

DEAD SOULS



NIKOLAI VASILIEVICH GOGOL

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INTRODUCTION.

Dead Souls, first published in 1842, is the great prose classic of Russia. That amazing institution, "the Russian novel," not only began its career with this unfinished masterpiece by Nikolai Vasil'evich Gogol, but practically all the Russian masterpieces that have come since have grown out of it, like the limbs of a single tree. Dostoevsky goes so far as to bestow this tribute upon an earlier work by the same author, a short story entitled *The Cloak*; this idea has been wittily expressed by another compatriot, who says: "We have all issued out of Gogol's Cloak."

Dead Souls, which bears the word "Poem" upon the title page of the original, has been generally compared to *Don Quixote* and to the *Pickwick Papers*, while E. M. Vogüé places its author somewhere between Cervantes and Le Sage. However considerable the influences of Cervantes and Dickens may have been—the first in the matter of structure, the other in background, humour, and detail of characterisation—the predominating and distinguishing quality of the work is undeniably something foreign to both and quite peculiar to itself; something which, for want of a better term, might be called the quality of the Russian soul. The English reader familiar with the works of Dostoevsky, Turgenev, and Tolstoi, need hardly be told what this implies; it might be defined in the words of the French critic just named as "a tendency to pity." One might indeed go further and say that it implies a certain tolerance of one's characters even though they be, in the conventional sense, knaves, products, as the case might be, of conditions or circumstance, which after all is the thing to be criticised and not the man. But pity and tolerance are rare in satire, even in clash with it, producing in the result a deep sense of tragic humour. It is this that makes of *Dead Souls* a unique work, peculiarly Gogolian, peculiarly Russian, and distinct from its author's Spanish and English masters.

Still more profound are the contradictions to be seen in the author's personal character; and unfortunately they pre-

vented him from completing his work. The trouble is that he made his art out of life, and when in his final years he carried his struggle, as Tolstoi did later, back into life, he repented of all he had written, and in the frenzy of a wakeful night burned all his manuscripts, including the second part of *Dead Souls*, only fragments of which were saved. There was yet a third part to be written. Indeed, the second part had been written and burned twice. Accounts differ as to why he had burned it finally. Religious remorse, fury at adverse criticism, and despair at not reaching ideal perfection are among the reasons given. Again it is said that he had destroyed the manuscript with others altogether inadvertently.

The poet Pushkin, who said of Gogol that "behind his laughter you feel the unseen tears," was his chief friend and inspirer. It was he who suggested the plot of *Dead Souls* as well as the plot of the earlier work *The Revisor*, which is almost the only comedy in Russian. The importance of both is their introduction of the social element in Russian literature, as Prince Kropotkin points out. Both hold up the mirror to Russian officialdom and the effects it has produced on the national character. The plot of *Dead Souls* is simple enough, and is said to have been suggested by an actual episode.

It was the day of serfdom in Russia, and a man's standing was often judged by the numbers of "souls" he possessed. There was a periodical census of serfs, say once every ten or twenty years. This being the case, an owner had to pay a tax on every "soul" registered at the last census, though some of the serfs might have died in the meantime. Nevertheless, the system had its material advantages, inasmuch as an owner might borrow money from a bank on the "dead souls" no less than on the living ones. The plan of Chichikov, Gogol's hero-villain, was therefore to make a journey through Russia and buy up the "dead souls," at reduced rates of course, saving their owners the government tax, and acquiring for himself a list of fictitious serfs, which he meant to mortgage to a bank for a considerable sum. With this money he would buy an estate and some real live serfs, and make the beginning of a fortune.

Obviously, this plot, which is really no plot at all but merely a ruse to enable Chichikov to go across Russia in a *troika*, with Selifan the coachman as a sort of Russian Sancho Panza, gives Gogol a magnificent opportunity to reveal his genius as a painter of Russian panorama, peopled with char-

acteristic native types commonplace enough but drawn in comic relief. "The comic," explained the author yet at the beginning of his career, "is hidden everywhere, only living in the midst of it we are not conscious of it; but if the artist brings it into his art, on the stage say, we shall roll about with laughter and only wonder we did not notice it before." But the comic in *Dead Souls* is merely external. Let us see how Pushkin, who loved to laugh, regarded the work. As Gogol read it aloud to him from the manuscript the poet grew more and more gloomy and at last cried out: "God! What a sad country Russia is!" And later he said of it: "Gogol invents nothing; it is the simple truth, the terrible truth."

The work on one hand was received as nothing less than an exposure of all Russia—what would foreigners think of it? The liberal elements, however, the critic Belinsky among them, welcomed it as a revelation, as an omen of a freer future. Gogol, who had meant to do a service to Russia and not to heap ridicule upon her, took the criticisms of the Slavophiles to heart; and he palliated his critics by promising to bring about in the succeeding parts of his novel the redemption of Chichikov and the other "knaves and block-heads." But the "Westerner" Belinsky and others of the liberal camp were mistrustful. It was about this time (1847) that Gogol published his *Correspondence with Friends*, and aroused a literary controversy that is alive to this day. Tolstoi is to be found among his apologists.

Opinions as to the actual significance of Gogol's masterpiece differ. Some consider the author a realist who has drawn with meticulous detail a picture of Russia; others, Merejkovsky among them, see in him a great symbolist; the very title *Dead Souls* is taken to describe the living of Russia as well as its dead. Chichikov himself is now generally regarded as a universal character. We find an American professor, William Lyon Phelps,¹ of Yale, holding the opinion that "no one can travel far in America without meeting scores of Chichikovs; indeed, he is an accurate portrait of the American promoter, of the successful commercial traveller whose success depends entirely not on the real value and usefulness of his stock-in-trade, but on his knowledge of human nature and of the persuasive power of his tongue." This is also the opinion held by Prince Kropotkin,² who says: "Chichikov may buy

¹ *Essays on Russian Novelists*. Macmillan.

² *Ideals and Realities in Russian Literature*. Duckworth and Co.

dead souls, or railway shares, or he may collect funds for some charitable institution, or look for a position in a bank, but he is an immortal international type; we meet him everywhere; he is of all lands and of all times; he but takes different forms to suit the requirements of nationality and time."

Again, the work bears an interesting relation to Gogol himself. A romantic, writing of realities, he was appalled at the commonplaceness of life, at finding no outlet for his love of colour derived from his Cossack ancestry. He realised that he had drawn a host of "heroes," "one more commonplace than another, that there was not a single palliating circumstance, that there was not a single place where the reader might find pause to rest and to console himself, and that when he had finished the book it was as though he had walked out of an oppressive cellar into the open air." He felt perhaps inward need to redeem Chichikov; in Merejkovsky's opinion he really wanted to save his own soul, but had succeeded only in losing it. His last years were spent morbidly; he suffered torments and ran from place to place like one hunted; but really always running from himself. Rome was his favourite refuge, and he returned to it again and again. In 1848, he made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, but he could find no peace for his soul. Something of this mood had reflected itself even much earlier in the *Memoirs of a Madman*: "Oh, little mother, save your poor son! Look how they are tormenting him. . . . There's no place for him on earth! He's being driven! . . . Oh, little mother, take pity on thy poor child."

All the contradictions of Gogol's character are not to be disposed of in a brief essay. Such a strange combination of the tragic and the comic was truly seldom seen in one man. He, for one, realised that "it is dangerous to jest with laughter." "Everything that I laughed at became sad." "And terrible," adds Merejkovsky. But earlier his humour was lighter, less tinged with the tragic; in those days Pushkin never failed to be amused by what Gogol had brought to read to him. Even *Revizor* (1835), with its tragic undercurrent, was a trifle compared to *Dead Souls*, so that one is not astonished to hear that not only did the Tsar, Nicholas I., give permission to have it acted, in spite of its being a criticism of official rottenness, but laughed uproariously, and led the applause. Moreover, he gave Gogol a grant of money, and asked that its

source should not be revealed to the author lest "he might feel obliged to write from the official point of view."

Gogol was born at Sorotchinetz, Little Russia, in March 1809. He left college at nineteen and went to St. Petersburg, where he secured a position as copying clerk in a government department. He did not keep his position long, yet long enough to store away in his mind a number of bureaucratic types which proved useful later. He quite suddenly started for America with money given to him by his mother for another purpose, but when he got as far as Lübeck he turned back. He then wanted to become an actor, but his voice proved not strong enough. Later he wrote a poem which was unkindly received. As the copies remained unsold, he gathered them all up at the various shops and burned them in his room.

His next effort, *Evenings at the Farm of Dikanka* (1831), was more successful. It was a series of gay and colourful pictures of Ukraine, the land he knew and loved, and if he is occasionally a little over romantic here and there, he also achieves some beautifully lyrical passages. Then came another even finer series called *Mirgorod*, which won the admiration of Pushkin. Next he planned a "History of Little Russia" and a "History of the Middle Ages," this last work to be in eight or nine volumes. The result of all this study was a beautiful and short Homeric epic in prose, called *Taras Bulba*. His appointment to a professorship in history was a ridiculous episode in his life. After a brilliant first lecture, in which he had evidently said all he had to say, he settled to a life of boredom for himself and his pupils. When he resigned he said joyously: "I am once more a free Cossack." Between 1834 and 1835 he produced a new series of stories, including his famous *Cloak*, which may be regarded as the legitimate beginning of the Russian novel. ✓

Gogol knew little about women, who played an equally minor rôle in his life and in his books. This may be partly because his personal appearance was not prepossessing. He is described by a contemporary as "a little man with legs too short for his body. He walked crookedly; he was clumsy, ill-dressed, and rather ridiculous-looking, with his long lock of hair flapping on his forehead, and his large prominent nose."

From 1835 Gogol spent almost his entire time abroad; some strange unrest—possibly his Cossack blood—possessed him like a demon, and he never stopped anywhere very long. After his pilgrimage in 1848 to Jerusalem, he returned to

Moscow, his entire possessions in a little bag; these consisted of pamphlets, critiques, and newspaper articles mostly inimical to himself. He wandered about with these from house to house. Everything he had of value he gave away to the poor. He ceased work entirely. According to all accounts he spent his last days in praying and fasting. Visions came to him. His death, which came in 1852, was extremely fantastic. His last words, uttered in loud frenzy, were: "A ladder! Quick, a ladder!" This call for a ladder—"a spiritual ladder," in the words of Merejkovsky—had been made on an earlier occasion by a certain Russian saint, who used almost the same language. "I shall laugh my bitter laugh"¹ was the inscription placed on Gogol's grave.

JOHN CURNOS.

¹ This is generally referred to in the Russian criticisms of Gogol as a quotation from Jeremiah. It appears upon investigation, however, that it actually occurs only in the Slavonic version from the Greek, and not in the Russian translation made direct from the Hebrew.

Evenings on the Farm near the Dikanka, 1829-31; Mirgorod, 1831-33; Taras Bulba, 1834; Arabesques (includes tales, The Portrait and A Madman's Diary), 1831-35; The Cloak, 1835; The Revizor (The Inspector-General), 1836; Dead Souls, 1842; Correspondence with Friends, 1847.

ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS: Cossack Tales (The Night of Christmas Eve, Tarass Boolba), trans. by G. Tolstoy, 1860; St. John's Eve and Other Stories, trans. by Isabel F. Hapgood, New York, Crowell, 1886; Taras Bulba: Also St. John's Eve and Other Stories, London, Vizetelly, 1887; Taras Bulba, trans. by B. C. Baskerville, London, Scott, 1907; The Inspector: a Comedy, Calcutta, 1890; The Inspector-General, trans. by A. A. Sykes, London, Scott, 1892; Revizor, trans. for the Yale Dramatic Association by Max S. Mandell, New Haven, Conn., 1908; Home Life in Russia (adaptation of Dead Souls), London, Hurst, 1854; Tchitchikoff's Journeys; or Dead Souls, trans. by Isabel F. Hapgood, New York, Crowell, 1886; Dead Souls, London, Vizetelly, 1887; Dead Souls, London, Maxwell, 1887; Meditations on the Divine Liturgy, trans. by L. Alexeieff, London, A. R. Mowbray and Co., 1913.

LIVES, etc.: (*Russian*) Kotlyarevsky (N. A.), 1903; Shenrok (V. I.), Materials for a Biography, 1892; (*French*) Leger (L.), Nicholas Gogol, 1914.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

TO THE FIRST PORTION OF THIS WORK

SECOND EDITION PUBLISHED IN 1846

From the Author to the Reader

READER, whosoever or wheresoever you be, and whatsoever be your station—whether that of a member of the higher ranks of society or that of a member of the plainer walks of life—I beg of you, if God shall have given you any skill in letters, and my book shall fall into your hands, to extend to me your assistance.

For in the book which lies before you, and which, probably, you have read in its first edition, there is portrayed a man who is a type taken from our Russian Empire. This man travels about the Russian land, and meets with folk of every condition—from the nobly-born to the humble toiler. Him I have taken as a type to show forth the vices and the failings, rather than the merits and the virtues, of the commonplace Russian individual; and the characters which revolve around him have also been selected for the purpose of demonstrating our national weaknesses and shortcomings. As for men and women of the better sort, I propose to portray them in subsequent volumes. Probably much of what I have described is improbable and does not happen as things customarily happen in Russia; and the reason for that is that for me to learn all that I have wished to do has been impossible, in that human life is not sufficiently long to become acquainted with even a hundredth part of what takes place within the borders of the Russian Empire. Also, carelessness, inexperience, and lack of time have led to my perpetrating numerous errors and inaccuracies of detail; with the result that in every line of the book there is something which calls for correction. For these reasons I beg of you, my reader, to act also as my corrector. Do not despise the task, for, however superior be your education, and however lofty your station, and however insignificant, in your eyes, my book, and however

trifling the apparent labour of correcting and commenting upon that book, I implore you to do as I have said. And you too, O reader of lowly education and simple status, I beseech you not to look upon yourself as too ignorant to be able in some fashion, however small, to help me. Every man who has lived in the world and mixed with his fellow men will have remarked something which has remained hidden from the eyes of others; and therefore I beg of you not to deprive me of your comments, seeing that it cannot be that, should you read my book with attention, you will have *nothing* to say at some point therein.

For example, how excellent it would be if some reader who is sufficiently rich in experience and the knowledge of life to be acquainted with the sort of characters which I have described herein would annotate in detail the book, without missing a single page, and undertake to read it precisely as though, laying pen and paper before him, he were first to peruse a few pages of the work, and then to recall his own life, and the lives of folk with whom he has come in contact, and everything which he has seen with his own eyes or has heard of from others, and to proceed to annotate, in so far as may tally with his own experience or otherwise, what is set forth in the book, and to jot down the whole exactly as it stands pictured to his memory, and, lastly, to send me the jottings as they may issue from his pen, and to continue so doing until he has covered the entire work! Yes, he would indeed do me a vital service! Of style or beauty of expression he would need to take no account, for the value of a book lies in its truth and its actuality rather than in its wording. Nor would he need to consider my feelings if at any point he should feel minded to blame or to upbraid me, or to demonstrate the harm rather than the good which has been done through any lack of thought or verisimilitude of which I have been guilty. In short, for anything and for everything in the way of criticism I should be thankful.

Also, it would be an excellent thing if some reader in the higher walks of life, some person who stands remote, both by life and by education, from the circle of folk which I have pictured in my book, but who knows the life of the circle in which he himself revolves, would undertake to read my work in similar fashion, and methodically to recall to his mind any members of superior social classes whom he has met, and carefully to observe whether there exists any resemblance between one such class and another, and whether, at times, there may not be repeated in a higher sphere what is done in a lower, and likewise to note any addi-

tional fact in the same connection which may occur to him (that is to say, any fact pertaining to the higher ranks of society which would seem to confirm or to disprove his conclusions), and, lastly, to record that fact as it may have occurred within his own experience, while giving full details of persons (of individual manners, tendencies, and customs) and also of inanimate surroundings (of dress, furniture, fittings of houses, and so forth). For I need knowledge of the classes in question, which are the flower of our people. In fact, this very reason—the reason that I do not yet know Russian life in all its aspects, and in the degree to which it is necessary for me to know it in order to become a successful author—is what has, until now, prevented me from publishing any subsequent volumes of this story.

Again, it would be an excellent thing if some one who is endowed with the faculty of imagining and vividly picturing to himself the various situations wherein a character may be placed, and of mentally following up a character's career in one field and another—by this I mean some one who possesses the power of entering into and developing the ideas of the author whose work he may be reading—would scan each character herein portrayed, and tell me how each character ought to have acted at a given juncture, and what, to judge from the beginnings of each character, ought to have become of that character later, and what new circumstances might be devised in connection therewith, and what new details might advantageously be added to those already described. Honestly can I say that to consider these points against the time when a new edition of my book may be published in a different and a better form would give me the greatest possible pleasure.

One thing in particular would I ask of any reader who may be willing to give me the benefit of his advice. That is to say, I would beg of him to suppose, while recording his remarks, that it is for the benefit of a man in no way his equal in education, or similar to him in tastes and ideas, or capable of apprehending criticisms without full explanation appended, that he is doing so. Rather would I ask such a reader to suppose that before him there stands a man of incomparably inferior enlightenment and schooling—a rude country bumpkin whose life, throughout, has been passed in retirement—a bumpkin to whom it is necessary to explain each circumstance in detail, while never forgetting to be as simple of speech as though he were a child, and at every step there were a danger of employing terms beyond his understanding. Should these precautions be kept constantly in

view by any reader undertaking to annotate my book, that reader's remarks will exceed in weight and interest even his own expectations, and will bring me very real advantage.

Thus, provided that my earnest request be heeded by my readers, and that among them there be found a few kind spirits to do as I desire, the following is the manner in which I would request them to transmit their notes for my consideration. Inscribing the package with my name, let them then enclose that package in a second one addressed either to the Rector of the University of St. Petersburg or to Professor Shevirev of the University of Moscow, according as the one or the other of those two cities may be the nearer to the sender.

Lastly, while thanking all journalists and *litterateurs* for their previously published criticisms of my book—criticisms which, in spite of a spice of that intemperance and prejudice which is common to all humanity, have proved of the greatest use both to my head and to my heart—I beg of such writers again to favour me with their reviews. For in all sincerity I can assure them that whatsoever they may be pleased to say for my improvement and my instruction will be received by me with naught but gratitude.

DEAD SOULS

PART I

I

To the door of an inn in the provincial town of N. there drew up a smart *britchka*—a light spring-carriage of the sort affected by bachelors, retired lieutenant-colonels, staff-captains, land-owners possessed of about a hundred souls, and, in short, all persons who rank as gentlemen of the intermediate category. In the *britchka* was seated such a gentleman—a man who, though not handsome, was not ill-favoured, not over-fat, and not over-thin. Also, though not over-elderly, he was not over-young. His arrival produced no stir in the town, and was accompanied by no particular incident, beyond that a couple of peasants who happened to be standing at the door of a dramshop exchanged a few comments with reference to the equipage rather than to the individual who was seated in it. "Look at that carriage," one of them said to the other. "Think you it will be going as far as Moscow?" "I think it will," replied his companion. "But not as far as Kazan, eh?" "No, not as far as Kazan." With that the conversation ended. Presently, as the *britchka* was approaching the inn, it was met by a young man in a pair of very short, very tight breeches of white dimity, a quasi-fashionable frockcoat, and a dickey fastened with a pistol-shaped bronze tie-pin. The young man turned his head as he passed the *britchka* and eyed it attentively; after which he clapped his hand to his cap (which was in danger of being removed by the wind) and resumed his way. On the vehicle reaching the inn door, its occupant found standing there to welcome him the *polevoi*, or waiter, of the establishment—an individual of such nimble and brisk movement that even to distinguish the character of his face was impossible. Running out with a napkin in one hand and his lanky form clad in a tailcoat, reaching almost to the nape of his neck, he tossed back his locks, and escorted the gentleman upstairs, along a wooden gallery, and so to the bed-

chamber which God had prepared for the gentleman's reception. The said bedchamber was quite of ordinary appearance, since the inn belonged to the species to be found in all provincial towns—the species wherein, for two roubles a day, travellers may obtain a room swarming with black-beetles, and communicating by a doorway with the apartment adjoining. True, the doorway may be blocked up with a wardrobe; yet behind it, in all probability, there will be standing a silent, motionless neighbour whose ears are burning to learn every possible detail concerning the latest arrival. The inn's exterior corresponded with its interior. Long, and consisting only of two storeys, the building had its lower half destitute of stucco; with the result that the dark-red bricks, originally more or less dingy, had grown yet dingier under the influence of atmospheric changes. As for the upper half of the building, it was, of course, painted the usual tint of unfading yellow. Within, on the ground floor, there stood a number of benches heaped with horse-collars, rope, and sheepskins; while the window-seat accommodated a *sbitentshik*,¹ cheek by jowl with a *samovar*²—the latter so closely resembling the former in appearance that, but for the fact of the *samovar* possessing a pitch-black lip, the *samovar* and the *sbitentshik* might have been two of a pair.

During the traveller's inspection of his room his luggage was brought into the apartment. First came a portmanteau of white leather whose raggedness indicated that the receptacle had made several previous journeys. The bearers of the same were the gentleman's coachman, Selifan (a little man in a large overcoat), and the gentleman's valet, Petrushka—the latter a fellow of about thirty, clad in a worn, over-ample jacket which formerly had graced his master's shoulders, and possessed of a nose and a pair of lips whose coarseness communicated to his face rather a sullen expression. Behind the portmanteau came a small dispatch-box of redwood, lined with birch bark, a boot-case, and (wrapped in blue paper) a roast fowl; all of which having been deposited, the coachman departed to look after his horses, and the valet to establish himself in the little dark anteroom or kennel where already he had stored a cloak, a bagful of livery, and his own peculiar smell. Pressing the narrow bedstead back against the wall, he covered it with the tiny remnant of mattress—a remnant as thin and flat (perhaps also as greasy) as a pancake—which he had managed to beg of the landlord of the establishment.

¹ An urn for brewing honey tea.

² An urn for brewing ordinary tea.

While the attendants had been thus setting things straight the gentleman had repaired to the common parlour. The appearance of common parlours of the kind is known to every one who travels. Always they have varnished walls which, grown black in their upper portions with tobacco smoke, are, in their lower, grown shiny with the friction of customers' backs—more especially with that of the backs of such local tradesmen as, on market-days, make it their regular practice to resort to the local hostelry for a glass of tea. Also, parlours of this kind invariably contain smutty ceilings, an equally smutty chandelier, a number of pendant shades which jump and rattle whenever the waiter scurries across the shabby oilcloth with a trayful of glasses (the glasses looking like a flock of birds roosting by the seashore), and a selection of oil paintings. In short, there are certain objects which one sees in every inn. In the present case the only outstanding feature of the room was the fact that in one of the paintings a nymph was portrayed as possessing breasts of a size such as the reader can never in his life have beheld. A similar caricaturing of nature is to be noted in the historical pictures (of unknown origin, period, and creation) which reach us—sometimes through the instrumentality of Russian magnates who profess to be connoisseurs of art—from Italy; owing to the said magnates having made such purchases solely on the advice of the couriers who have escorted them.

To resume, however—our traveller removed his cap, and divested his neck of a parti-coloured woollen scarf of the kind which a wife makes for her husband with her own hands, while accompanying the gift with interminable injunctions as to how best such a garment ought to be folded. True, bachelors also wear similar gauds, but, in their case, God alone knows who may have manufactured the articles! For my part, I cannot endure them. Having unfolded the scarf, the gentleman ordered dinner, and whilst the various dishes were being got ready—cabbage soup, a pie several weeks old, a dish of marrow and peas, a dish of sausages and cabbage, a roast fowl, some salted cucumber, and the sweet tart which stands perpetually ready for use in such establishments; whilst, I say, these things were either being warmed up or brought in cold, the gentleman induced the waiter to retail certain fragments of tittle-tattle concerning the late landlord of the hostelry, the amount of income which the hostelry produced, and the character of its present proprietor. To the last-mentioned inquiry the waiter returned the answer invariably given in such cases—namely,

"My master is a terribly hard man, sir." Curious that in enlightened Russia so many people cannot even take a meal at an inn without chattering to the attendant and making free with him! Nevertheless not *all* the questions which the gentleman asked were aimless ones, for he inquired who was Governor of the town, who President of the Local Council, and who Public Prosecutor. In short, he omitted no single official of note, while asking also (though with an air of detachment) the most exact particulars concerning the landowners of the neighbourhood. Which of them, he inquired, possessed serfs, and how many of them? How far from the town did those landowners reside? What was the character of each landowner, and was he in the habit of paying frequent visits to the town? The gentleman also made searching inquiries concerning the hygienic condition of the countryside. Was there, he asked, much sickness about—whether sporadic fever, fatal forms of ague, smallpox, or what not? Yet, though his solicitude concerning these matters showed more than ordinary curiosity, his bearing retained its gravity unimpaired, and from time to time he blew his nose with portentous fervour. Indeed, the manner in which he accomplished this latter feat was marvellous in the extreme, for, though that member emitted sounds equal to those of a trumpet in intensity, he could yet, with his accompanying air of guileless dignity, evoke the waiter's undivided respect—so much so that, whenever the sounds of the nose reached that menial's ears, he would shake back his locks, straighten himself into a posture of marked solicitude, and inquire afresh, with head slightly inclined, whether the gentleman happened to require anything further. After dinner the guest consumed a cup of coffee, and then, seating himself upon the sofa, with, behind him, one of those wool-covered cushions which, in Russian taverns, resemble nothing so much as a cobblestone or a brick, fell to snoring; whereafter, returning with a start to consciousness, he ordered himself to be conducted to his room, flung himself at full length upon the bed, and once more slept soundly for a couple of hours. Aroused, eventually, by the waiter, he, at the latter's request, inscribed a fragment of paper with his name, his surname, and his rank (for communication, in accordance with the law, to the police): and on that paper the waiter, leaning forward from the corridor, read, syllable by syllable: "Paul Ivanovitch Chichikov, Collegiate Councillor—Landowner—Travelling on Private Affairs." The waiter had just time to accomplish this feat before Paul Ivanovitch Chichikov set forth to inspect the town. Ap-

parently the place succeeded in satisfying him, and, to tell the truth, it was at least up to the usual standard of our provincial capitals. Where the staring yellow of stone edifices did not greet his eye he found himself confronted with the more modest grey of wooden ones; which, consisting, for the most part, of one or two storeys (added to the range of attics which provincial architects love so well), looked almost lost amid the expanses of street and intervening medleys of broken or half-finished partition-walls. At other points evidence of more life and movement was to be seen, and here the houses stood crowded together and displayed dilapidated, rain-blurred signboards whereon boots or cakes or pairs of blue breeches inscribed "Arshavski, Tailor," and so forth, were depicted. Over a shop containing hats and caps was written "Vassili Thedorov, Foreigner"; while, at another spot, a signboard portrayed a billiard table and two players—the latter clad in frockcoats of the kind usually affected by actors whose part it is to enter the stage during the closing act of a piece, even though, with arms sharply crooked and legs slightly bent, the said billiard players were taking the most careful aim, but succeeding only in making abortive strokes in the air. Each emporium of the sort had written over it: "This is the best establishment of its kind in the town." Also, *al fresco* in the streets there stood tables heaped with nuts, soap, and gingerbread (the latter but little distinguishable from the soap), and at an eating-house there was displayed the sign of a plump fish transfixed with a gaff. But the sign most frequently to be discerned was the insignia of the State, the double-headed eagle (now replaced, in this connection, with the laconic inscription "Dramshop"). As for the paving of the town, it was uniformly bad.

The gentleman peered also into the municipal gardens, which contained only a few sorry trees that were poorly selected, requiring to be propped with oil-painted, triangular green supports, and able to boast of a height no greater than that of an ordinary walking-stick. Yet recently the local paper had said (*apropos* of a gala) that, "Thanks to the efforts of our Civil Governor, the town has become enriched with a pleasaunce full of umbrageous, spaciouly-branching trees. Even on the most sultry day they afford agreeable shade, and indeed gratifying was it to see the hearts of our citizens panting with an impulse of gratitude as their eyes shed tears in recognition of all that their Governor has done for them!"

Next, after inquiring of a gendarme as to the best ways and

means of finding the local council, the local law-courts, and the local Governor, should he (Chichikov) have need of them, the gentleman went on to inspect the river which ran through the town. *En route* he tore off a notice affixed to a post, in order that he might the more conveniently read it after his return to the inn. Also, he bestowed upon a lady of pleasant exterior who, escorted by a footman laden with a bundle, happened to be passing along a wooden sidewalk a prolonged stare. Lastly, he threw around him a comprehensive glance (as though to fix in his mind the general topography of the place) and betook himself home. There, gently aided by the waiter, he ascended the stairs to his bedroom, drank a glass of tea, and, seating himself at the table, called for a candle; which having been brought him, he produced from his pocket the notice, held it close to the flame, and conned its tenour—slightly contracting his right eye as he did so. Yet there was little in the notice to call for remark. All that it said was that shortly one of Kotzebue's¹ plays would be given, and that one of the parts in the play was to be taken by a certain Monsieur Poplevin, and another by a certain Mademoiselle Ziablova, while the remaining parts were to be filled by a number of less important personages. Nevertheless the gentleman perused the notice with careful attention, and even jotted down the prices to be asked for seats for the performance. Also, he remarked that the bill had been printed at the press of the Provincial Government. Next, he turned over the paper, in order to see if anything further was to be read on the reverse side; but, finding nothing there, he refolded the document, placed it in the box which served him as a receptacle for odds and ends, and brought the day to a close with a portion of cold veal, a bottle of pickles, and a sound sleep.

The following day he devoted to paying calls upon the various municipal officials—a first, and a very respectful, visit being paid to the Governor. This personage turned out to resemble Chichikov himself in that he was neither fat nor thin. Also, he wore the riband of the order of Saint Anna around his neck, and was reported to have been recommended also for the star. For the rest, he was large and good-natured, and had a habit of amusing himself with occasional spells of knitting. Next, Chichikov repaired to the Vice-Governor's, and thence to the house of the Public Prosecutor, to that of the President of the Local Council, to that of the Chief of Police, to that of the Commis-

¹ A German dramatist (1761-1819) who also filled sundry posts in the service of the Russian Government.