



Dostoevsky's speech on Pushkin at the meeting of the Society of Lovers of Russian Literature. June 8 1880

Pushkin is an extraordinary phenomenon, and, perhaps, the unique phenomenon of the Russian spirit, said Gogol. I will add, 'and a prophetic phenomenon.' Yes, in his appearing there is contained for all us Russians, something incontestably prophetic. Pushkin arrives exactly at the beginning of our true self-consciousness, which had only just begun to exist a whole century after Peter's reforms, and Pushkin's coming mightily aids us in our dark way by a new guiding light. In this sense Pushkin is a presage and a prophecy.

I divide the activity of our great poet into three periods. I speak now not as a literary critic. I dwell on Pushkin's creative activity only to elucidate my conception of his prophetic significance to us, and the meaning I give the word prophecy. I would, however, observe in passing that the periods of Pushkin's activity do not seem to me to be marked off from each other by firm boundaries.

The beginning of Eugene Onyegin, for instance, in my opinion belongs still to the first period, while Onyegin ends in the second period when Pushkin had already found his ideals in his native land, had taken them to his heart and cherished them in his loving and clairvoyant soul. It is said that in his first period Pushkin imitated European poets, Parny and Andre Chenier, and above all, Byron.

Without doubt the poets of Europe had a great influence upon the development of his genius, and they maintained their influence all through his life. Nevertheless, even the very earliest poems of Pushkin were not mere imitations, and in them the extraordinary independence of his genius was expressed. In an imitation there never appears such

individual suffering and such depths of self-consciousness as Pushkin displayed, for instance, in *The Gipsies*, a poem which I ascribe in its entirety to his first period; not to mention the creative force and impetuosity which would never have been so evident had his work been only imitation.

Already, in the character of Aleko, the hero of *The Gipsies*, is exhibited a powerful, profound, and purely Russian idea, later to be expressed in harmonious perfection in *Onyegin*, where almost the same Aleko appears not in a fantastic light, but as tangible, real and comprehensible. In Aleko Pushkin had already discovered, and portrayed with genius, the unhappy wanderer in his native land, the Russian sufferer of history, whose appearance in our society, uprooted from among the people, was a historic necessity. The type is true and perfectly rendered, it is an eternal type, long since settled in our Russian land.

These homeless Russian wanderers are wandering still, and the time will be long before they disappear. If they in our day no longer go to gipsy camps to seek their universal ideals in the wild life of the Gipsies and their consolation away from the confused and pointless life of our Russian intellectuals, in the bosom of nature, they launch into Socialism, which did not exist in Aleko's day, they march with a new faith into another field, and there work zealously, believing, like Aleko, that they will by their fantastic occupations obtain their aims and happiness, not for themselves alone, but for all mankind. For the Russian wanderer can find his own peace only in the happiness of all men; he will not be more cheaply satisfied, at least while it is still a matter of theory.

It is the same Russian man who appears at a different time. This man, I repeat, was born just at the beginning of the second century after

Peter's great reforms, in an intellectual society, uprooted from among the people. Oh, the vast majority of intellectual Russians in Pushkin's time were serving then as they are serving now, as civil servants, in government appointments, in railways or in banks, or earning money in whatever way, or engaged in the sciences, delivering lectures — all this in a regular, leisurely, peaceful manner, receiving salaries, playing whist, without any longing to escape into gipsy camps or other places more in accordance with our modern times.

The go only so far as to play the liberal, 'with a tinge of European Socialism,' to which Socialism is given a certain benign Russian character — but it is only a matter of time: What if one has not yet begun to be disturbed, while another has already come up against a bolted door and violently beaten his head against it?

The same fate awaits all men in their turn, unless they walk in the saving road of humble communion with the people. But suppose that this fate does not await them all: let' the chosen ' suffice, let only a tenth part be disturbed lest the vast majority remaining should find no rest through them.

Aleko, of course, is still unable to express his anguish rightly: with him everything is still somehow abstract; he has only a yearning after nature, a grudge against high society, aspirations for all men, lamentations for the truth, which some one has somewhere lost, and he can by no means find. Wherein is this truth, where and in what she could appear, and when exactly she was lost, he, of course, cannot say, but he suffers sincerely.

In the meantime a fantastic and impatient person seeks for salvation above all in external phenomena; and so it should be. Truth is as it were

somewhere outside himself, perhaps in some other European land, with their firm and historical political organisations and their established social and civil life. And he will never understand that the truth is first of all within himself.

How could he understand this? For a whole century he has not been himself in his own land. He has forgotten how to work, he has no culture, he has grown up like a convent schoolgirl within closed walls, he has fulfilled strange and unaccountable duties according as he belonged to one or another of the fourteen classes into which educated Russian society is divided. For the time being he is only a blade of grass torn from the roots and blown through the air.

And he feels it, and suffers for it, suffers often acutely! Well, what if, perhaps belonging by birth to the nobility and probably possessing serfs, he allowed himself a nobleman's liberty, the pleasant fancy of being charmed by men who live 'without laws,' and began to lead a performing bear in a gipsy camp?

Of course a woman, 'a wild woman,' as a certain poet says, would be most likely to give him hope of a way out of his anguish, and with an easy-going, but passionate belief, he throws himself into the arms of Zemphira. 'Here is my way of escape; here I can find my happiness, here in the bosom of nature far from the world, here with people who have neither civilisation nor law.'

And what happens? He cannot endure his first collision with the conditions of this wild nature, and his hands are stained with blood. The wretched dreamer was not only unfitted for universal harmony, but even for gipsies, and they drive him away — without vengeance, without malice, with simple dignity.

Leave us, proud man.

We are wild and without law,

We torture not, neither do we punish.

This is, of course, all fantastic, but the proud man is real, his image sharply caught. Pushkin was the first to seize the type, and we should remember this. Should anything happen in the least degree not to his liking, he is ready to torment cruelly and punish for the wrong done to him, or, more comfortable still, he will remember that he belongs to one of the fourteen classes, and will himself call upon — this has happened often — the torturing and punishing law, if only his private wrong may be revenged.

No, this poem of genius is not an imitation! Here already is whispered the Russian solution of the question, 'the accursed question,' in accordance with the faith and justice of the people. 'Humble yourself, proud man, and first of all break down your pride. Humble yourself, idle man, and first of all labour on your native land' — that is the solution according to the wisdom and justice of the people. 'Truth is not outside thee, but in thyself.

Find thyself in thyself, subdue thyself to thyself, be master of thyself and thou wilt see the truth. Not in things is this truth, not outside thee or abroad, but first of all in thine own labour upon thyself. If thou conquer and subdue thyself, then thou wilt be freer than thou hast ever dreamed, and thou wilt begin a great work and make others free, and thou wilt see happiness, for thy life will be fulfilled and thou wilt at the last understand thy people and its sacred truth.

Not with the Gipsies nor elsewhere is universal harmony, if thou thyself art first unworthy of her, malicious and proud, and thou dost demand life as a gift, not even thinking, that man must pay for her.'

This solution of the question is strongly foreshadowed in Pushkin's poem. Still more clearly is it expressed in Eugene Onyegin, which is not a fantastic, but a tangible and realistic poem, in which the real Russian life is embodied with a creative power and a perfection such as had not been before Pushkin and perhaps never after him.

Onyegin comes from Petersburg. Certainly from Petersburg: it is beyond all doubt necessary to the poem, and Pushkin could not omit that all-important realistic trait in the life of his hero. I repeat, he is the same Aleko, particularly when later on in the poem he cries in anguish: Why am I not, like the assessor of Tula, Stricken with palsy?

But now at the beginning of the poem he is still half a coxeomb and a man of the world; he had lived too little to be utterly disappointed in life. But he is already visited and disturbed by The demon lord of hidden weariness.

In a remote place, in the heart of his mother country, he is of course an exile in a foreign land. He does not know what to do and is somehow conscious of his own quest. Afterwards, wandering over his native country and over foreign lands, he, beyond doubt clever and sincere, feels himself among strangers, still more a stranger to himself.

True, he loves his native land, but he does not trust in it. Of course he has heard of national ideals, but he does not believe in them. He only

believes in the utter impossibility of any work whatever in his native land, and upon those who believe in this possibility — then, as now, but few — he looks with sorrowful derision. He had killed Lensky out of spleen, perhaps from spleen born of yearning for the universal ideal — that is quite like us, quite probable.

Tatiana is different. She is a strong character, strongly standing on her own ground. She is deeper than Onyegin and certainly wiser than he. With a noble instinct she divines where and what is truth, and her thought finds expression in the finale of the poem. Perhaps Pushkin would even have done better to call his poem Tatiana, and not Onyegin, for she is indubitably the chief character.

She is positive and not negative, a type of positive beauty, the apotheosis of the Russian woman, and the poet destined her to express the idea of his poem in the famous scene of the final meeting of Tatiana with Onyegin. One may even say that so beautiful or positive a type of the Russian woman has never been created since in our literature, save perhaps the figure of Liza in Turgeniev's *A Nest of Gentlefolk*.

But because of his way of looking down upon people, Onyegin did not even understand Tatiana when he met her for the first time, in a remote place, under the modest guise of a pure, innocent girl, who was at first so shy of him. He could not see the completeness and perfection of the poor girl, and perhaps he really took her for a 'moral embryo.' She, the embryo! She, after her letter to Onyegin!

If there is a moral embryo in the poem, it is he himself, Onyegin, beyond all debate. And he could not comprehend her. Does he know the human soul? He has been an abstract person, a restless dreamer, all his life long. Nor does he comprehend her later in Petersburg, as a

grand lady, when in the words of his own letter to her ' he in his soul understood all her perfections.' But these are only words.

She passed through his life unrecognised by him and unappreciated: therein is the tragedy of their love. But if at his first meeting with her in the village Childe Harold had arrived from England, or even, by a miracle, Lord Byron himself, and had noticed her timid, modest beauty and pointed her out to him, oh, Onyegin would have been instantly struck with admiration, for in these universal sufferers there is sometimes so much spiritual servility!

But this did not happen, and the seeker after universal harmony, having read her a sermon, and having done very honestly by her, set off with his universal anguish and the blood of his friend, spilt in foolish anger, on his hands, to wander over his mother country, blind to her; and, bubbling over with health and strength, he exclaims with an oath:
I am yet young and life is strong in me,
Yet what awaits me? — anguish, anguish, anguish.

This Tatiana understood. In the immortal lines of the romance the poet represented her coming to see the house of the man who is so wonderful and still so incomprehensible to her. I do not speak of the unattainable artistic beauty and profundity of the lines. She is in his study; she looks at his books and possessions; she tries through them to understand his soul, to solve her enigma, and * the moral embryo ' at last pauses thoughtfully, with a foreboding that her riddle is solved, and gently whispers:

Perhaps he is only a parody?

Yes, she had to whisper this; she had divined him. Later, long afterwards in Petersburg, when they meet again, she knows him perfectly. By the way, who was it that said that the life of the court and society had affected her soul for the worse, and that her new position as a lady of fashion and her new ideas were in part the reason for her refusing Onyegin? This is not true.

No, she is the same Tanya, the same country Tanya as before! She is not spoiled; on the contrary, she is tormented by the splendid life of Petersburg, she is worn down by it and suffers: she hates her position as a lady of society, and whoever thinks otherwise of her, has no understanding of what Pushkin wanted to say. Now she says firmly to Onyegin:

Now am I to another given: To him I will be faithful unto death.

She said this as a Russian woman, indeed, and herein is her apotheosis. She expresses the truths of the poem. I shall not say a word of her religious convictions, her views on the sacrament of marriage — no, I shall not touch upon that. But then, did she refuse to follow him although she herself had said to him ‘ I love you ‘?

Did she refuse because she, ‘ as a Russian woman ‘ (and not a Southern or a French woman), is incapable of a bold step or has not the power to sacrifice the fascination of honours, riches, position in society, the conventions of virtue? No, a Russian woman is brave.

A Russian woman will boldly follow what she believes, and she has proved it. But she ‘ is to another given; to him she will be faithful unto death.’ To whom, to what will she be true? To what obligations be faithful? Is it to that old general whom she cannot possibly love, whom she married only because ‘ with tears and adjurations her mother did

beseech her,' and in her wronged and wounded soul was there then only despair and neither hope nor ray of light at all?

Yes, she is true to that general, to her husband, to an honest man who loves her, respects her, and is proud of her. Her mother ' did beseech her,' but it was she and she alone who consented, she herself swore an oath to be his faithful wife. She married him out of despair. But now he is her husband, and her perfidy will cover him with disgrace and shame and will kill him.

Can any one build his happiness on the unhappiness of another? Happiness is not in the delights of love alone, but also in the spirit's highest harmony. How could the spirit be appeased if behind it stood a dishonourable, merciless, inhuman action? Should she run away merely because her happiness lay therein?

What kind of happiness would that be, based on the unhappiness of another? Imagine that you yourself are building a palace of human destiny for the final end of making all men happy, and of giving them peace and rest at last.

And imagine also that for that purpose it is necessary and inevitable to torture to death one single human being, and him not a great soul, but even in some one's eyes a ridiculous being, not a Shakespeare, but simply an honest old man, the husband of a young wife in whom he believes blindly, and whom, although he does not know her heart at all, he respects, of whom he is proud, with whom he is happy and at rest. He has only to be disgraced, dishonoured, and tortured, and on his dishonoured suffering your palace shall be built! Would you consent to be the architect on this condition? That is the question.

Can you for one moment admit the thought that those for whom the building had been built would agree to receive that happiness from you, if its foundation was suffering, the suffering of an insignificant being perhaps, but one who had been cruelly and unjustly put to death, even if, when they had attained that happiness, they should be happy for ever? Could Tatiana's great soul, which had so deeply suffered, have chosen otherwise?

No, a pure, Russian soul decides thus: Let me, let me alone be deprived of happiness, let my happiness be infinitely greater than the unhappiness of this old man, and finally let no one, not this old man, know and appreciate my sacrifice: but I will not be happy through having ruined another. Here is a tragedy in act, the line cannot be passed, and Tatiana sends Onyegin away.

It may be said: But Onyegin too is unhappy. She has saved one, and ruined the other. But that is another question, perhaps the most important in the poem. By the way, the question, Why did not Tatiana go away with Onyegin? has with us, in our literature at least, a very characteristic history, and therefore I have allowed myself to dwell upon it.

The most characteristic thing is that the moral solution of the question should have been so long subject to doubt. I think that even if Tatiana had been free and her old husband had died and she become a widow, even then she would not have gone away with Onyegin.

But one must understand the essential substance of the character. She sees what he is. The eternal wanderer has suddenly seen the woman whom he had previously scorned in a new and unattainable setting. In this setting is perhaps the essence of the matter.

The girl whom he almost despised is now adored by all society — society, the awful authority for Onyegin, for all his universal aspirations. That is why he throws himself, dazzled, at her feet. Here is my ideal, he cries, - here is my salvation, here is the escape from my anguish.

I did not see her then, when 'happiness was so possible, so near.' And as before Aleko turned to Zemphira, so does Onyegin turn to Tatiana, seeking in his new, capricious fancy the solution of all his questions. But does not Tatiana see this in him, had she not seen it long ago?

She knows beyond a doubt that at bottom he loves his new caprice, and not her, the humble Tatiana as of old. She knows that he takes her for something else, and not for what she is, that it is not her whom he loves, that perhaps he does not love any one, is incapable of loving any one, although he suffers so acutely. He loves a caprice, but he himself is a caprice.

If she were to follow him, then to-morrow he would be disillusioned and look with mockery upon his infatuation. He has no root at all, he is a blade of grass, borne on the wind. She is otherwise: even in her despair, in the painful consciousness that her life has been ruined, she still has something solid and unshakable upon which her soul may bear. These are the memories of her childhood, the reminiscences of her country, her remote village, in which her pure and humble life had begun: it is the woven shade Of branches that o'erhang her nurse's grave.

Oh, these memories and the pictures of the past are most precious to her now; these alone are left to her, but they do save her soul from

final despair. And this is not a little, but rather much, for there is here a whole foundation, unshakable and indestructible. Here is contact with her own land, with her own people, and with their sanctities.

And he — what has he and what is he? Nothing, that she should follow him out of compassion, to amuse him, to give him a moment's gift of a mirage of happiness out of the infinite pity of her love, knowing well beforehand that to-morrow he would look on his happiness with mockery. No, these are deep, firm souls, which cannot deliberately give their sanctities to dishonour, even from infinite compassion. No, Tatiana could not follow Onyegin.

Thus in Onyegin, that immortal and unequalled poem, Pushkin was revealed as a great national writer, unlike any before him. In one stroke, with the extreme of exactness and insight, he denned the very inmost essence of our high society that stands above the people. He defined the type of the Russian wanderer before our day and in our day; he was the first to divine him, with the flair of genius, to divine his destiny in history and his enormous significance in our destiny to be.

Side by side he placed a type of positive and indubitable beauty in the person of a Russian woman. Besides, of course, he was the first Russian writer to show us, in his other works of that period, a whole gallery of positively beautiful Russian types, finding them in the Russian people.

The paramount beauty of these lies in their truth, their tangible and indubitable truth. It is impossible to deny them, they stand as though sculptured. I would remind you again. I speak not as a literary critic, and therefore do not intend to elucidate my idea by a particular and detailed literary discussion of these works of the poet's genius.

Concerning the type of the Russian monkish ehnrieler, for instance, a whole book might be written to show the importance and meaning for us of this lofty Russian figure, discovered by Pushkin in the Russian land, portrayed and sculptured by him, and now eternally set before us in its humble, exalted, indubitable spiritual beauty, as the evidence of that mighty spirit of national life which can send forth from itself figures of such certain loveliness.

This type is now given; he exists, he cannot be disputed; it cannot be said that he is only the poet's fancy and ideal. You yourself see and agree: Yes, he exists, therefore the spirit of the nation which created him exists also, therefore the vital power of this spirit exists and is mighty and vast.

Throughout Pushkin sounds a belief in the Russian character, in its spiritual might; and if there is belief, there is hope also, the great hope for the man of Russia.

In the hope of glory and good I look without fear ahead, said the poet himself on another occasion; but the words may be applied directly to the whole of his national, creative activity. And yet no single Russian writer, before or after him, did ever associate himself so intimately and fraternally with his people as Pushkin.

Oh, we have a multitude of experts on the people among our writers, who have written about the people, with talent and knowledge and love, and yet if we compare them with Pushkin, then in reality, with one or at most two exceptions among his latest followers, they will be found to be only 'gentlemen' writing about the masses. Even in the most gifted of them, even in the two exceptions¹

I have just mentioned, sometimes appears a sudden flash of something haughty, something from another life and world, something which desires to raise the people up to the writer, and so to make them happy. But in Pushkin there is something allied indeed to the people, which in him rises on occasion to some of the most naive emotions. Take his story of The Bear, and how a peasant killed the bear's mate; or remember the verses, Kinsman John, when we begin to drink . . . and you will understand what I mean.

All these treasures of art and artistic insight are left by our great poet as it were a landmark for the¹ Turgeniev and Tolstoi are meant.

writers who should come after him, for future labourers in the same field. One may say positively that if Pushkin had not existed, there would not have been the gifted writers who came after him.

At least they would not have displayed themselves with such power and clarity, in spite of the great gifts with which they have succeeded in expressing themselves in our day. But not in poetry alone, not in artistic creation alone: if Pushkin had not existed, there would not have been expressed with the irresistible force with which it appeared after him (not in all writers, but in a chosen few), our belief in our Russian individuality, our now conscious faith in the people's powers, and finally the belief in our future individual destiny among the family of European nations. This achievement of Pushkin's is particularly displayed if one examines what I call the third period of his activity.

I repeat, there are no fixed divisions between the periods. Some of the works of even the third period might have been written at the very beginning of the poet's artistic activity, for Pushkin was always a complete whole, as it were a perfect organism carrying within itself at

once every one of its principles, not receiving them from beyond. The beyond only awakened in him that which was already in the depths of his soul.

But this organism developed and the phases of this development could really be marked and defined, each of them by its peculiar character and the regular generation of one phase from another. Thus to the third period can be assigned those of his works in which universal ideas were pre-eminently reflected, in which the poetic conceptions of other nations were mirrored and their genius re-embodied. Some of these appeared after Pushkin's death.

And in this period the poet reveals something almost miraculous, never seen or heard at any time or in any nation before. There had been in the literatures of Europe men of colossal artistic genius — a Shakespeare, a Cervantes, a Schiller. But show me one of these great geniuses who possessed such a capacity for universal sympathy as our Pushkin.

This capacity, the preeminent capacity of our nation, he shares with our nation, and by that above all he is our national poet. The greatest of European poets could never so powerfully embody in themselves the genius of a foreign, even a neighbouring, people, its spirit in all its hidden depth, and all its yearning after its appointed end, as Pushkin could.

On the contrary, when they turned to foreign nations European poets most often made them one with their own people, and understood them after their own fashion. Even Shakespeare's Italians, for instance, are almost always Englishmen. Pushkin's alone of all world poets

possessed the capacity of fully identifying himself with another nationality.

Take scenes from Faust, take The Miserly Knight, take the ballad 'Once there Lived a Poor Knight'; read Don Juan again. Had Pushkin not signed them, you would never know that they were not written by a Spaniard. How profound and fantastic is the imagination in the poem 'A Feast in Time of Plague.' But in this fantastic imagination is the genius of England; and in the hero's wonderful song about the plague, and in Mary's song,

Our children's voices in the noisy school Were heard . . .

These are English songs; this is the yearning of the British genius, its lament, its painful presentiment of its future. Remember the strange lines:

Once as I wandered through the valley wild.

It is almost a literal transposition of the first three pages of a strange mystical book, written in prose by an old English sectarian — but is it only a transposition? In the sad and rapturous music of these verses is the very soul of Northern Protestantism, of the English heresiarch, of the illimitable mystic with his dull, sombre, invincible aspiration, and the impetuous power of his mystical dreaming.

As you read these strange verses, you seem to hear the spirit of the times, of the Reformation, you understand the warlike fire of early Protestantism, and finally history herself, not merely by thought but as one who passes through the armed sectarian camp, sings psalms with them, weeps with them in their religious ecstasies, and with them believed in their belief. Then set beside this religious mysticism, religious verses from the Koran or 'Imitations from the Koran.' Is there

not here a Mohammedan, is it not the very spirit of the Koran and its sword, the naive grandeur of faith and her terrible, bloody power?

And here is the ancient world; here are Egyptian Nights, here sit the gods of earth, who sat above their people like gods, and despised the genius of the people and its aspirations, who became gods in isolation, and went mad in their isolation, in the anguish of their weariness unto death, diverting themselves with fanatic brutalities, with the voluptuousness of creeping things, of a she-spider devouring her male. No, I will say deliberately, there never had been a poet with a universal sympathy like Pushkin's.

And it is not his sympathy alone, but his amazing profundity, the reincarnation of his spirit in the spirit of foreign nations, a reincarnation almost perfect and therefore also miraculous, because the phenomenon has never been repeated in any poet in all the world. It is only in Pushkin; and by this, I repeat, he is a phenomenon never seen and never heard of before, and in my opinion, a prophetic phenomenon, because . . . because herein was expressed the national spirit of his poetry, the national spirit in its future development, the national spirit of our future, which is already implicit in the present, and it was expressed prophetically.

For what is the power of the spirit of Russian nationality if not its aspiration after the final goal of universality and omni-humanity? No sooner had he become a completely national poet, no sooner had he come into contact with the national power, than he already anticipated the great future of that power. In this he was a seer, in this a prophet.

For what is the reform of Peter the Great to us, not merely for the future, but in that which has been and has already been plainly manifested to us? What did that reform mean to us?

Surely it was not only the adoption of European clothes, customs, inventions and science. Let us examine how it was, let us look more steadily. Yes, it is very probable that at the outset Peter began his reform in this narrowly utilitarian sense, but in course of time, as his idea developed, Peter undoubtedly obeyed some hidden instinct which drew him and his work to future purposes, undoubtedly more vast than narrow utilitarianism.

Just as the Russian people did not accept the reform in the utilitarian spirit alone; but undoubtedly with a presentiment which almost instantly forewarned them of a distant and incomparably higher goal than mere utilitarianism. I repeat, the people felt that purpose unconsciously, but it felt it directly and quite vitally. Surely we then turned at once to the most vital reunion, to the unity of all mankind!

Not in a spirit of enmity (as one might have thought it would have been) but in friendliness and perfect love, we received into our soul the geniuses of foreign nations, all alike without preference of race, able by instinct from almost the very first step to discern, to discount distinctions, to excuse and reconcile them, and therein we already showed our readiness and inclination, which had only just become manifest to ourselves, for a common and universal union with all the races of the great Aryan family. Yes, beyond all doubt, the destiny of a Russian is pan-European and universal. To become a true Russian, to become a Russian fully, (in the end of all, I repeat) means only to become the brother of all men, to become, if you will, a universe man.

All our Slavophilism and Westernisni Is only a great misunderstanding, even though historically necessary. To a true Russian, Europe and the destiny of all the mighty Aryan family is as dear as Russia herself, as the destiny of his own native country, because our destiny is universality, won not by the sword, but by the strength of brotherhood and our fraternal aspiration to reunite mankind.

If you go deep into our history since Peter's reform, you will already find traces and indications of this idea, of this dream of mine, if you will, in the character of our intercourse with European nations, even in the policy of the state. For what has Russian policy been doing for these two centuries if not serving Europe, perhaps, far more than she has served herself. I do not believe this came to pass through the incapacity of our statesmen.

The nations of Europe know how dear they are to us. And in course of time I believe that we — not we, of course, but our children to come — will all without exception understand that to be a true Russian does indeed mean to aspire finally to reconcile the contradictions of Europe, to show the end of European yearning in our Russian soul, omni-human and all-uniting, to include within our soul by brotherly love all our brethren, and at last, it may be, to pronounce the final Word of the great general harmony, of the final brotherly communion of all nations in accordance with the law of the gospel of Christ!

I know, I know too well, that my words may appear ecstatic, exaggerated and fantastic. Let them be so, I do not repent having uttered them. They ought to be uttered, above all now, at the moment that we honour our great genius who by his artistic power embodied his idea. The idea has been expressed manjy times before. I say nothing new. But chiefly it will appear presumptuous. ' Is this our dest my, the

destiny of our poor, brutal land? Are we predestined among mankind to utter the new word?

Do I speak of economic glory, of the glory of the sword or of science? I speak only of the brotherhood of man; I say that to this universal, omni-human union the heart of Russia, perhaps more than all other nations, is chiefly predestined; I see its traces in our history, our men of genius, in the artistic genius of Pushkin. Let our country be poor, but this poor land 'Christ traversed with blessing, in the garb of a serf.' Why then should we not contain His final word? Was not He Himself born in a manger?

I say again, we at least can already point to Pushkin, to the universality and omni-humanity of his genius. He surely could contain the genius of foreign lands in his soul as his own. In art at least, in artistic creation, he undeniably revealed this universality of the aspiration of the Russian spirit, and therein is a great promise. If our thought is a dream, then in Pushkin at least this dream has solid foundation.

Had he lived longer, he would perhaps have revealed great and immortal embodiments of the Russian soul, which would then have been intelligible to our European brethren; he would have attracted them much more and closer than they are attracted now, perhaps he would have succeeded in explaining to them all the truth of our aspirations; and they would understand us more than they do now, they would have begun to have insight into us, and would have ceased to look at us so suspiciously and presumptuously as they still do.

Had Pushkin lived longer, then among us too there would perhaps be fewer misunderstandings and quarrels than we still have now. But God saw otherwise. Pushkin died in the full maturity of his powers, and

undeniably bore away with him a great secret into the grave. And now we, without him, are seeking to divine his secret.

The End