him unaware;
Where, e'en if right be known by its true name,
The hand of sin will still all evil dare;
Where faithlessness, corruption, rapine dwell,
And brother for his brother's blood doth lust,
Where discord turns the purest love of friends,
By scandal's breath, to hatred and mistrust...
He left that fleeting world where every gift
Is as a snare, and beauty but a lure;
The devil uses even virtues there
To wile th'unwary, and his prey secure.

IV

Alone the hermit dwelt, amid this ice,
A solitary anchorite, his mind
He troubled not henceforth with painful thoughts
Of all the sinful cares of human kind.
He banished from his heart each worldly grief,
Each thought, concern and wish that was profane,
That he might stand before the judgment seat
Of God, with spirit pure and free from stain.
Both day and night, with lamentation, prayer,
And scourging martyred he, for his soul's sake,
His flesh, and, like a vessel wash'd clean,
With tears he strove his spirit pure to make;
Both day and night, with sighing and complaint,
The icy rocks re-echoed forth his groans,
And his fast-flowing, suppliant tears ceased not
In that lone home of weeping and of moans.
Far from this transitory earth apart,
His spirit like a flower there did bloom;
Each worldly wish was calmed and laid to rest,
And all desire was buried in the tomb.

V

He was not old — upon his saint-like face
His soul's nobility was pictured fair,
It could be seen his spirit was the home
Of other thoughts than those of worldly care.
His features melancholy, thin and sad,
Yet beamed with loveliness of grace divine,
Which from his deeply wrinkled, lofty brow,

Like bright encircling halo, forth did shine.
So gentle and so sweet was the deep thought
Expressed in his clear, meditative eyes,
It seemed as if in them was mirrored forth
Virtue herself, arrayed in modest guise;
As if, with gently gladness, they rejoiced
At Paradise's open entrance gate,
Together with his soul, to meet their Lord,
And hastened on, with faith secure, elate.
In fasting and prayer, with body weak,
He lived like holy martyrs who attain,
By many roads of suffering and of woe,
To glory, conquering heroes over pain.

VI

His witness was accepted of the Lord,
Who hearkened to His Humble servant's sighs
And, as a token of His grace, vouchsafed
A miracle in answer to his cries.
In the dark cell wherein the monk did pray
The window faced the dawning day's first gleam,
And downward, in a flood of lustrous light,
The rays of sun and moon did through it stream.
And o'er yon solitary mountain peak
When rose the sun's glad rays of morning light,
Through that small window in his lonely cell
The beam shone down, a column broad and bright.
Lo! when the hermit prayed, it was ordained
That on the ray his book of prayers should stand,
And on that solid sunbeam did it rest
Secure and safe, by God's divine command...
Thus passed his days, and thus rolled on the years,
And as a sign that God approved the way
Wherein he walked, thus pure and without sin,
This wonder was performed day by day.

VII

One evening, from long vigils weary, worn,
Forth through the door he dragged his limbs, and fixed
His meditative gaze upon the plain
Stretched, verdant-carpeted, the hills betwixt.
The setting sun had not yet sunk to rest,
Behind the mountain's summit still he beamed,
And round the peak, like fan of flaming fire,
The heav'ns with a broad-stretching glory gleamed,
Like to a brazier, burned the bright blue sky,
And sparks of yellow and deep crimson-hued,
Glittered among the clouds; bent back by them,
They trembled with a thousand tints imbued.
The hermit was entranced, and raptured gazed —

So wondrous fair, so glorious was the sight —
Upon the splendour of the glowing sun
As on a living picture of God's might...
But suddenly the wind arose; o'er rocks,
Ravines and caverns blew the stormy blast,
And, like a serpent, over Kazbek's peak
A dark low'ring cloud, swift gliding, passed.

VIII

It crept along, tyrannical, immense,
And stretched across the heav'ns' expansive vault,
Then burst the thunderclap, and roared with rage,
As one who doth his deadly foe assault.
The heaven and earth were straight with trembling seized
At that loud noise, that terrible uproar —
Then sudden darkness overspread the sky,
And hissing hail forth from the clouds did pour.
Upon the earth, all intermingled, burst,
With furious din, the thunder, lightning, hail,
The raging wind blew fiercely 'mong the rocks,
With angry whirl, a wild, strong, howling gale;
All these together strove, so that it seemed
As if God oped his vials of wrath, and hurled
An awful judgment down from heaven that day
As retribution on His erring world...
But now the monk took refuge in his cell,
He prayed, with fervently upraised hand,
Before the Virgin's image, that the Lord
From sin and ruin would redeem the land.

IX

Then suddenly, he heard a human voice,
And, startled at this unaccustomed sound,
Again he listened, and he heard beneath
As if one called from out the mirk profound.
Quickly unto the door the hermit ran,
Against the ladder saw a bending form,
And lo! a childish voice cried out aloud
And begged a shelt'ring roof in that wild storm.
Say, can it be a son of man who roams
In this fierce deluge, on this awesome night?
The wild beasts e'en lie cow'ring in their lairs,
In fear they flee the fury of God's sight!
Who art thou?" said the monk, "Art thou a man?
Or evil sprite sent by the devil here?"
"Human am I — I pray thee shelter me!
For God's love, save me now from death's dire fear!
Dost thou not see that heaven is well-nigh rent
And, overwhelming, on the earth doth press?
Is this a time for words! Oh, pity me!

Refuse me not a refuge in distress!"

X

"Thou sayest well. If thou be son of man
'Twere sin to leave thee to the storm a prey;
If thou be spirit ill, then God must wish
To make a trial of His poor monk this day.
Come up whoe'er thou art! God's will be done!
Hold fast this iron chain, and have no fear
It is a ladder safe, footholds there are
By which a man can mount securely here!"
At last he reached the monastery door;
Climbing the steep ascent of that rough chain.
The hermit met him "What or who is this?"
In the deep gloom he asked himself in vain.
"Come in, whoe'er thou art. I'll shelter thee,
Take refuge here, kneel down and pray,
This is my cell, and lo! it is God's house;
Here many a knee hath bent before this day."
He led the way; into the cell they came;
Here was the darkness deeper, e'en despite
The ashes of the almost burnt-out fire
Which in the gloom gleamed with a feeble light.

XI

Now, when God's Mother let this new-come guest
Into the cell, and showed of wrath no sign,
The monk said in his heart: "'Tis son of man,
And not a spirit harmful and malign!"
The stranger sank down quickly, numbed and wet,
And stirred the cinders, then recumbent lay
Upon the hearth, with both cold hands outstretched,
Over the dying embers' fading ray.
"How cold it is!" exclaimed the shiv'ring guest,
"Ugh! Ugh! I'm frozen into stone!"
The hermit started at the sound, 'twas like
A maiden's voice, he trembled at her moan.
Could it then be that fate had hither sent
This shape in woman's guise to be a test!
And, like a flash of lightning, came this thought
Into the horror-stricken hermit's breast.
But e'en if fate had sent this for a trial,
It must have been by God's own self designed;
Therefore he took it from the Lord in faith,
In confidence and peace of heart resigned.

XII

"Hast thou no firewood?" asked the visitor,
"Go, bring some here and light a fire! A load

Upon my back, to-morrow, will I fetch;
But let me warm myself, for love of God!"
The hermit, from the corner, brought some wood
To light the fire anew; the blaze that beamed
When it was kindled, fast dispersed the gloom,
And through the darksome cell it brightly streamed.
But when the ray, cast from the lighted fire,
Upon the stranger guest, there seated, glowed,
A picture of enchanting loveliness
Unto the hermit's wond'ring eyes it showed.
Full of bewitching beauty, full of life,
A youthful maiden by the fire reclined,
Of noble mien, yet meek, she seemed; her neck
Was bare, and graceful as the timid hind.
The beauty shed abroad from her black eyes
Disputed with the warmth cast by the glow
Of firelight, and beneath that conquering gaze
It yielded up to her, and flickered low.

XIII

The grace of Love herself, if she desired
To picture forth the beauties of her mind,
And if she dwelt incarnate on the earth,
A fairer semblance could not wish to find.
One could not say if grace adorned her form
Or if her form was ornament to grace;
E'en envy, hatred's self, could naught descry —
In that fair maid, of fault there was no trace.
Who would not tremble 'fore her glorious eyes,
Her brilliant cheeks, and bosom heaving high?
Look at her lips!... It seems that Love has left
A kiss imprinted on them tenderly...
Who is not drawn and captivated held
By mighty Beauty's all-enchanting power?...
'Tis said that by its influence subdued
The savage beasts are tamed, and gentle cower.
And e'en that hermit stern, severe and sad,
Grew gentler and more mild, by beauty swayed;
With sorrow in his guileless heart, he gazed,
His eyes held captive by the lovely maid.

XIV

At length he asked her: "Who art thou, my child?
What can have brought thee to this desert drear,
In such rough weather, when the tempest wild
Has almost flooded earth, afar and near?"
"A shepherd lass am I. Down in the lap
Of Kazbek's mount my father's flocks I fed;
Deceived were the sheep by the fresh grass,
I followed them, and on they still were led.

Fair was the evening, when the setting sun
Was glowing, and upon the sky I gazed
Until I could see naught but heaven's vault,
For in its brilliant light my eyes were dazed.
The great sun shone, surrounded with bright rays,
Behind the mountain peak, and heart and eye
Were ravished with the beauty of the sight —
'Twas like God's face that beamed so fair on high.
I quite forgot to heed my father's words:
'My child, trust ne'er yon mountains, for I've seen
The stormy blast sweep suddenly from heav'n,
Although the sun rose glorious and serene'.

XV

"It matters naught! Come," said my eager heart,
'Dost thou not wish this wondrous scene to view?
Intent I gazed... but Kazbek suddenly
Frowned fierce, and clouds o'erspread the heavens blue.
In one brief moment all was darkness drear,
And from the mountain blew a chilly wind.
I wish'd to take the sheep home ere nightfall,
But 'twas too late, the way I could not find.
For suddenly the storm came sweeping on,
Like drops of lead the hail began to shower;
I trembled for the sheep, but could do naught —
In that deep gloom fear robbed me of all power.
Indeed this mountain treacherous is, and false;
For sudden darkness had obscured the day,
The smiling heaven had changed to sudden hell.
And all my joy was turned into dismay.
Ah! why did I not heed my father's words!
What will befall me! Woe is me! They say,
I've heard it oft, that those who disobey
Their father ne'er can prosper in their way.

XVI

"I, disobedient to my father's words,
Had lost the sheep. I only was to blame.
But (canst thou tell me?) how can one avoid
The law that fate inex'orable doth frame?
It was not for the flocks I grieved alone,
'Twas that my father dear would be alarmed —
I am his only child, he loves me much —
Ah! sorely would he grieve if I were harmed.
The sheep were gone — they were his sole support,
His only means of livelihood and gain —
Yet, were I only safe at home once more
He would not frown, lest he should cause me pain.
I stood in that wild storm on yon hillside;
Upon the land, from heaven, the deluge poured,

The mountain shook and trembled to its base
Beneath my feet, while loud the thunder roared. —
What could I do! Where could I hope to find
A shelter from the tempest's raging blast?
Shall I be bold, and strive to reach my home,
Or trust to fate until the storm be past?

XVII

"But if I stay — who knows if I am safe
From this dark night's impending, awful doom!
If I go forth — in some deep, rocky glen
I may be dashed to pieces in the gloom...
Yet I resolved to take the homeward path;
And said: Whatever comes to pass is good!...
Nor canst thou say that I mistook my way;
For here in safety presently I stood.
I felt the chain, and then I knew that this
Must be Mount Kazbek's far-famed, saintly shrine;
Full often had I from my father heard
That here a monk lived for the life divine.
With joy I called aloud, and called again;
My voice was powerless 'gainst the raging wind.
'Woe unto me', I cried, 'if none can hear,
If on this night no shelter I shall find!'
But God had mercy on me, and at last
My cry He carried through the storm to thee —
I need not tell thee more — thou know'st the rest —
May God save thee, e'en as thou hast saved me."

XVIII

"Thanks are not due to me that thou art safe,
For God alone can save the child He made;
He ever stretches forth a helping hand
That He may all His chosen creatures aid..."
"It seems thou thoughtest me a spirit ill!"
"Be not amazed nor troubled in thy mind,
What being in the world would visit me,
A lonely monk forgotten by mankind!"
"Hast thou no ties upon the earth, no friend,
No brother, sister, kin dear to thy heart?"
"These had I once; to all I said farewell.
To serve the Lord, from yon world did I part."
"Hast thou lived here for long?" "I cannot tell."
"Thou canst not tell!" "My child, from all the fears
Of yon fast-fleeting world apart I dwell.
What reck I of the flight of passing years?"
"And dost thou live without a human friend?"
"To me God's holy will was thus revealed."
"But why should God desire that man should stay
Alone amid these icy rocks concealed?"

XIX

"May God not be displeased, nor thou, O monk!
For I am very ignorant in speech...
When in yon vale below I watched my flocks,
And looked up here, as far as sight could reach,
I often pondered o'er my father's words:
'That there a monk dwelt, in those realms of ice,
Who for his soul's sake suffered solitude',
And of his body made a sacrifice.
This tale surprised me, for I could not think
How this should be a pleasing deed to God;
He surely could not be displeased that man
Should love the world where He Himself had trod!
I said within myself: 'How can this be?
'Why did God deck the earth and make it fair
'If man should look upon it as a curse,
'And leave the world and all its beauties rare?
'Should I abandon all, all earthly ties?
'From all my friends, and home, should I depart?
'O God, forgive me! 'tis too hard a task!
'I could not with such ease crush my poor heart!'

XX

"How canst thou bear to leave the world of joy?
Its pleasures sweet thou surely knowest well!
Death sways all here, but there is gladsome life:
Here grief abides, but there delight doth dwell.
Hast thou from thy crushed heart torn ev'ry tie?
Does love no longer linger in thy breast?
Hadst thou not brought grief hither with thee too?
Do care and sorrow ne'er disturb thy rest?
Do dreams of home ne'er haunt the weary hours?
Dost thou ne'er for thy friends and parents pine,
Was there no heart to make thee happy there —
No heart which throbbed in harmony with thine?
How couldst thou leave all love?"... "Hear me, my child!
The soul is dearer than all vain delight;
It is a captive in yon fleeting world,
These joys are chains that stay its upward flight."
"Are all who dwell within the world then doomed?
Must we all hopes of safety then forego?"
"Salvation's road lies open unto all;
This is life's way for me—a way of woe!"

XXI

"A way of woe!" These words he scarce had said
When chilling horror seized the hermit's heart.
Such words betokened bitter discontent —

How could complaint in his calm life find part?
"A way of woe!" 'Twas cry of suff'ring soul
Sunk 'neath the load of sadness and distress —
'Twas like a sobbing sigh, a mournful moan
For joy departed and lost happiness...
What had he lost? Should he not gladsome feel
That from the weary world he had withdrawn,
And all its fleeting fancies flung aside
That for his soul a day of rest might dawn?
It cannot be that still he casts behind
A longing look on life and its delights,
When upward, e'en to God's most holy throne,
Sweet immortality his soul invites.
What had come o'er him? What had moved him thus?
It could not be that now he mourned his fate,
And felt regret that he had yielded all
To Him, who every being did create!

XXII

He dares not own himself displeas'd with God;
The soul that trusts Him He will never leave.
Was not God's blessing generously given?
He could not wish for more — why did he grieve?
Yea! Yea! His grace was all he could desire...
Then, whence had come those words of deep despair?
Around his cell he glanced, oppress'd by fear,
As if perchance some lurking fiend hid there.
But none was there... none save the wearied maid,
Who, sunk in slumbers soft, in silence lay,
While lovingly on her the firelight glowed
And flicker'd o'er her face, glad and gay.
Bewitching was she as she lay asleep,
Adorn'd in beauty and all charms of love,
As if, seeking to make her fair and good,
Both love and happiness together strove.
Beauty divine seem'd to have shed on her
All the rich treasures of its boundless store,
And, as the nightingale's upon the rose,
So beauty's soul upon her cheek did pour.

XXIII

And when the hermit gaz'd upon that face
The stormy waves that toss'd his heart were still.
Surely some secret force held him enslav'd
That he must look on her against his will!
What power is this that o'er him casts its spell?
Is it delight, or sorcery's fell snare?
His eyes were traitors to his mind's command;
He tried to turn away, but still stood there.
Long time he look'd... then into his cold heart

At last there streamed a ray, so tender, warm —
He trembled, yet he felt the trembling sweet...
What gape it such a strange and subtle charm?
His agitated heart heaved with quick throbs,
Ne'er had he felt it thus before this day,
He heard the melody of silver strings;
As on a lyre, love on his heart did play.
What meant this sweetness hitherto unknown?
He could not tell this tender feeling's name;
If it was sinful, why was it so like
Immortal life, his soul's incessant aim?

XXIV

A step he took — himself he knew not why —
Calm and serene still slept the wearied maid,
And pleasing thoughts pursued her in her dreams,
While round her parted lips a proud smile played.
And that seducing smile so sweetly hired
Th'enchanted gazer to a fatal kiss,
None could deny those soul-enticing lips,
Not e'en an angel fresh from realms of bliss.
Now, lo! the unhappy monk bent down his head
To kiss her face... but seized with swift alarm
He started back... 'Twas death's delusive snare
That sought to draw him by the maiden's charm.
He was not vanquished? Nay, it could not be
That now his faith had lost its former power —
The thirst for holiness that filled his soul
Would surely last until life's latest hour!
He could not cast away God's holy gifts,
The welfare of his soul and grace divine.
To change them for this earth's harassing cares?
For passing worldly pleasures dared he pine?

XXV

But who is this that calls reproachfully,
"Hast thou not fallen into fatal fault!"
Who cries, triumphant o'er his wounded heart:
"Art thou not vanquished by my first assault?"
Whence comes this sound of noisy, mocking laugh?
What merriment is this that greets his ear?
No one was there; and yet, it could not be
That this loud laugh was born of naught but fear!
And tremblingly, with terror, he looked round;
He was alone... still slept the unconscious maid.
In haste he rose, and, filled with wild alarm,
Before the Holy Virgin bent and prayed.
Is there no help? E'en looking on that face
The same dismay the hermit's heart assails,
'Gainst that curst laughter, fraught with deep reproach,

His erstwhile potent prayer naught avails!
His soul entreats his erring heart to pray,
But all its earnest efforts are in vain;
E'en kneeling 'neath the Virgin's sheltering gaze
He cannot his rebellious will restrain!

XXVI

He looks upon the holy Virgin's face,
His supplicating eyes entreat her aid —
But, woe! her gracious smile beams not on him,
Before him still he sees the shepherd maid.
What brings that form again before his eyes'?
Is it of flesh, or but a phantom pale?
Or has the image of God's Mother changed
Into the likeness of a mortal frail?
Since he has fall'n, does God not deem him fit
To look upon the Virgin's holy face?
Has He performed a miracle divine
To bring His erring servant back to grace?
He tries to cross himself, but lo! his hands
Refuse to move; he seeks to breathe a prayer,
His tongue is mute; he, thirsting for God's smile,
Can see naught save the cursed maiden there.
"Now, canst thou still resist?" and in his cell
The mocking laughter re-echoed forth once more.
No longer could the unhappy monk remain;
But, like a madman, rushed forth thro' the door...

XXVII

...The day was dawning, fair the morning broke,
And from the heav'ns the clouds were chased away,
While o'er the tranquil earth a zephyr breathed
And everywhere peace held her potent sway...
But who is this with wildly waving hair
That runs among the rocks with trembling dread?
It cannot be the monk!... 'Tis he indeed!
O'er his pale face a death-like hue is spread.
See how he stands upon the very brink,
And gazes longingly on yonder peaks,
As if he on those lofty mountain heights
His last and only consolation seeks.
He watches for the sun's first rising ray;
Why doth it tarry? Why doth it delay?
Until this day e'en Time itself was naught,
Why doth a moment now cause him dismay?
— The sun arose! Into his cell in haste
The monk returned, by dawning hope consoled;
For through his window streamed the sun's bright beam,
And stood there like a pillar, massy gold.

XXVIII

His heart was calmed... Once more with timid trust,
His eyes he turned towards the Blessed Maid;
Once more the image smiled upon the monk,
Looking with favour on him as he prayed,
"O God! Thine anger then is turned away!"
And thankful tears forth from his eyes did well.
He laid his book of prayers upon the ray;
But, woe! the unhappy man! alas!... it fell.
Before the hermit's eyes the light grew dim;
Fear seized his fainting heart, and hopeless dread;
With a wild, Availing shriek of woe he fell,
In that bright beam, from earth his spirit fled.

* * * * *

And there where saints once sang their grateful hymns,
And glorified God's wondrous works and ways,
There where they offered daily sacrifice
Of lamentation, love, and prayer, and praise,
There, midst the landslips and the broken stones,
Only the wind moves to and fro, and sighs
While, fearful of the mighty thunder-clap,
Within its lonesome lair the wild beast cries.

Poems

ELEGY

The pale light of the full moon
Was streaming on the fatherland
And its white ray among the mountains
Hovered in deep blue space.

Nowhere a sound, nowhere a cry
Nothing born of parents stirred
Save sometimes crying in pain
Some Georgian sobbing in his sleep was heard.

Again alone... and the mountain's shade
Caressed my native land in sleep
Still sleep O God! Sleep, always sleep
When shalt thou deem us worthy to awake?

SPRING

The wood is clothed in leaf?
The swallow twitters again,
In the garden the solitary vinestem
Weeps with excess of joy.

The mead is in bloom,
The mountains blossom,
O beloved fatherland
Why dost thou not bloom?

O OUR ARAGVA...*

O our Aragva how I love thee!
Thou art the witness of our ancient life
On thy banks my, fatherland
Was at one time a glory.

The ancient greatness of my native land
Flourished before thy holy eye.
I love thee for this, that I a Georgian
There on thy banks was born.

In thy waves in the midst of my land
A long history lies buried
And pure Georgian blood
Has been poured forth on thy banks.

There where thy powerful stream
Mingles with the troubled slow Kura
There once was spilt Georgian life
There thundered the voice of Georgia for
for fatherland's sake.

Centuries have passed over thy waves
And centuries over — those Georgians
With overflowing heart on thy holy waters
How many times have I gazed with grief —

What sought I ? my country's past,
In thy sight my ancient fatherland has
sunk in the stream.
And only the tears of blood from my wearied
eyes
Give frequently broken-hearted answer.

* The river Aragvi

THE SLEEPING MAID

I gaze on thee so calm at rest,
And look upon thy crystal breast;
Thy heart beats like the placid waves,
When summer shores the water laves.
On thy soft cheek's a gentle flush;
Thy smiling lips like rubies blush;
Like glimpse of heaven's thy pure sleep,
While o'er thee angels vigil keep.
Thy breath's as sweet as thy pure heart,
Oh! blest is he whose love thou art!

* * *

Ah!... She to whom my dear desires
Life's longings — even self — were given —
This dark land now she ne'er inspires
She dwells beyond the highest heaven
The star of my fair fortune's gone
An orphan am I here — alone —
The only joy for me that's left
Is tears — of all else I'm bereft.

BAZALETHI'S LAKE

Deep down in Bazaleti's lake,
'Tis said a golden cradle lies,
And there beneath the welling waves,
An orchard blooms, and never dies.

That garden gay is always green,
Its blossoms never know decay;
The changing seasons of this earth,
That region rare need not obey.

Nor summer's sun, nor winter's cold,
Can harm that em'rald orchard gay
For, in those sunlit glades of gold,
Eternal spring doth hold her sway.

In that fair garden's very heart
The golden cradle aye doth rest,
There man hath never dared to go —
That spot has never known a guest

Of the same school is Prince Ilia Chavchavadze (born 1837), who is in many respects the most remarkable man that Georgia possesses. All his poems, and indeed all his works, whether as a poet, a novelist, a journalist, an orator, or a financier, breathe a spirit of the loftiest patriotism. The return of spring and the awakening of bird and flower to fuller life are to him a reminder of the long-delayed awakening of his beloved land; his elegies on the Kura, the Aragva, the Alazana are all full of the same feeling. It is, however, in "Lines to the Georgian mother" that he most clearly expresses his ideas; after reminding the matrons of Georgia how they have served their country in times past, cheerfully sending their sons forth to the fight and sustaining their courage in the hour of misfortune, he says: —

"...But why should we shed idle tears
For glory that will ne'er return?
The ever-flowing stream of years
Leaves us no time to idly mourn.

"'Tis ours to tread an untried path
'Tis ours the future to prepare.
If forward thou dost urge thy sons,
Then answer'd is my earnest prayer.

"This is the task that waits for thee,
Thou virtuous mother of our land
Strengthen thy sons, that they may be
Their country's stay with heart and hand.

"Inspire them with fraternal love,
Freedom, equality and right,
Teach them to struggle 'gainst all ill,
And give them courage for the fight."

Chavchavadze's tales and poems have done more than anything else to awaken the Georgian people to a sense of the duties they have to perform in the altered conditions under which they now live. His poem, "Memoirs of a Robber", which portrayed the lazy country squires who lived on the toil of their serfs, made a powerful impression. On the class it was meant for; and the tale, "Is that a Man?" which describes the life of a young noble who spends his whole time in eating, drinking, sleeping and folly, brought a blush to the faces of hundreds of his countrymen, and prompted them to seek a worthier mode of existence. At first, the more conservative part of the nobility were bitterly opposed to the radical ideas of Chavchavadze, but he has now succeeded in bringing round the majority of them to his way of thinking. He is editor of a daily paper, *Iveria*, which is read by all classes of society, and most of his time is spent between his journalistic duties and the management of the nobles' Land Bank, an institution founded for the relief of the farmers.

Besides those I have mentioned, Chavchavadze has written many other works; with the following extract from "The Phantom" I conclude this brief notice of him: —

"O Georgia, thou pearl and ornament of the world. What sorrow and misfortune hast thou not undergone for the Christian faith! Tell me, what other land has had so thorny a path to tread? Where is the land that has maintained such a fight twenty centuries long without disappearing from the earth? Thou alone, Georgia, couldst do it. No other people can compare with thee for endurance. How often have thy sons freely shed their blood for thee! Every foot of thy soil is made fruitful by it. And even when they bowed under oppression they always bravely rose again. Faith and freedom were their ideals".*

OLIVER WARDROP

* The Kingdom of Georgia by Oliver Wardrop, London, 1888, p 150—152.

PREFACE

While most English readers are, to some extent acquainted with the literature of Persia, there are but few who are aware of the existence of Georgian literature. Yet Georgia is well worthy of attention. The *Man in the Panther's Skin*, by Rust'haveli, the great epic poet of the XIIIth century, loses nothing by comparison with Firdausi's *Shah Nameh*; but what modern Persian can be placed beside Barat'hashvili or Chavchavadze ?

Endowed by nature with exceptional gifts, assimilating alike the culture of the East and West, the Christian kingdom of the Caucasus achieved a high degree of refinement and enlightenment at a very early date; and, despite the fierce blasts of war that have swept ceaselessly over the land, the light of literature has been kept alive.

Prince Ilia Chavchavadze was born in 1837. His family has produced many remarkable men, including the poet Alexander Chavchavadze (1786—1846), who was much influenced by the writings of Byron. Prince Ilia received his education in the Tiflis grammar-school and the University of St. Petersburg.

In 1863 he published a journal, *Sakart'hvelos Moambe*, which had a great influence on his countrymen. In the same year he wrote his novel, "Is that a Man?" in which he drew a picture of the aimless life of the average country squire. This tale raised a storm of ill-will, but it achieved the object of its author: the landed gentry saw their faults mercilessly mirrored forth; first of all they were angry, then ashamed, finally awakened to self-improvement.

Chavchavadze's literary activity extends over a period of well-nigh forty years, and falls into three divisions. In the first, he is critical and satirical, endeavouring to rouse men from the lethargy in which they lay. In the second, he encourages them to lead a nobler life, by reminding them of the glorious past of their country, and by depicting the heroic deeds of patriots. Finally, he has passed into a phase which may be described as almost purely aesthetic.

To this last division belongs *The Hermit*, written in 1883. Based upon a legend, the poem has, in my opinion, a symbolic meaning added. Is not the hermit meant, perhaps, to represent mediaevalism, and the shepherd girl, so bewitching and bright, the Renaissance, which has come so much later in Georgia than in the West? Before her beauty and gladness the old life cannot be lived, and must either share in her joy or die. From ancient Buddhist legend to modern French romance, many stories have been written on the temptation of holy recluses. *The Hermit* differs from all these in its wonderful simplicity. Here, we have no theatrical machinery, no dazzling wealth, no dreams of power to tempt the monk from his solitude, poverty and suffering; no vision of Cleopatra or Semiramis to wile him from the path of duty., but only a simple maiden, innocent and lovely, who tells him of the pure loves of mankind and of the joyousness of life. Yet, we feel that the temptation is all the more subtle and strong for its very simplicity. In the original the style is dignified and harmonious, and the descriptions are full of poetry, and tender sympathy with nature in all her moods.

It is not as a poet and novelist alone that Prince Ilia is distinguished. He is the Editor of a daily paper, *Iveria*, published in Tiflis, managing director of the Land Bank of the Nobility (an institution which devotes all its profits to educational and other philanthropic work), an eloquent orator, and in all the social life of the nation the most prominent figure.

I regret that my translation is so far from doing justice to the original. The difficulty of learning a tongue hitherto unknown in the West, and of rendering an idiom unallied to any known family of languages may be pleaded as some excuse for my shortcomings.

MARJORY WARDROP.

Kertch, Crimea,* October 1895.

* *The Hermit* a legend by Prince Ilia Chavchavadze translated from the Georgian by Marjory Wardrop, London, 1895. p7—10.

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