

**Alexander Kuprin**

## **"To Chekhov's Memory"**

**Translated by S. S. Koteliansky and Leonard Woolf, New York: 1921**

*He lived among us ...*

### **I**

You remember how, in early childhood, after the long summer holidays, one went back to school. Everything was gray; it was like a barrack; it smelt of fresh paint and putty; one's school-fellows rough, the authorities unkind. Still one tried somehow to keep up one's courage, though at moments one was seized with home-sickness. One was occupied in greeting friends, struck by changes in faces, deafened by the noise and movement.

But when evening comes and the bustle in the half dark dormitory ceases, O what an unbearable sadness, what despair possesses one's soul. One bites one's pillow, suppressing one's sobs, one whispers dear names and cries, cries with tears that burn, and knows that this sorrow is unquenchable. It is then that one realizes for the first time all the shattering horror of two things: the irrevocability of the past and the feeling of loneliness. It seems as if one would gladly give up all the rest of life, gladly suffer any tortures, for a single day of that bright, beautiful life which will never repeat itself. It seems as if one would snatch each kind, caressing word and enclose it forever in one's memory, as if one would drink into one's soul, slowly and greedily, drop by drop, every caress. And one is cruelly tormented by the thought that, through carelessness, in the hurry, and because time seemed inexhaustible, one had not made the most of each hour and moment that flashed by in vain.

A child's sorrows are sharp, but will melt in sleep and disappear with the morning sun. We, grown-up people, do not feel them so passionately, but we remember longer and grieve more deeply. After Chekhov's funeral, coming back from the service in the cemetery, one great writer spoke words that were simple, but full of meaning:

"Now we have buried him, the hopeless keenness of the loss is passing away. but do you realize, forever, till the end of our days, there will remain in us a constant, dull, sad, consciousness that Chekhov is not there?"

And now that he is not here, one feels with peculiar pain how precious was each word of his, each smile, movement, glance, in which shone out his beautiful, elect, aristocratic soul. One is sorry that one was not always attentive to those special details, which sometimes more potently and intimately than great deeds reveal the inner man. One reproaches oneself that in the fluster of life one has not

managed to remember--to write down much of what is interesting, characteristic and important. And at the same time one knows that these feelings are shared by all those who were near him, who loved him truly as a man of incomparable spiritual fineness and beauty; and with eternal gratitude they will respect his memory, as the memory of one of the most remarkable of Russian writers.

To the love, to the tender and subtle sorrow of these men, I dedicate these lines.

Chekhov's cottage in Yalta stood nearly outside the town, right on the white and dusty Antka road. I do not know who had built it, but it was the most original building in Yalta. All bright, pure, light, beautifully-proportioned, built in no definite architectural style whatsoever, with a watchtower like a castle, with unexpected gables, with a glass verandah on the ground and an open terrace above, with scattered windows--both wide and narrow--the bungalow resembled a building of the modern school, if there were not obvious in its plan the attentive and original thought, the original, peculiar taste of an individual. The bungalow stood in the corner of an orchard, surrounded by a flower-garden. Adjoining the garden, on the side opposite the road was an old deserted Tartar cemetery, fenced with a low little wall; always green, still and unpeopled, with modest stones on the graves.

The flower garden was tiny, not at all luxurious, and the fruit orchard was still very young. There grew in it pears and crab-apples, apricots, peaches, almonds. During the last year the orchard began to bear fruit, which caused Anton Pavlovitch much worry and a touching and childish pleasure. When the time came to gather almonds, they were also gathered in Chekhov's orchard. They usually lay in a little heap in the window-sill of the drawing room, and it seemed as if nobody could be cruel enough to take them, although they were offered.

Anton Pavlovitch did not like it and was even cross when people told him that his bungalow was too little protected from the dust, which came from the Antka road, and that the orchard was insufficiently supplied with water. Without on the whole liking the Crimea, and certainly not Yalta, he regarded his orchard with a special, zealous love. People saw him sometimes in the morning, sitting on his heels, carefully coating the stems of his roses with sulphur or pulling weeds from the flower beds. And what rejoicing there would be, when in the summer drought there at last began a rain that filled the spare clay cisterns with water!

But his love was not that of a proprietor, it was something else--a mightier and wiser consciousness. He would often say, looking at his orchard with a twinkle in his eye:

"Look, I have planted each tree here and certainly they are dear to me. But this is of no consequence. Before I came here all this was waste land and ravines, all covered with stones and thistles. Then I came and turned this wilderness into a cultivated beautiful place. Do you know?"--he would suddenly add with a grave face, in a tone of profound belief--"do you know that in three or four hundred years all the earth will become a flourishing garden. And life will then be exceedingly light and comfortable."

The thought of the beauty of the coming life, which is expressed so tenderly, sadly, and charmingly in all his latest works, was in his life also one of his most intimate, most cherished thoughts. How often must he have thought of the future

happiness of mankind when, in the mornings, alone, silently, he trimmed his roses, still moist from the dew, or examined carefully a young splint, wounded by the wind. And how much there was in that thought of meek, wise, and humble self-forgetfulness.

No, it was not a thirst for life, a clinging to life coming from the insatiable human heart, neither was it a greedy curiosity as to what will come after one's own life, nor an envious jealousy of remote generations. It was the agony of an exceptionally refined, charming, and sensitive soul, who suffered beyond measure from banality, coarseness, dreariness, nothingness, violence, savagery--the whole horror and darkness of modern everyday existence. And that is why, when towards the end of his life there came to him immense fame and comparative security, together with the devoted love of all that was sensitive, talented and honest in Russian society,--that is why he did not lock himself up in the inaccessibility of cold greatness nor become a masterful prophet nor shrink into a venous and petty hostility against the fame of others. No, the sum of his wide and hard experience of life, of his sorrows, joys, and disappointments was expressed in that beautiful, anxious, self-forgetting dream of the coming happiness of others.

-- "How beautiful life will be in three or four hundred years."

And that is why he looked lovingly after his flower beds, as if he saw in them the symbol of beauty to come, and watched new paths being laid out by human intellect and knowledge. He looked with pleasure at new original buildings and at large, seagoing steamers; he was eagerly interested in every new invention and was not bored by the company of a specialist. With firm conviction he said that crimes such as murder, theft, and adultery are decreasing, and have nearly disappeared among the intelligentsia, teachers, doctors, and authors. He believed that in the future true culture would ennoble mankind.

Telling of Chekhov's orchard I forgot to mention that there stood in the middle of it swings and a wooden bench. Both these latter remained from "Uncle Vanya," which play the Moscow Art Theatre acted at Yalta, evidently with the sole purpose of showing the performance to Anton Pavlovitch who was ill then. Both objects were specially dear to Chekhov and, pointing to them, he would recollect with gratitude the attention paid him so kindly by the Art Theatre. It is fitting to say here that these fine actors, by their exceptionally subtle response to Chekhov's talent and their friendly devotion to himself, much sweetened his last days.

## II

There lived in the yard a tame crane and two dogs. It must be said that Anton Chekhov loved all animals very much with the exception of cats, for whom he felt an invincible disgust. He loved dogs specially. His dead "Kashtanka," his "Bromide," and "Quinine," which he had in Melikhovo, he remembered and spoke of, as one remembers one's dead friends. "Fine race, dogs!"--he would say at times with a good-natured smile.

The crane was a pompous, grave bird. He generally mistrusted people, but had a close friendship with Arseniy, Anton Chekhov's pious servant. He would run after Arseniy anywhere, in the garden, orchard or yard and would jump amusingly and

wave his wide-open wings, performing a characteristic crane dance, which always made Anton Pavlovitch laugh.

One dog was called "Tusik," and the other "Kashtan," in honor of the famous "Kashtanka." "Kashtan" was distinguished in nothing but stupidity and idleness. In appearance he was fat, smooth and clumsy, of a bright chocolate color, with senseless yellow eyes. He would bark after "Tusik" at strangers, but one had only to call him and he would turn on his back and begin servilely to crawl on the ground. Anton Pavlovitch would give him a little push with his stick, when he came up fawning, and would say with mock sternness:

-- "Go away, go away, fool. ... Leave me alone."

And would add, turning to his interlocutor, with annoyance, but with laughter in his eyes:

-- "Wouldn't you like me to give you this dog? You can't believe how stupid he is."

But it happened once that "Kashtan," through his stupidity and clumsiness, got under the wheels of a cab which crushed his leg. The poor dog came home running on three legs, howling terribly. His hind leg was crippled, the flesh cut nearly to the bone, bleeding profusely. Anton Pavlovitch instantly washed his wound with warm water and sublimate, sprinkled iodoform and put on a bandage. And with what tenderness, how dexterously and warily his big beautiful fingers touched the torn skin of the dog and with what compassionate reproof he soothed the howling "Kashtan":

-- "Ah, you silly, silly. ... How did you do it? Be quiet ... you'll be better . ... little stupid ..."

I have to repeat a commonplace, but there is no doubt that animals and children were instinctively drawn to Chekhov. Sometimes a girl who was ill would come to A.P. and bring with her a little orphan girl of three or four, whom she was bringing up. Between the tiny child and the sad invalid man, the famous author, was established a peculiar, serious and trusting friendship. They would sit for a long time on the bench, in the verandah. Anton Pavlovitch listened with attention and concentration, and she would whisper to him without ceasing her funny words and tangle her little hands in his beard.

Chekhov was regarded with a great heart-felt love by all sorts of simple people with whom he came into contact--servants, messengers, porters, beggars, tramps, postmen,--and not only with love, but with subtle sensitiveness, with concern and with understanding. I cannot help telling here one story which was told me by a small official of the Russian Navigation and Trade Company, a downright man, reserved and perfectly direct in receiving and telling his impressions.

It was autumn. Chekhov, returning from Moscow, had just arrived by steamer from Sebastopol at Yalta, and had not yet left the deck. It was that interval of chaos, of shouts and bustle which comes while the gangway is being put in place. At that chaotic moment the porter, a Tartar, who always waited on Chekhov, saw him from the distance and managed to climb up on the steamer sooner than any one else. He found Chekhov's luggage and was already on the point of carrying it down, when suddenly a rough and fierce-looking chief mate rushed on him. The

man did not confine himself to obscene language, but in the access of his official anger, he struck the Tartar on the face.

"And then an unbelievable scene took place," my friend told me--"the Tartar threw the luggage on the deck, beat his breast with his fists and, with wild eyes, was ready to fall on the chief mate, while he shouted in a voice which rang all over the port:

-- "What? Striking me? D'ye think you struck me? It is him--him, that you struck!"

"And he pointed his finger at Chekhov. And Chekhov, you know, was pale, his lips trembled. He came up to the mate and said to him quietly and distinctly, but with an unusual expression: 'Are not you ashamed!' Believe me, by Jove, if I were the chief mate, I would rather be spat upon twenty times in the face than hear that 'are not you ashamed.' And although the mate was sufficiently thick-skinned, even he felt it. He bustled about for a moment, murmured something and disappeared instantly. No more of him was seen on deck."

### III

Chekhov's study in his Yalta house was not big, about twelve strides long and six wide, modest, but breathing a peculiar charm. Just opposite the entrance was a large square window in a frame of yellow colored glass. To the left of the entrance, by the window, stood a writing table, and behind it was a small niche, lighted from the ceiling, by a tiny window. In the niche was a Turkish divan. To the right, in the middle of the wall was a brown fireplace of Dutch tiles. On the top of the fireplace there is a small hole where a tile is missing, and in this is a carelessly painted but lovely landscape of an evening field with hayricks in the distance; the work of Levitan. Further, in the corner, there is a door, through which is seen Anton Pavlovitch's bachelor bedroom, a bright, gay room, shining with a certain virgin cleanliness, whiteness and innocence. The walls of the study are covered with dark and gold papers, and by the writing table hangs a printed placard: "You are requested not to smoke." Immediately by the entrance door, to the right, there is a book-case with books. On the mantelpiece there are some bric-a-brac and among them a beautifully made model of a sailing ship. There are many pretty things made of ivory and wood on the writing table; models of elephants being in the majority. On the walls hang portraits of Tolstoy, Grigorovitch, and Turgenev. On a little table with a fan-like stand are number of photographs of actors and authors. Heavy dark curtains fall on both sides of the window. On the floor is a large carpet of oriental design. This softens all the outlines and darkens the study; yet the light from the window falls evenly and pleasantly on the writing table. The room smells of very fine scents of which A. Pavlovitch was very fond. From the window is seen an open horseshoe-shaped hollow, running down to the sea, and the sea itself, surrounded by an amphitheatre of houses. On the left, on the right, and behind, rise mountains in a semi-circle. In the evenings, when the lights are lit in the hilly environs of Yalta and the lights and the stars over them are so mixed that you cannot distinguish one from the other,--then the place reminds one of certain spots in the Caucasus.

This is what always happens--you get to know a man; you have studied his appearance, bearing, voice and manners, and still you can always recall his face as it was when you saw it for the first time, completely different from the present. Thus, after several years of friendship with Anton Pavlovitch, there is preserved in my memory the Chekhov, whom I saw for the first time in the public room of the hotel "London" in Odessa. He seemed to me then tall, lean, but broad in the shoulders, with a somewhat stern look. Signs of illness were not then noticeable, unless in his walk--weak, and as if on somewhat bent knees. If I were asked what he was like at first sight, I should say: "A Zemstvo doctor or a teacher of a provincial secondary school." But there was also in him something plain and modest, something extraordinarily Russian--of the people. In his face, speech and manners there was also a touch of the Moscow undergraduate's carelessness. Many people saw that in him, and I among them. But a few hours later I saw a completely different Chekhov--the Chekhov, whose face could never be caught by any photograph, who, unfortunately, was not understood by any painter who drew him. I saw the most beautiful, refined and spiritual face that I have ever come across in my life.

Many said that Chekhov had blue eyes. It is a mistake, but a mistake strangely common to all who knew him. His eyes were dark, almost brown, and the iris of his right eye was considerably brighter, which gave A.P.'s look, at certain moments, an expression of absent-mindedness. His eyelids hung rather heavy upon his eyes, as is so often observed in artists, hunters and sailors, and all those who concentrate their gaze. Owing to his pince-nez and his manner of looking through the bottom of his glasses, with his head somewhat tilted upwards, Anton Pavlovitch's face often seemed stern. But one ought to have seen Chekhov at certain moments (rare, alas, during the last years) when gaiety possessed him, and when with a quick movement of the hand, he threw off his glasses and swung his chair and burst into gay, sincere and deep laughter. Then his eyes became narrow and bright, with good-natured little wrinkles at the corners and he reminded one then of that youthful portrait in which he is seen as a beardless boy, smiling, short-sighted and naïve, looking rather sideways. And--strange though it is--each time that I look at that photograph, I cannot rid myself of the thought that Chekhov's eyes were really blue.

Looking at Chekhov one noticed his forehead, which was wide, white and pure, and beautifully shaped; two thoughtful folds came between the eyebrows, by the bridge of the nose, to vertical melancholy folds. Chekhov's ears were large and not shapely, but such sensible, intelligent ears I have seen only in one other man--Tolstoy.

Once in the summer, availing myself of A.P.'s good humor, I took several photographs of him with a little camera. Unfortunately the best of them and those most like him turned out very pale, owing to the weak light of the study. Of the others which were more successful, A.P. said as he looked at them:

"Well, you know, it is not me but some Frenchman."

I remember now very vividly the grip of his large, dry and hot hand,--a grip, always strong and manly but at the same time reserved, as if it were consciously concealing something. I also visualize now his handwriting: thin, with extremely fine strokes, careless at first sight and inelegant, but, when you look closer, it appears very distinct, tender, fine and characteristic, as everything else about him.

## IV

A.P. used to get up, in the summer at least, very early. None even of his most intimate friends saw him carelessly dressed nor did he approve of lazy habits, like wearing slippers, dressing gowns or light jackets. At eight or nine he was already pacing his study or at his writing table, invariably impeccably and neatly dressed.

Evidently, his best time for work was in the morning before lunch, although nobody ever managed to find him writing: in this respect he was extraordinarily reserved and shy. All the same, on nice warm mornings he could be seen sitting on a slope behind the house, in the cosiest part of the place, where oleanders stood in tubs along the walls, and where he had planted a cypress. There he sat sometimes for an hour or longer, alone, without stirring, with his hands on his knees, looking in front of him at the sea.

About midday and later visitors began to fill the house. Girls stood for hours at the iron railings, separating the bungalow from the road, with open mouths, in white felt hats. The most diverse people came to Chekhov: scholars, painters, admirers of both sexes, professors, society men and women, senators, priests, actors--and God knows who else. Often he was asked to give advice or help and still more often to give his opinion upon manuscripts. Casual newspaper reporters and people who are merely inquisitive would appear; also people who came to him with the sole purpose of "directing the big, but erring talent to the proper ideal side." Beggars came--genuine and sham. These never met with a refusal. I do not think it right, myself, to mention private cases, but I know for certain that Chekhov's generosity towards students of both sexes, was immeasurably beyond what his modest means would allow.

People came to him from all strata of society, of all camps, of all shades. Notwithstanding the worry of so continuous a stream of visitors, there was something attractive in it to Chekhov. He got first-hand knowledge of everything that was going on at any given moment in Russia. How mistaken were those who wrote or supposed that he was a man indifferent to public interests, to the whirling life of the intelligentsia, and to the burning questions of his time! He watched everything carefully, and thoughtfully. He was tormented and distressed by all the things which tormented the minds of the best Russians. One had only to see how in these terrible times, when the absurd, dark, evil phenomena of our public life were discussed in his presence, he knitted his thick eyebrows, and how martyred his face looked, and what a deep sorrow shone in his beautiful eyes.

It is fitting to mention here one fact which, in my opinion, superbly illustrates Chekhov's attitude to the stupidities of Russian life. Many know that he resigned the rank of an honorary member of the Academy; the motives of his resignation are known; but very few have read his letter, written with a simple and noble dignity, and the restrained indignation of a great soul.

To the August President of the Academy

25 August 1902

Yalta

*Your Imperial Highness,*

August President!

In December of last year I received a notice of the election of A. M. Pyeshkov (Maxim Gorky) as an honorary academician, and I took the first opportunity of seeing A. M. Pyeshkov, who was then in Crimea. I was the first to bring him news of his election and I was the first to congratulate him. Some time later, it was announced in the newspapers that, in view of proceedings according to Art. 1035 being instituted against Pyeshkov for his political views, his election was cancelled. It was expressly stated that this act came from the Academy of Sciences; and since I am an honorary academician, I also am partly responsible for this act. I have congratulated him heartily on becoming an academician and I consider his election cancelled--such a contradiction does not agree with my conscience, I cannot reconcile my conscience to it. The study of Art. 1035 has explained nothing to me. And after long deliberation I can only come to one decision, which is extremely painful and regrettable to me, and that is to ask most respectfully to be relieved of the rank of honorary academician. With a feeling of deepest respect I have the honor to remain

Your most devoted

Anton Chekhov.

Queer--to what extent people misunderstood Chekhov! He, the "incorrigible pessimist," as he was labelled,--never tired of hoping for a bright future, never ceased to believe in the invisible but persistent and fruitful work of the best forces of our country. Which of his friends does not remember the favorite phrase, which he so often sometimes so incongruously and unexpectedly, uttered in a tone of assurance:

-- "Look here, don't you see? There is sure to be a constitution in Russian in ten years time."

Yes, even in that there sounds the *motif* of the joyous future which is awaiting mankind; the *motif* that was audible in all the work of his last years.

The truth must be told: by no means all visitors spared A.P.'s time and nerves, and some of them were quite merciless. I remember one striking, and almost incredible instance of the banality and indelicacy which could be displayed by a man of the so-called artistic power.

It was a pleasant, cool and windless summer morning. A.P. was in an unusually light and cheerful mood. Suddenly there appeared as from the blue a stout gentleman (who subsequently turned out to be an architect), who sent his card to Chekhov and asked for an interview. A.P. received him. The architect came in, introduced himself, and, without taking any notice of the placard "You are requested not to smoke," without asking any permission, lit a huge stinking Riga cigar. then, after paying, as was inevitable, a few stone-heavy compliments to his host, he began on the business which brought him here.

The business consisted in the fact that the architect's little son, a school boy of the third form, was running in the streets the other day and from a habit peculiar to boys, whilst running, touched with his hand anything he came across: lamp-posts, or posts of fences. At last he managed to push his hand into a barbed wire fence and thus scratched his palm. "You see now, my worthy A.P.,"--the architect concluded his tale, "I shall very much like you to write a letter about it in the newspapers. It is lucky that Kolya (his boy) got off with a scratch, but it's only a chance. He might have cut an artery--what would have happened then?" "Yes, it's a nuisance," Chekhov answered, "but, unfortunately, I cannot be of any use to you. I do not write, nor have ever written, letters in the newspapers. I only write stories." "So much the better, so much the better! Put it in a story"--the architect was delighted. "Just put the name of the landlord in full letters. You may even put my own name, I do not object to it. ... Still it would be best if you only put my initials, not the full name. ... There are only two genuine authors left in Russia, you and Mr. P." (and the architect gave the name of a notorious literary tailor).

I am not able to repeat even a hundredth part of the boring commonplaces which the injured architect managed to speak, since he made the interview last until he finished the cigar to the end, and the study had to be aired for a long time to get rid of the smell. but when at last he left, A.P. came out into the garden completely upset with red spots on his cheeks. His voice trembled, when he turned reproachfully to his sister Marie and to a friend who sat on the bench:

"Could you not shield me from that man? You should have sent word that I was needed somewhere. He has tortured me!"

I also remember,--and this I am sorry to say was partly my fault--how a certain self-assured general came to him to express his appreciation as a reader, and, probably, desiring to give Chekhov pleasure, he began, with his legs spread open and the fists of his turned-out hand leaning on them, to vilify a young author, whose great popularity was then only beginning to grow. And Chekhov, at once, shrank into himself, and sat all the time with his eyes cast down, coldly, without saying a single word. And only from the quick reproachful look, which he cast at my friend, who had introduced that general, did he show what pain he caused.

Just as shyly and coldly he regarded praises lavished on him. He would retire into his niche, on the divan, his eyelids trembled, slowly fell and were not again raised, and his face became motionless and gloomy. Sometimes, when immoderate raptures came from some one he knew, he would try to turn the conversation into a joke, and give it a different direction. He would suddenly say, without rhyme or reason, with a light little laugh:

-- "I like reading what the Odessa reporters write about me."

"What is that?"

"It is very funny--all lies. Last spring one of them appeared in my hotel. He asked for an interview. And I had not time for it. So I said: 'Excuse me but I am busy now. But write whatever you like; it is of no importance of me.' Well, he did write. It drove me into a fever."

And once with a most serious face he said:

-- "You know, in Yalta every cabman knows me. They say: 'O, Chekhov, that man, the reader? I know him.' For some reason they call me reader. Perhaps they think that I read psalm-services for the dead? You, old fellow, ought to ask a cabman what my occupation is. ..."

## V

At one o'clock Chekhov dined downstairs, in a cool bright dining-room, and there was nearly always a guest at dinner. It was difficult not to yield to the fascination of that simple, kind, cordial family. One felt constant solicitude and love, not expressed with a single high-sounding word,--an amazing amount of refinement and attention which never, as if on purpose, got beyond the limits of ordinary, everyday relations. One always noticed a truly Chekhovian fear of everything high-flown, insincere, or showy. In that family one felt very much at one's ease, light and warm, and I perfectly understand a certain author who said that he was in love with all the Chekhovs at the same time.

Anton Pavlovitch ate exceedingly little and did not like to sit at table, but usually passed from the window to the door and back. Often after dinner, staying behind with some one in the dining-room, Yevguenia Yakovlevna (A.P.'s mother) said quietly with anxiety in her voice:

"Again Antosha ate nothing at dinner."

He was very hospitable and loved it when people stayed to dinner, and he knew how to treat guests in his own peculiar way, simply and heartily. He would say, standing behind one's chair:

-- "Listen, have some vodka. When I was young and healthy I loved it. I would pick mushrooms for a whole morning, get tired out, hardly able to reach home, and before lunch I would have two or three thimblefuls. Wonderful! ..."

After dinner he had tea upstairs, on the open verandah, or in his study, or he would come down in the garden and sit there on the bench, in his overcoat, with a cane, pushing his soft black hat down to his very eyes and looking out under its brim with screwed up eyes.

These hours were the most crowded. There were constant rings on the telephone, asking if Anton Chekhov could be seen; and perpetual visitors. Strangers also came, sending in their cards and asking for help, for autographs or books. Then queer things happened.

One "Tambov squire," as Chekhov christened him, came to him for medical advice. In vain did Anton Pavlovitch answer him, that he had given up medical practice long ago and that he was behind the times in medicine. In vain did he recommend a more experienced physician,--the "Tambov squire" persisted: no doctor would he trust but Chekhov. Willy-nilly he had to give a few trifling, perfectly innocent pieces of advice. On taking leave the "Tambov squire" put on the table two gold coins and, in spite of all Chekhov's persuasion, he would not agree to take them back. Anton Pavlovitch had to give way. He said that as he neither wished nor considered himself entitled to take money as a fee, he would give it to the Yalta Charitable Society, and at once wrote a receipt. It turned out

that it was that the "Tambov squire" wanted. With a radiant face, he carefully put the receipt in his pocket-book, and then confessed that the sole purpose of his visit was to obtain Chekhov's autograph. Chekhov himself told me the story of this original and persistent patient--half-laughing, half-cross.

I repeat, many of these visitors plagued him fearfully and even irritated him, but, owing to the amazing delicacy peculiar to him, he was with all patient, attentive and accessible to those who wished to see him. His delicacy at times reached a limit that bordered on weakness. Thus, for instance, one nice, well-meaning lady, a great admirer of Chekhov, gave him for a birthday present a huge pug-dog in a sitting position, made of colored plaster of Paris, over a yard high, i.e., about five times larger than its natural size. That pug-dog was placed downstairs, on the landing near the dining room, and there he sat with an angry face chewing his teeth and frightening those who had forgotten him.

-- "O, I'm afraid of that stone dog myself," Chekhov confessed, "but it is awkward to move him; it might hurt her. Let him stay on here."

And suddenly, with eyes full of laughter, he added unexpectedly, in his usual manner:

"Have you noticed in the houses of rich Jews, such plaster dogs often sit by the fireplace?"

At times, for days on end, he would be annoyed with every sort of admirer and detractor and even adviser. "O, I have such a mass of visitors," - he complained in a letter,--"that my head swims. I cannot work." But still he did not remain indifferent to a sincere feeling of love and respect and always distinguished it from idle and fulsome tittle-tattle. Once he returned in a very gay mood from the quay where he sometimes took a walk, and with great animation told us:

-- "I just had a wonderful meeting. An artillery officer suddenly came up to me on the quay, quite a young man, a sub-lieutenant. --'Are you A. P. Chekhov?' --'Yes. Do you want anything?' --'Excuse me please for my importunity, but for so long I have wanted to shake your hand!' And he blushed--he was a wonderful fellow with a fine face. We shook hands and parted."

Chekhov was at his best towards evening, about seven o'clock, when people gathered in the dining room for tea and a light supper. Sometimes--but more and more rarely as the years went on--there revived in him the old Chekhov, inexhaustibly gay, witty, with a bubbling, charming, youthful humor. Then he improvised stories in which the characters were his friends, and he was particularly fond of arranging imaginary weddings, which sometimes ended with the young husband the following morning, sitting at the table and having his tea, saying as it were by the way in an unconcerned an businesslike tone:

-- "Do you know, my dear, after tea we'll get ready and go to a solicitor's. Why should you have unnecessary bother about your money?"

He invented wonderful Chekhovian names, of which I now--alas! --remember only a certain mythical sailor Koshkodovenko-cat-slayer. He also liked as a joke to make young writers appear old. "What are you saying--Bunin is my age"--he would assure one with mock seriousness. "So is Teleshov: he is an old writer. Well, ask him yourself: he will tell you what a spree we had at T. A. Bieloussov's

wedding. What a long time ago!" To a talented novelist, a serious writer and a man of ideas, he said: "Look here, you're twenty years my senior: surely you wrote previously under the nom-de-plume 'Nestor Kukolnik.'"

But his jokes never left any bitterness any more than he consciously ever caused the slightest pain to any living thing.

After dinner he would keep some one in his study for half an hour or an hour. On his table candles would be lit. Later, when all had gone and he remained alone, a light would still be seen in his large window for a long time. Whether he worked at that time, or looked through his note-books, putting down the impressions of the day nobody seems to know.

## VI

It is true, on the whole, that we know nearly nothing, not only of his creative activities, but even of the external methods of his work. In this respect Anton Pavlovitch was almost eccentric in his reserve and silence. I remember him saying, as if by the way, something very significant:

-- "For God's sake don't read your work to any one until it is published. Don't read it to others in proof even."

This was always his own habit, although he sometimes made exceptions for his wife and sister. Formerly he is said to have been more communicative in this respect.

That was when he wrote a great deal and at great speed. He himself said that he used to write a story a day. E. T. Chekhov, his mother, used to say: "When he was still an undergraduate, Antosha would sit at the table in the morning, having his tea and suddenly fall to thinking; he would sometimes look straight into one's eyes, but I knew that he saw nothing. Then he would get his note-book out of his pocket and write quickly, quickly. And again he would fall to thinking ..."

But during the last years Chekhov began to treat himself with ever increasing strictness and exactitude: he kept his stories for several years, continually correcting and copying them, and nevertheless in spite of such minute work, the final proofs, which came from him, were speckled throughout with signs, corrections, and insertions. In order to finish a work he had to write without tearing himself away. "If I leave a story for a long time,"--he once said--"I cannot make myself finish it afterwards. I have to begin again."

Where did he draw his images from? Where did he find his observations and his similes? Where did he forge his superb language, unique in Russian literature: He confided in nobody, never revealed his creative methods. Many note-books are said to have been left by him; perhaps in them will in time be found the keys to those mysteries. Or perhaps they will forever remain unsolved. Who knows? At any rate we must limit ourselves to vague hints and guesses.

I think that always, from morning to night, and perhaps at night even, in his sleep and sleeplessness, there was going on in him an invisible but persistent--at times even unconscious--activity, the activity of weighing, defining and remembering.

He knew how to listen and ask questions, as no one else did; but often, in the middle of a lively conversation, it would be noticed, how his attentive and kindly look became motionless and deep, as if it were withdrawing somewhere inside, contemplating something mysterious and important, which was going on there. At those moments A.P. would put his strange questions, amazing through their unexpectedness, completely out of touch with the conversation, questions which confused many people. The conversation was about neo-marxists, and he would suddenly ask: "Have you ever been to a stud-farm? You ought to see one. It is interesting." Or he would repeat a question for the second time, which had already been answered.

Chekhov was not remarkable for a memory of external things. I speak of that power of minute memory, which women so often possess in a very high degree, also peasants, which consists in remembering how a person was dressed, whether he has a beard and mustaches, what his watch chain was like or his boots, what color his hair was. These details were simply unimportant and uninteresting to him. But, instead, he took the whole person and defined quickly and truly, exactly like an experienced chemist, his specific gravity, his quality and order, and he knew already how to describe his essential qualities in a couple of strokes.

Once Chekhov spoke with slight displeasure of a good friend of his, a famous scholar, who, in spite of a long-standing friendship, somewhat oppressed Chekhov with his talkativeness. No sooner would he arrive in Yalta, than he at once came to Chekhov and sat there with him all the morning till lunch. Then he would go to his hotel for half an hour, and come back and sit until late at night, all the time talking, talking, talking. ... And so on day after day.

Suddenly, abruptly breaking off his story, as if carried away by a new interesting thought, Anton Pavlovitch added with animation:

-- "And nobody would guess what is most characteristic in that man. I know it. That he is a professor and a savant with a European reputation, is to him a secondary matter. The chief thing is that in his heart he considers himself to be a remarkable actor, and he profoundly believes that it is only by chance that he has not won universal popularity on the stage. At home he always reads Ostovsky aloud."

Once, smiling at his recollection, he suddenly observed:

-- "D'you know, Moscow is the most peculiar city. In it everything is unexpected. Once on a spring morning S., the publicist, and myself came out of the Great Moscow Hotel. It was after a late and merry supper. Suddenly S. dragged me to the Tversky Church, just opposite. He took a handful of coppers and began to share it out to the beggars--there are dozens standing about there. He would give one a penny and whisper: 'Pray for the health of Michael the slave of God.' It is his Christian name Michael. And again: 'for the servant of God, Michael; for Michael, the servant of God.' And he himself does not believe in God. ... Queer fellow!"

I now approach a delicate point which may not perhaps please every one. I am convinced that Chekhov talked to a scholar and a peddler, a beggar and a litterateur, with a prominent Zemstvo worker and suspicious monk or shop assistant or a small postman, with the same attention and curiosity. Is not that the

reason why in his stories the professor speaks and thinks just like an old professor, and the tramp just like a veritable tramp? And is it not because of this, that immediately after his death there appeared so many "bosom" friends, for whom, in their words, he would be ready to go through fire and water?

I think that he did not open or give his heart completely to any one (there is a legend, though, of an intimate, beloved friend, a Taganrog official). But he regarded all kindly, indifferently so far as friendship is concerned - and at the same time with a great, perhaps unconscious, interest.

His Chekhovian *mots* and those little *traits* that astonish us by their neatness and appositeness, he often took direct from life.

The expression "it displeases me" which quickly became, after the "Bishop," a bye-word with a wide circulation, he got from a certain gloomy tramp, half-drunkard, half-madman, half-prophet. I also remember talking once with Chekhov of a long dead Moscow poet, and Chekhov glowingly remembered him, and his mistress, and his empty rooms, and his St. Bernard, "Ami," who suffered from constant indigestion. "Certainly, I remember,"--Chekhov said laughing gayly--"At five o'clock his mistress would always come in and ask: 'Liodor Tranitch, I say, Liodor Tranitch, is it not time you drank your beer?'"--And then I imprudently said: "O, that's where it comes from in your 'Ward N 6' ?" --"Yes, well, yes"--replied Chekhov with displeasure.

He had friends also among those merchants' wives, who, in spite of their millions and the most fashionable dresses, and an outward interest in literature, say "ideal" and "in principal." Some of them would for hours pour out their souls before Chekhov, wishing to convey what extraordinarily refined, neurotic characters they were, and what a remarkable novel could be written by a writer of genius about their lives, if only they could tell everything. And he would sit quietly, in silence, and listen with apparent pleasure--only under his moustache glided an almost imperceptible smile.

I do not wish to say that he *looked* for models, like many other writers. But I think, that everywhere and always he saw material for observation, and this happened involuntarily, often perhaps against his will, through his long-cultivated and ineradicable habit of diving into people, of analyzing and generalizing them. In this hidden process was to him, probably, all the torment and joy of his creative activity.

He shared his impression with no one, just as he never spoke of what and how he was going to write. Also very rarely was the artist and novelist shown in his talk. He, partly deliberately, partly instinctively, used in his speech ordinary, average, common expressions, without having recourse either to simile or picturesqueness. He guarded his treasures in his soul, not permitting them to be wasted in wordy foam, and in this there was a huge difference between him and those novelists who tell their stories much better than they write them.

This, I think, came from a natural reserve, but also from a peculiar shyness. There are people who constitutionally cannot endure and are morbidly shy of too demonstrative attitudes, gestures and words, and Anton Pavlovitch possessed this quality in the highest degree. Herein, maybe, is hidden the key to his *seeming* indifference towards questions of struggle and protest and his aloofness towards

topical events, which did and do agitate the Russian intelligentsia. He had a horror of pathos, of vehement emotions and theatrical effects inseparable from them. I can only compare him in this with a man who loves a woman with all the ardor, tenderness and depth, of which a man of refinement and great intelligence is capable. He will never try to speak of it in pompous, high-flown words, and he cannot even imagine himself falling on his knees and pressing his hand to his heart and speaking in the tremulous voice of a young lover on the stage. And therefore he loves and is silent, and suffers in silence, and will never attempt to utter what the average man will express freely and noisily according to all the rules of rhetoric.

## VII

To young writers, Chekhov was always sympathetic and kind. No one left him oppressed by his enormous talent and by one's own insignificance. He never said to any one: "Do as I do; see how I behave." If in despair one complained to him: "Is it worth going on, if one will forever remain 'our young and promising author'?" he answered quietly and seriously":

-- "But, my dear fellow, not every one can write like Tolstoy." His considerateness was at times pathetic. A certain young writer came to Yalta and took a little room in a big and noisy Greek family somewhere beyond Antka, on the outskirts of the city. He once complained to Chekhov that it was difficult to work in such surroundings, and Chekhov insisted that the writer should come to him in the mornings and work downstairs in the room adjoining the dining room. "You will write downstairs, and I upstairs"--he said with his charming smile-- "And you will have dinner with me. When you finish something, do read it to me, or, if you go away, send me the proofs."

He read an amazing amount and always remembered everything, and never confused one writer with another. If writers asked his opinion, he always praised their work, not so as to get rid of them, but because he knew how cruelly a sharp, even if just, criticism cuts the wings of beginners, and what an encouragement and hope a little praise gives sometimes. "I have read your story. It is marvelously well done," he would say on such occasions in a hearty voice. But when a certain confidence was established and they got to know each other, especially if an author insisted, he gave his opinion more definitely, directly, and at greater length. I have two letters of his, written to one and the same novelist, concerning one and the same tale. Here is a quotation from the first:

"Dear N., I received your tale and have read it; many thanks. The tale is good, I have read it at one go, as I did the previous one, and with the same pleasure. ... "

But as the author was not satisfied with praise alone, he soon received a second letter from Anton Pavlovitch.

"You want me to speak of defects only, and thereby you put me in an embarrassing situation. There are no defects in that story, and if one finds fault, it is only with a few of its peculiarities. For instance, your heroes, characters, you treat in the old style, as they have been treated for a hundred years by all who have written about them--nothing new. Secondly, in the first chapter you are busy

describing people's faces--again that is the old way, it is a description which can be dispensed with. Five minutely described faces tire the attention and in the end lose their value. Clean-shaved characters are like each other, like Catholic priests, and remain alike, however studiously you describe them. Thirdly, you overdo your rough manner in the description of drunken people. That is all I can say in reply to your questions about the defects; I can find nothing more that is wrong."

To those writers with whom he had any common spiritual bond, he always behaved with great care and attention. He never missed an occasion to tell them any news which he knew would be pleasing or useful.

"Dear N.," he wrote to a certain friend of mine,--"I hereby inform you that your story was read by L. N. Tolstoy and he liked it *very much*. Be so good as to send him your book at this address; Koreiz, Tauric Province, and on the title page underline the stories which you consider best, so that he should begin with them. Or send the book to me and I will hand it to him."

To the writer of these lines he also once showed a delightful kindness, communicating by letter that, "In the 'Dictionary of the Russian Language,' published by the Academy of Sciences, in the sixth number of the second volume, which number I received to-day, you too appeared at last."

All these of course are details, but in them is apparent much sympathy and concern, so that now, when this great artist and remarkable man is no longer among us, his letters acquire the significance of a far-away, irrevocable caress.

"Write, write as much as possible"--he would say to young novelists. "It does not matter if it does not come off. Later on it will come off. The chief thing is, do not waste your youth and elasticity. It's now the time for working. See, you write superbly, but your vocabulary is small. You must acquire words and turns of speech, and for this you must write every day."

And he himself worked untiringly on himself, enriching his charming, varied vocabulary from every source: from conversations, dictionaries, catalogues, from learned works, from sacred writings. The store of words which that silent man had was extraordinary.

-- "Listen, travel third class as often as possible"-- he advised--"I am sorry that illness prevents me from traveling third. There you will sometimes hear remarkably interesting things."

He also wondered at those authors who for years on end see nothing but the next door house from the windows of their Petersburg flats. And often he said with a shade of impatience:

-- "I cannot understand why you--young, healthy, and free--don't go, for instance, to Australia (Australia for some reason was his favorite part of the world), or to Siberia. As soon as I am better, I shall certainly go to Siberia. I was there when I went to Saghalien. You cannot imagine, my dear fellow, what a wonderful country it is. It is quite different. you know, I am convinced Siberia will some day sever herself completely from Russia, just as America severed herself from her motherland. You must, must go there without fail. ..."

Why don't you write a play? --he would sometimes ask. "Do write one, really. Every writer must write at least four plays."

But he would confess now and then, that the dramatic form is losing its interest now.

"The drama must either degenerate completely, or take a completely new form"--he said. "We cannot even imagine what the theatre will be like in a hundred years."

There were some little inconsistencies in Anton Pavlovitch which were particularly attractive in him and had at the same time a deep inner significance. This was once the case with regard to note-books. Chekhov had just strongly advised us not to have recourse to them for help but to rely wholly on our memory and imagination. "The big things will remain"--he argued--"and the details you can always invent or find." But then, an hour later, one of the company, who had been for a year on the stage, began to talk of his theatrical impressions and incidentally mentioned this case. A rehearsal was taking place in the theatre of a tiny provincial town. The "young lover" paced the stage in a hat and check trousers, with his hands in his pockets, showing off before a casual public which had straggled into the theatre. The "ingenue," his mistress, who was also on the stage, said to him: "Sasha, what was it you whistled yesterday from *Pagliacci*? Do please whistle it again." The "young lover" turned to her, and looking her up and down with a devastating expression said in a fat, actor's voice: "Wha-at! Whistle on the stage? Would you whistle in church? Then know that the stage is the same as a church!"

At the end of the story Anton Pavlovitch threw off his pince-nez, flung himself back in his chair, and began to laugh with his clear, ringing laughter. He immediately opened the drawer of his table to get his note-book. "Wait, wait, how did you say it? The stage is a temple?" ... And he put down the whole anecdote.

There was no essential contradiction in this, and Anton Pavlovitch explained it himself. "One should not put down similes, characteristic *traits*, details, scenes from nature--this must come of itself when it is needed. But a bare fact, a rare name, a technical term, should be put down in the note-book--otherwise it may be forgotten and lost."

Chekhov frequently recalled the difficulties put in his way by the editors of serious magazines, until with the helping hand of "Sieverny Viestnik" he finally overcame them.

"For one thing you all ought to be grateful to me,"--he would say to young writers. --"It was I who opened the way for writers for short stories. Formerly, when one took a manuscript to an editor, he did not even read it. He just looked scornfully at one. 'What? You call this a work? But this is shorter than a sparrow's nose. No, we do not want such trifles.' But, see, I got round them and paved the way for others. but that is nothing; they treated me much worse than that! They used my name as a synonym for a writer of short stories. They would make merry: 'O, you Chekhovs!' It seemed to them amusing."

Anton Pavlovitch had a high opinion of modern writing, i.e., properly speaking, of the technique of modern writing. "All write superbly now; there are no bad

writers"--he said in a resolute tone. "And hence it is becoming more and more difficult to win fame. Do you know whom that is due to?--Maupassant. He, as an artist in language, put the standard before an author so high that it is no longer possible to write as of old. You try to re-read some of our classics, say, Pissensky, Grigorovitch, or Ostrovsky; try, and you will see what obsolete, commonplace stuff it is. Take on the other hand our decadents. They are only pretending to be sick and crazy,--they all are burly peasants. But so far as writing goes, - they are masters."

At the same time he asked that writers should choose ordinary, everyday themes, simplicity of treatment, and absence of showy tricks. "Why write,"--he wondered--"about a man getting into a submarine and going to the North Pole to reconcile himself with the world, while his beloved at that moment throws herself with a hysterical shriek from the belfry? All this is untrue and does not happen in reality. One must write about simple things: how Peter Semionovitch married Marie Ivanovna. That is all. And again, why those subtitles: a psychological study, genre, nouvelle? All these are mere pretense. Put as plain a title as possible--any that occurs to your mind --and nothing else. Also use as few brackets, italics and hyphens as possible. They are mannerisms."

He also taught that an author should be indifferent to the joys and sorrows of his characters. "In a good story"--he said--"I have read a description of a restaurant by the sea in a large city. You saw at once that the author was all admiration for the music, the electric lights, the flowers in the buttonholes; that he himself delighted in contemplating them. One has to stand outside these things, and, although knowing them in minute detail, one must look at them from top to bottom with contempt. And then it will be true."

## VIII

The son of Alphonse Daudet in his memoirs of his father relates that the gifted French writer half jokingly called himself a "seller of happiness." People of all sorts would constantly apply to him for advice and assistance. They came with their sorrows and worries, and he, already bedridden with a painful and incurable disease, found sufficient courage, patience, and love of mankind in himself to penetrate into other people's grief, to console and encourage them.

Chekhov, certainly, with his extraordinary modesty and his dislike of phrase-making would never have said anything like that. But how often he had to listen to people's confessions, to help by word and deed, to hold out a tender and strong hand to the falling. ... In his wonderful objectivity, standing above personal sorrows and joys, he knew and saw everything. But personal feeling stood in the way of his understanding. He could be kind and generous without loving; tender and sympathetic without attachment; a benefactor, without counting gratitude. And these traits which were never understood by those round him, contained the chief key to his personality.

Availing myself of the permission of a friend of mine, I will quote a short extract from a Chekhov letter. The man was greatly alarmed and troubled during the first pregnancy of a much beloved wife, and to tell the truth, he distressed Anton Pavlovitch greatly with his own trouble. Chekhov once wrote to him:

"Tell your wife she should not be anxious, everything will be all right. The travail will last twenty hours, and then will ensue a most blissful state, when she will smile, and you will long to cry from love and gratitude. Twenty hours is the usual maximum for the first childbirth."

What a subtle cure for another's anxiety is heard in these few simple lines! But it is still more characteristic that later, when my friend had become a happy father, and, recollecting that letter, asked Chekhov how he understood these feelings so well, Anton Pavlovitch answered quietly, even indifferently:

"When I lived in the country, I always had to attend peasant women. It was just the same--there too is the same joy."

If Chekhov had not been such a remarkable writer, he would have been a great doctor. Physicians who sometimes invited him to a consultation spoke of him as an unusually thoughtful observer and penetrating in diagnosis. It would not be surprising if his diagnosis were more perfect and profound than a diagnosis given by a fashionable celebrity. He saw and heard in man--in his face, voice, and bearing--what was hidden and would escape the notice of an average observer.

He himself preferred to recommend, in the rare cases when his advice was sought, medicines that were tried, simple, and mostly domestic. By the way he treated children with great success.

He believed in medicine firmly and soundly, and nothing could shake that belief. I remember how cross he was once when some one began to talk slightly of medicine, basing his remarks on Zola's novel "Doctor Pascal."

-- "Zola understands nothing and invents it all in his study,"--he said in agitation, coughing. "Let him come and see how our Zemstvo doctors work and what they do for the people."

Every one knows how often--with what sympathy and love beneath an external hardness, he describes those superb workers, those obscure and inconspicuous heroes who deliberately doomed their names to oblivion. He described them, even without sparing them.

## IX

There is a saying: the death of each man is like him. One recalls it involuntarily when one thinks of the last year of Chekhov's life, of the last days, even of the last minutes. Even into his funeral fate brought, by some fatal consistency, many purely Chekhovian traits.

He struggled long, terribly long, with an implacable disease, but bore it with manly simplicity and patience, without irritation, without complaints, almost in silence. Only just before his death, he mentions his disease, just by the way, in his letters. "My health is recovered, although I still walk with a compress on." ... "I have just got through a pleurisy, but am better now." ... "My health is not grand. ... I write on."

He did not like to talk of his disease and was annoyed when questioned about it. Only from Arseniy (the servant) one would learn. "This morning he was very bad -there was blood," he would say in a whisper, shaking his head. Or Yevguenia Yakovlevna, Chekhov's mother, would say secretly with anguish in her voice:

"Antosha again coughed all night. I hear through the wall."

Did he know the extent and the meaning of his disease? I think he did, but intrepidly, like a doctor and a philosopher, he looked into the eyes of imminent death. There were various, trifling circumstances pointing to the fact that he knew. Thus, for instance, to a lady who complained to him of insomnia and nervous breakdown, he said quietly, with an indefinable sadness:

"You see; whilst a man's lungs are right, everything is right."

He died simply, pathetically, and fully conscious. They say his last words were: "Ich sterbe." and his last days were darkened by a deep sorrow for Russia, and by the anxiety of the monstrous Japanese war.

His funeral comes back to mind like a dream. The cold, grayish Petersburg, a mistake about a telegram, a small gathering of people at the railway station, "Wagon for oysters," in which his remains were brought from Germany, the station authorities who had never heard of Chekhov and saw in his body only a railway cargo. ... Then, as a contrast, Moscow, profound sorrow, thousands of bereaved people, tear-stained faces. and at last his grave in the Novodevitchy cemetery, filled with flowers, side by side with the humble grave of the "Cossack's widow, Olga Coocaretnikov."

I remember the service in the cemetery the day after his funeral. It was a still July evening, and the old lime trees over the graves stood motionless and golden in the sun. With a quiet, tender sadness and sighing sounded the women's voices. And in the souls of many, then, was a deep perplexity.

Slowly and in silence the people left the cemetery. I went up to Chekhov's mother and silently kissed her hand. And she said in a low, tired voice:

"Our trial is bitter. ... Antosha is dead."

O, the overwhelming depth of these simple, ordinary, very Chekhovian words! The enormous abyss of the loss, the irrevocable nature of the great event, opened behind. No! Consolations would be useless. Can the sorrow of these, whose souls have been so close to the great soul of the dead, ever be assuaged?

But let their unquenchable anguish be stayed by the consciousness that their distress is our common distress. Let it be softened by the thought of the immortality of his great and pure name. Indeed: there will pass years and centuries, and time will efface the very memory of thousands and thousands of those living now. But the posterity, of whose happiness Chekhov dreamt with such fascinating sadness, will speak his name with gratitude and silent sorrow for his fate.

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