

Maxim Gorki and Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi
Personal Contacts and Literary Relationship

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ABSTRACT

The personal contacts and literary relationship between Maxim Gorki and Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi began with their personal meeting in Capri on June 2, 1909 and continued until the latter's death in April, 1913. During this period the two writers established a close friendship based on common humanitarian ideals and a mutual interest in literature. The aim of this thesis specifically is to investigate their relationship as manifested in the personal, intellectual and literary aspects of their association.

The friendship between M. Gorki and M. Kotsiubyns'kyi resulted in a mutual enrichment of both writers' lives. Gorki arranged for the translation and publication of Kotsiubyns'kyi's works and provided the Ukrainian writer with the intellectual and cultural environment necessary for literary work. Kotsiubyns'kyi introduced Gorki to the wealth of Ukrainian culture through personal discussions of its literature and by procuring for him a number of scholarly works on Ukrainian folklore and ethnography.

An analysis of the literary works of both writers during this period reveals that they met after the formative period of their literary development and that their friendship did not significantly alter their lives. Furthermore, their mutual influences did not extend to their literary works as contemporary Soviet literary critics maintain. Both writers retained their own distinct style of writing. Although parallel themes, characters and ideas may be found in some of their works, Gorki was essentially a realist while Kotsiubyns'kyi had evolved to impressionism while retaining certain realistic tendencies. The mood in Gorki's works is serious, rebellious and often depressing while, Kotsiubyns'kyi achieves a harmony of joy and sorrow against a background of colour and beauty as seen in nature.

Both writers are great literary figures who added much to the literatures of their respective nations and neither can be regarded as having written under the influence of the other. The correspondence between them provided a source of information which elucidated their relationship. It appears as an integral part of this thesis.

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SYSTEM OF TRANSLITERATION

The system used in this thesis for the purpose of transliterating the Russian and Ukrainian alphabets is based upon the system used by the Library of Congress. In cases of dissimilarity between the two, the Ukrainian letter will be preceded by the abbreviation (U). The modern post-revolutionary orthography will be used throughout the thesis. The orthography of personal and geographical names will be based upon the language of the country to which they belong.

Аа	-	a	Оо	-	o
Бб	-	b	Пп	-	p
Вв	-	v	Рр	-	r
Гг	-	g	Сс	-	s
(U) Гг	-	h	Тт	-	t
Дд	-	d	Уу	-	u
Ее	-	e	Фф	-	f
(U) Єє	-	ie	Хх	-	kh
Жж	-	zh	Цц	-	ts
Зз	-	z	Чч	-	ch
Ии	-	i	Шш	-	sh
(U) Ии	-	y	Щщ	-	shch
(U) Іі	-	i	Ъъ	-	"
(U) Іі	-	ii	Ыы	-	y
Йй	-	ii	Ьь	-	'
Кк	-	k	Ээ	-	e
Лл	-	l	Юю	-	iu
Мм	-	m	Яя	-	ia
Нн	-	n			

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The comparative study of Eastern Slavic literary figures has evoked considerable interest among Slavists in all parts of the world. This interest is partially the result of the growing political and economic importance of Eastern Europe as well as the increasing number of scholarly works in the field of Slavic linguistics and literature. It has been acknowledged that a more profound understanding of the Slavic peoples can be achieved through the scholarly study of their literary heritage. Furthermore, the recent accessibility of hitherto unavailable archival materials has provided the contemporary Slavist with ample opportunity for scholarly research and study.

The objectivity of comparative literary study had been hindered to some extent by a political and emotional bias found both in the Soviet Union and in the Western world. The consequences of such a tendency have been to overemphasize certain qualities in a literary figure while at the same time totally ignoring other aspects considered negative. This has produced superficial and often distorted interpretations of an author's literary contribution. There is now, however, a tendency to view literary figures more objectively and to avoid trying to fit them into the narrow framework of current literary interpretation. The greatness of an author can be judged by the artistic quality of his works irrespective of his particular views and interpretation of life. Consequently, it is not the literary period but his artistic portrayal of it that is important.

In comparing the relationship between the two authors and determining the literary influences they may have had on each other, we recognize that, although there may be parallels in character and composition, it is the style and language which determine the originality of an author's work. The literary relationship between two authors also reflects in microcosm the relationship between two peoples. It is with this end in mind that Slavic scholars are researching and publishing articles, monographs, biographies, documents and theses on Russian, Ukrainian and other Slavic literatures.

The Problem and its Delineation

The problem of analyzing the relationship between the Russian realist Aleksei Maksimovich Gorki and the Ukrainian impressionist Mykhailo Mykhailovich Kotsiubyns'kyi has interested scholars for the last fifty years. The warm friendship which developed between the two writers during their Capri period, 1909-1913, has been superficially lauded but concretely ignored by Soviet scholars. However, a number of Western scholars have demonstrated their interest in this problem and have considered it as a subject worthy of investigation. Until recently, the lack of primary source materials on both Gorki and Kotsiubyns'kyi had prevented scholars from making a comprehensive and objective study of the personal contacts and literary relationship between these two authors. However, the publication of their collected works and correspondence in the Soviet Union has provided scholars with data and documents necessary for research and study.

The objective of this thesis is essentially three fold. It will attempt:

1) to describe the friendship and personal contacts of Maxim Gorki and Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi; 2) to examine these as sources of mutual influence as they affect both authors in that period and 3) to evaluate their effect on their literary output of the said period.

The relationship itself will be considered as having both a personal aspect and a literary aspect.

The discussion of the personal aspect will assess the contribution made by each author in the form of non-literary assistance, literary advice and criticism, and general overall friendship. Our analysis of the literary aspect will deal with specific mutual or individual influences from the creative and technical point of view.

Method of Investigation

The initial step taken in this investigation was the collection and evaluation of all available sources on the subject. These sources were placed in three categories: 1) primary sources 2) literary criticism, and 3) literary works.

The primary sources, consisting of collected works, correspondence and articles by contemporary acquaintances, were intensively studied and all relevant material was excerpted. Special attention was paid to the correspondence exchanged between Maxim Gorki and Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi between 1909-1913. These letters served as the chief primary source. They were arranged chronologically with each letter followed by its immediate reply. A number of letters written by Gorki's wife, Maria Fedorovna, to Kotsiubyns'kyi were also included.

The secondary materials of literary criticism included literary history, biographies, monographs, critical essays and articles. The information contained in this category included the analyses, criticisms and evaluations of scholars interested in the two writers. These sources in some instances provided information not found in primary sources or references to archival materials still unpublished.

The third category consisted of other literary works written during the period in which the two authors maintained a close friendship. These works were chosen for comparative study because they reveal striking parallels in characterization, composition and subject material. We studied them in order to discover any possible reflection of the relationship between the two authors and any evidence of mutual or individual influence in creativity or technique.

After the study and assessment of the above sources were completed and personal and literary relationships were defined in order to determine the extent of possible mutual and individual influences.

Statement on Research and Sources

The study and evaluation of the sources available revealed that a considerable number of works have already been written in which the personal friendship and literary relations between Maxim Gorki and Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi have already been mentioned. However, Soviet biographers and literary historians have only emphasized the influence of Gorki on Kotsiubyns'kyi; they have totally ignored

the question of Kotsiubyns'kyi's influence on Gorki. Most of these works are devoted to evaluating the social significance of the author's works and gave only superficial attention to their Capri period. This trend is now much criticized by Soviet scholars writing in literary journals.¹

Organization

The following thesis consists of eight chapters and an appendix.

Chapter II presents brief biographies of A. M. Gorki and M. M. Kotsiubyns'kyi up to the time of their initial meeting in 1909.

Chapters III and IV discuss the possibility that the two authors may have had previous knowledge of each other before their meetings and journeys while in Capri.

Chapter V presents a description of the relationship and mutual influence of the two writers during their period of close friendship.

Chapter VI is devoted to a comparison of some of the authors' literary works written during their Capri period in order to determine the extent of these mutual or individual influences.

Chapter VII analyzes Gorki's eulogy to Kotsiubyns'kyi, written shortly after the latter's death. This eulogy to some extent clarifies Gorki's attitude toward and opinion of Kotsiubyns'kyi.

The concluding chapter will evaluate the results of their friendship and discuss the extent to which the two writers influenced each other.

The appendix contains a translation of the correspondence between Maxim Gorki and Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi, as well as additional relevant correspondence, arranged in chronological order.

¹ Iu. Z. Iankovskii. "Problema A. M. Gorki i M. M. Kotsiubyns'kyi i ee izuchenie v sovetskom literaturovedenii" (The Problem A. M. Gorki and M. M. Kotsiubyns'kyi and their study in Soviet literary criticism). Voprosy russkoi literatury (Questions about Russian Literature). No. 1 (7) Kiev, 1968. p. 60-67. "It appears that the question of Kotsiubyns'kyi's influence on Gorki, as testified to by Gorki himself--has not been chosen by literary critics as a topic for special discussion. Along with a number of other questions, it still remains to be resolved."

CHAPTER II

THE LIFE AND WORKS OF MAXIM GORKI AND MYKHAILO KOTSIUBYNS'KYI BEFORE 1909

A proper understanding of the two writers Maxim Gorki and Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi can be gained by briefly reviewing their life and works in retrospect to the time when they actually met. It is then discovered that there are many parallels in their lives. Both authors came from impoverished middleclass families and both lived in the same social and political milieu which characterized Imperial Russia toward the end of the nineteenth century. They were to a large degree self-educated and both had been attracted by the Populist ideology which swept Russia and Ukraine in the 1880's. Dissillusioned by its failure to improve the material life of the people they turned to socialism, attracted by its humanitarian concepts. However, neither author completely embraced revolutionary Marxism.

There are also dissimilarities in their lives which make each author a unique individual. Gorki belonged to the dominant nation in the Russian Empire. Russian culture flourished in spite of political and economic problems and Gorki had no need to speak in its defense. Kotsiubyns'kyi, on the other hand, was a representative of a nation which had no official recognition. Its language and literature were suppressed by official decree and its political and social institutions were largely in the hands of Russian speaking foreigners. The Ukrainian language and customs were preserved only in the villages and by illiterate peasants. Thus, the small Ukrainian intelligentsia, of which Kotsiubyns'kyi was a part, assumed the responsibility of creating a new educated class and of laying the foundations of a national consciousness among the common people. The poverty, brutality and stupidity of life did not, however, embitter Kotsiubyns'kyi as much as it did Gorki. He could still see beauty and harmony in life around him and his faith in the ultimate goodness of people never wavered.

The similarities and dissimilarities in their lives are reflected in their works. For it is there that the literary development of each author can be discerned; it is there also that the extent to which their close friendship affected their personal and literary lives can be determined.

Maxim Gorki Before 1909

Aleksei Maksimovich Peshkov, who wrote under the pen-name of Maxim Gorki ("bitter", "unhappy") is considered by Soviet literary historians as the link between pre-revolutionary and contemporary Soviet literature.¹ He was born on March 28, 1868 in the Russian city of Nizhni Novgorod.² His father died when he was very young and he lived with his grandparents whom he portrayed in his autobiographical novel Childhood (1913-1914). His grandfather, who owned a dyeing establishment, soon went bankrupt and became mentally deranged. He was sadistically cruel to Gorki while the grandmother was kind and sympathetic. When the boy was ten years old, his mother died and he was turned out of his grandfather's home.

Finding himself alone in the world, Gorki travelled to many parts of Russia meeting all types of people and working at difficult and varied jobs; he was employed as an errand boy in a shoe store, a dishwasher on a Volga steamer, a general helper in a draftsman's establishment, a kitchen boy on another ship, a baker, an assistant in an icon painter's shop, a porter and a street hawker. In 1884, at the age of sixteen, he made his way to Kazan hoping to enter its university. Since he had only a few months of elementary schooling his attempts to get a formal education were unsuccessful. He had, however, in his travels met a number of people who introduced him to books which he read voraciously in an effort to educate himself. In Kazan he associated with student radicals and for a time he worked as a propagandist for the Populists.³

¹ L. I. Timofeyev. Russian Soviet Literature. Moscow, 1950.

² Renamed Gorky in 1932 in his honour.

³ The "Narodniks" who believed that the intellectuals should go to the villages to teach and help the peasants.

But he was soon disillusioned by the misery, brutality and stupidity of life around him. In December, 1887 an attempt to commit suicide by shooting himself merely damaged his left lung.

Following his recovery, Gorki again travelled about Russia working at a variety of miscellaneous jobs. In 1889 he met Vladimir Korolenko in Nizhni Novgorod, to whom he showed his first piece of writing, a "philosophic poem" in prose and verse. But it was in Tiflis, Georgia, that Gorki wrote his first published story, "Makar Chudra". It was published in the local newspaper Kavkaz in September, 1892, and signed with the pseudonym "M. Gorki". In October, he returned to Nizhni Novgorod where Korolenko helped him publish his short stories and sketches.

Gorki "came into Russian literature in the early 1890's on the crest of the wave which, rising from the depths of popular resentment, shook the old regime with the first labour strikes. Gorki's appearance in literature coincided with the revolutionary awakening of the working class."¹ His heroes, who were tramps, vagabonds and outcasts, had already been introduced into Russian literature by Gogol and Dostoyevsky. They appealed to the revolutionary youth in the Russian society of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Korolenko recognized very early that in these stories Gorki had introduced a new fusion of realism and romanticism.

Gorki's literary output is usually divided into three periods. The stories of the early period written between 1892-1899 include: "Makar Chudra" (1892), "Emel'ian Piliai" (1893), "Ded Arkhip i Len'ka" (Grandfather Arkhip and Len'ka) (1894), "Pesnia o sokole" (Song about a Falcon) (1895), "Starukha Izergil" (The Old Woman Izergil) (1895), and "Chelkash" which the writer Korolenko published in Ruskoe bogatstvo (Russian Wealth). Works published elsewhere include: "Konovalov", "Byvshie liudi" (Creatures that Once were Men), "Skuki radi" (Out of Boredom) 1897, and "Varen'ka Olesova" (1898).

¹ Vera Alexandra. A History of Soviet Literature. New York, Doubleday, 1963. p. 3.

In 1898 his first complete book, a two volume collection of stories, was a resounding success. His works began to be published abroad and soon he became a writer of international stature. Gorki's earlier stories exemplify an original romantic realism of his own creation. They portray members of the lower classes, often tramps and criminals, but also men of heroic power and essential idealism, in whom Gorki sees the future leaders of the revolution. The story "Chelkash" (1895) is typical of this tendency. This flair for idealizing the lowest elements of society is typical of Gorki's entire concept of revolution and reflects his profound humanism.

The second period takes in the late 1890's and early 1900's. It is characterized by experiments in new literary forms--the long story, the novel and the play. However, after 1895 Gorki lost much of his social idealism and went over to a gloomy, unrelieved naturalism. "Byvshie liudi" (1897), in English translation, "Creatures that Once were Men", is a collection of portraits of social derelicts who can never rise again. The stories of this period are depressing and pessimistic, except perhaps for the lyrical "Dvadtsat shestiodna" (Twenty-Six Men and a Girl) (1899), which has an element of pathos and idealism, as well as an expressive conciseness of manner that makes it one of Gorki's masterpieces. To this period belongs the "Pesnia o burevestnike" (Song of the Stormy Petrel) (1901) which became a prophesy of the coming revolution.

In the same period Gorki wrote a number of plays which are naturalistic representations of life. They include "Meshchane" (Petty Tradesmen) (1900), "Na dne" (The Lower Depths) (1902), "Dachniki" (The Summer Cottagers), "Deti solntsa" (Children of the Sun) (1905), "Vragi" (The Enemies) and "Varvary" (The Barbarians) (1906). The most famous of them "Na dne" won international fame for its sensational setting: a flop-house inhabited by a motley group of social outcasts. In another play "Dachniki" he criticizes those of the Russian intelligentsia who, because of their extreme individualism, lock themselves up within a narrow circle of mutual friends and refuse to accept any community responsibility.

The fact that Gorki's political sympathies were moving towards revolutionary Marxism is exemplified by his novel "Foma Gordeev" (1898) in which he reveals his capacity for social analysis. While in St. Petersburg, he joined the Social Democratic (Marxist) Party in 1905, devoting much of his tremendous literary income to the revolutionary cause. However, his radical sympathies soon made him the subject of police repression. In 1902, at the age of thirty-four, he was the youngest member ever to have been elected to the Imperial Academy of Science: and when the Tsar revoked this honour on the ground that it could not be conferred on an enemy of the state who had already served several sentences in jail, Chekov and Korolenko resigned in protest.

Gorki actively participated in the Revolution of 1905. He accompanied a delegation of writers, who, in an attempt to avert disaster, called on Count Serge Witte on the eve of what has come to be known as Bloody Sunday. He witnessed the bloodshed in the streets of St. Petersburg and protected the priest, Gapon, who had led the fateful procession to the Winter Palace. A few days later he was arrested and imprisoned in the Peter and Paul Fortress. However, the protests of such liberal writers as Anatole France, Rodin, Poincaré, Swinburne, Meredith and Hardy succeeded in persuading the government to release him. He was then banished from St. Petersburg pending his trial. The trial, however, never took place and the following year Gorki went to the United States to raise funds for a new revolution.

When he arrived in New York on April 30, 1906, he was enthusiastically welcomed. Dinners and receptions were planned for him. Unfortunately, four days after his arrival newspapers, inspired by the Imperial Embassy in Washington, spread a scandalous report that he was not married to the woman travelling with him. Although under Russian law it was impossible for him to divorce his first wife, public opinion quickly turned against him. Accused of immorality and refused admission to hotels and apartments,¹ he was compelled to stay with American friends

¹ M. R. Werner. "L'Affaire Gorky". The New Yorker, April 30, 1949. Pp. 56-65.

on Staten Island. Deeply hurt, Gorki retaliated by publishing a series of stories about New York called "Gorod zholtogo d'iavola" (The City of the Yellow Devil) (1906), a collection which is still used by Soviet writers as a source of anti-American clichés.

While still in the United States he wrote his famous "Mat" (Mother) (1906), a propaganda novel about the revolutionary movement and the only revolutionary novel which Gorki wrote. "Mother" is a documentary novel based on events which took place in Nizhni Novgorod and its suburb Sormov during the years 1901-1902. The central characters are a young worker and his mother who participate in revolutionary activity. Although the novel is poorly organized, sentimental and declamatory, it does possess a harmonious combination of realism and romanticism. Soviet literary historians now praise it as the first great example of a new literary method called "socialist realism".¹ Lenin called "Mother" a 'necessary book' in that it prepared the workers ideologically for the revolution.

Returning to Europe from the United States in October, 1906, Gorki settled on the Island of Capri and lived there until 1913. His Italian villa was a meeting place for Russian artists, writers and politicians, including Leonid Andreyev, Brodsky, Bunin, Kuprin, Chaliapin, Lunacharsky and Lenin.² During this time with Piatnitsky, he became co-director of the publishing house Znanie (Knowledge); editor of the legal Marxist journal, Novaya zhizn' (New Life); contributor to the newspapers Protelarian Star and Ukrainskaya zhizn'; and in 1912, literary editor of Pravda. In May, 1907 he went to London as a delegate to the Fifth Congress of the Social-Democratic Party. In 1908 he delivered a series of lectures on Russian literature in a school for workingmen which he and Lunacharsky had organized in Capri.

1 A literary doctrine which implies a relation between literature and politics. It requires that literature be written so as to further the interests of the working class by providing guidance and inspiration.

2 Louis Fischer, The Life of Lenin, New York, Harper & Row, 1964. p. 53. Gorki first met Lenin on November 27, 1905 in his home in St. Petersburg and later in January, 1906 in Helsingfors, Finland.

At this time Gorki wrote "Isповed" (A Confession) (1908) in which he developed a strange religion of the masses, who became higher than God in that they themselves "create" God. This religion of "bogostroitelstvo" (god-creation), as it was called, was a popular Marxist heresy of the times, held by those who, like Gorki wanted to give socialism more of the emotional character of a religion.

Meanwhile his villa in Capri became the center of literary and political discussions. Attracted to Capri by its mild Mediterranean climate, many of Europe's foremost writers and thinkers met and spoke with Gorki. It was here on June 2, 1909 that he first met the Ukrainian writer Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi who, because of deteriorating health, had also come to Capri. Both writers shared common ideals and a profound sympathy for the suffering of humanity. A very close friendship developed between them and each advised and inspired the other in his literary work.

Between 1907 and 1913, apart from articles and essays, Gorki published seven plays, four novels, two books of sketches, "Skazki ob Italiï" (Tales of Italy) and "Russkie skazki" (Russian Tales); and "Detstvo" (Childhood), the first part of his autobiography. In two of his novels "Gorodok Okurov) and "Zhizn' Matveia Kozhemiakina" (The Life of Matvey Kozhemiakin) he paints a gloomy picture of Russian provincial life.

Certain of his deficiencies as a writer are undoubtedly connected with his lack of formal education. His style is often ponderous, crude and heavy. He engages in endless philosophical conversations which have small literary value or even intrinsic interest. His philosophy, though well intentioned and humanistic, is often little more than vague theorizing about the essential goodness of man. His longer works suffer from defective organization, giving them an episodic quality. Other weaknesses in his writing include a lack of a sense of humour and the extensive use of realistic detail. As a realist he is often compared to the American writer, Theodore Dreiser.

On the other hand much of Gorki's work is redeemed by a tremendous personal vitality. Most apparent is his treatment of character. Gorki's literary personages, whether fictional portraits of actual persons are accurately and strikingly portrayed. He had a flair for catching slight details which reveal intuitively the essence of a character. His best books, including his autobiographical works and reminiscences, are original and vivid portrait galleries.

The literary value of Gorki's works is still difficult to assess. It may well be that Gorki represents the beginning of a new literary current, of a new "humanism of the proletariat". On the other hand, the passage of time may show that Gorki is only the closing chapter in the development of nineteenth century Russian realism.

Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi Before 1909

Mykhailo Mykhailovich Kotsiubyns'kyi was born on the 17th of March, 1864 in the Ukrainian city of Vinnitsa where his father worked as a minor civil servant. He lived there until he was seven years of age when the family moved to a nearby village. During these years his father was constantly in conflict with his superiors who forced him to change his position often. Consequently, the Kotsiubyns'kyi family did not remain in one place for long and were often in financial distress.

In 1874 they moved to the town of Bar and lived in a building located near the market place. This gave young Kotsiubyns'kyi the opportunity of mixing with the local inhabitants and learning the customs, traditions and songs of the Ukrainian people. In 1875 he was enrolled in the local elementary school where he gained a reputation for being a conscientious, serious pupil with an enquiring mind. In the fall of 1876, Kotsiubyns'kyi began studying in the Sharhorod ecclesiastical school, an institution which was dominated by formalism and scholasticism, but where he received a good classical education. Although instruction was given in the Russian language, he did cultivate his own language by reading Ukrainian authors such as Taras Shevchenko, Marko Vovchok and Ivan Nechui-Levitskyi.

After completing his studies at Sharhorod in the fall of 1880, Kotsiubyns'kyi planned to enter the Kam'ianets-Podil's'k seminary. However, sickness and the necessity of providing for his family prevented him from acquiring any formal higher education. While living in Kam'ianets-Podil's'k he came into contact with those illegal revolutionary groups among the seminarians which followed a Populist program current in the Russian empire at that time. When Alexander II was assassinated on March 1, 1881, by a terrorist group known as the "Narodna volia" (People's Will), they were brutally suppressed by the police. Kotsiubyns'kyi's radical ideas had been noticed by the authorities and for the rest of his life he was subject to police surveillance.

In the summer of 1882, Kotsiubyns'kyi's family returned to Vinnitsa. At this time his father became unemployed and his mother lost her eyesight. Giving up all hope of furthering his education, he supported his destitute family by working as a private tutor. In the evenings he continued his self-education by reading books on economics, history, and classical literature. In addition to Ukrainian authors he read Belinsky, Dostoyevsky, Saltikov-Shchedrin, Nekrasov, Dobroliubov, Mickiewicz, Heine, Shaw and Shakespeare. Thus, by self-study alone he acquired a good general education in the liberal arts.

In 1884 in Vinnitsa, he wrote one of his earliest works, "Andryi Soloveiko". In the style of the poems of Shevchenko he relates the experiences of a peasant family following the emancipation of 1861, in the light of the Populist ideals which he himself believed in at that time. The philosophical works of Fourier and Louis Feurerback which he read during this period introduced him to socialist ideas and undermined his religious beliefs. His anti-clericalism arose as a result of the official support which the Church gave to Tsarist autocracy.

In 1890 he travelled for the first time to Halychyna in Western Ukraine to study the cultural and social life of that area. There he met Ivan Franko and the other leading writers, journalists and publishers of Western Ukraine. This period marked the beginning of his literary career. In 1890, Dzvinok, No. 8, a journal for children and youth published in L'viv, printed his poem "Nasha khatka" (Our House). This was his first printed work.

In the Village of Lopatyntsi, where he worked as a tutor, he continued to write stories on peasant themes. At this time his style was influenced by the realists Nechui-Levytskyi and Panas Myrnyi. Here he wrote: "Kharytia", "Na viru" (Out of Wedlock), "Ialynka" (The Christmas Tree) (1891), "Piatizlotnyk" (The Gold Piece), and "Zavydiushchyi brat (The Jealous Brothers) (1892). This was the important formative period of his life, spent in developing his literary talents, formulating his ideas, enriching his language and discovering new themes. Kotsiubyns'kyi also wrote children's literature. The best example is the story "Malen'kyi hrishnyk" (The Little Sinner) which depicts the life of poor children living in a city. In all these stories Kotsiubyns'kyi portrays poor peasants who retain their noble qualities despite the grinding poverty and hardship of their lives.

In 1892, Kotsiubyns'kyi succeeded in securing a position in the civil service. He was appointed to work with the Phylloxera Commission which was established to combat a plant disease destroying the vineyards of Moldavia. This provided him with the opportunity to become acquainted with the life and language of the Moldavian people. Here he participated in the activities of a liberal-cultural organization known as, "The Brotherhood of Tarasivtsi".¹

The Brotherhood's influence on Kotsiubyns'kyi's thinking is reflected in his work "Kho" (1894) and "Tsipov'iaz" (The Harvester) (1893), where elements of original folklore can be found. This is also the period of the story "Dlia zahal'noho dobra" (For the Common Good) (1895). It portrays the tragic fate of a family, which deprived of its vineyard, loses all purpose and hope in life.

¹ This organization originated in 1892 in Eastern Ukraine and spread to Kiev, Bessarabia, Chernihiv and the Kuban. The brotherhood aimed at heading a national and cultural renaissance in Ukraine which in their opinion would bring about an improvement in the material life of the people.

In 1895, he was transferred to the southern coast of the Crimea where he worked until 1897. During these years he greatly extended the range of his reading in the contemporary literature of the so-called naturalist school. He discovered the Russian Chekhov, the French novelists Zola and de Maupassant, the Scandinavians Hamsun and Ibsen. In 1898 he wrote to reassure his wife, "Do not fear that I go beyond realism, beyond de Maupassant. Be it as it may, I believe that my taste is healthy and that I know the limitations of realism."¹ Kotsiubyns'kyi eventually develops a style entirely his own, free from the preoccupations of realism and abounding in impressionistic devices.² These are found at a later date in his stories of the life and customs of the Crimean Tatars: "V'putakh shaitana" (In the Paths of the Devil) (1899), "Na kameni" (On the Rock) (1902) and "Pid minaretamy" (Under the Minarets) (1904).

When illness forced Kotsiubyns'kyi to give up his position on the Phylloxera Commission, he sought a position as administrator of the book warehouse of the Chernihiv County Government; but the Governor refused to sanction the appointment. He was then forced to go to Zhytomyr where, from the fall of 1897 to the end of February, 1898, he worked on the staff of the newspaper Volyn'. Although he disliked the newspaper's petty bourgeois editorial policy, he contributed a column called, "Svet i teni russkoi zhizni" (The World and Shades of Russian Life). In spite of interference from the editor and severe limitations placed upon him by the censor, Kotsiubyns'kyi used the newspaper to propagate his personal political views. They were highly critical of tsarist autocracy and often had a socialist bias. His articles dealt with some of the most pressing issues of the day.

¹ Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi. Tvory v shesty tomakh. (Works in Six Volumes). Kyiv, Vydavnytstvo Akademii Nauk Ukr. S. S. R. 1962. Vol. 5, p. 221.

² Volodymyr Kubiiovyc. ed. Ukraine; A Concise Encyclopaedia. University of Toronto Press, 1963. p. 1033. The extensive descriptions which characterized realism were replaced by the free associations of a hero, events presented through the prismatic consciousness of the characters and the landscape becoming a dramatic personage.

Early in 1898 Kotsiubyns'kyi finally settled in Chernihiv; first, as business manager for the county government and, at the same time, editor of the Zemskii sbornik (County Collection). Later he became statistician in the assessment-statistical office of the Chernihiv County Government where he remained for thirteen years. This work, imposed on him by the need to provide for his family, interfered with his literary ambitions. Nevertheless, in spite of poor health, he wrote extensively and took an active part in the educational, political and literary life of the community.

The Liberal-Populist ideology was one of the most popular themes in current use by writers at the beginning of the 1900's. In 1901 Kotsiubyns'kyi wrote his story "Lialechka" (The Doll) in which he satirized the Populist intelligentsia. In another story "Dorohoiu tsinoiu" (At a High Price) (1902) he relates the past history of the Ukrainian people and sympathetically portrays the hardships of serfs who, persecuted and oppressed at home, escape beyond the Danube to Turkey where they hope to find liberty and democracy. Perhaps his best work from this period is "Tsvit iabluni" (The Apple Blossom) (1902). Here the author broadens his literary scope to include the realm of human psychology and tells the story of a father, who, deeply affected by the death of his daughter, can still see hope in the future.

In 1903 he travelled to Poltava for the unveiling of a monument to Ivan Kotliarevskyi, the father of modern Ukrainian literature. He offered his story "The Apple Blossom" as his contribution to the memorial volume published in honour of the great writer.

In 1904 Kotsiubyns'kyi travelled to the Crimea in order to collect material for fresh stories, "U hrishii svit" (Into the Sinful World) and "Pid minaretamy" (Under the Minarets). Between 1902 and 1904 he worked with the Chernihiv County Scientific-Archaeological Commission, whose members collected information about

the archaeology, history, and ethnography of the Chernihiv area. During the revolution of 1905 he followed events closely and gave his moral support to the revolutionaries.

His active participation in revolutionary activities is shown by a speech he made on January 9, 1905 to a general meeting of the Chernihiv public library; he called for the abolishment of censorship and supported the demands put forward by the Social Democrats. In April of the same year, impelled by reasons of health he began extensive travels in Western Europe. He visited Berlin and travelled through Italy, Switzerland and Austria. Upon returning home, he took part in a strike at the statistical bureau. This caused his name to be entered in police records as that of a "politically unreliable person".

In 1906, when certain legal cultural organizations appeared in Ukraine under the name of "Prosvity", Kotsiubyns'kyi was elected as head of the organization in Chernihiv and both he and his wife actively participated in its activities. However, continued interference and surveillance by the police prevented the organization from functioning properly until, finally, on September 17, 1908, the Governor brought illegal pressures on the executive to expel Kotsiubyns'kyi, his wife and several of his friends from the society.

Kotsiubyns'kyi was keenly aware of the social unrest that was sweeping Ukraine along with the rest of Russia just prior to the Revolution of 1905. In 1903 the first, and in 1910 the second part of his novel "Fata Morgana" appeared. He had planned a trilogy on this revolutionary theme but he only finished two parts. The story, which centres around a poor landless peasant family, and portrays the revolutionary movements in the villages before and during the years 1905-1907, is often compared to Gorki's novel "Mother", which also maintains that the lot of the common people can only be improved through revolutionary struggle.

The stories that followed continued to make use of the theme of the 1905 Revolution in Ukraine and its suppression: "Smikh" (Laughter) and "Vin ide"

(He Comes) (1906); "Nevidomyi" (The Stranger), "Persona Grata", "V dorozii" (On a Journey) (1907); "Intermezzo", "Iak my izdyly do Krynysi (How We Travelled to Krenetsa) (1908); and "Debiut", (1909). They are realistic and naturalistic in style and their themes are sometimes sordid and unpleasant but Kotsiubyns'kyi wanted to evoke a mood that would stir the emotions of his readers.

In 1909 he travelled to Italy to rest and recover his deteriorating health. It was there on the Island of Capri, on June 2nd, 1909 that Kotsiubyns'kyi first met Gorki and the two writers immediately became close friends. However, Kotsiubyns'kyi was familiar with Gorki's works long before they became personal friends, having read them in literary journals and newspapers. In 1903, he had taken a first step in establishing contact with Gorki by sending him the first volume of his own works published by the journal Vik.¹ Kotsiubyns'kyi again travelled to Capri in the years 1909, 1910 and the winter of 1911-1912 when he actually lived in Gorki's home. Their correspondence from 1909 to 1913 shows how eagerly they read and praised each other's works and that Gorki even promoted Kotsiubyns'kyi's stories by arranging to have them translated and printed by his publishing house Znanie.

It was during these years that Kotsiubyns'kyi reached his full maturity as a writer. By adding impressionistic devices to realistic settings he achieved beauty and harmony in all his later works. His delicate appreciation of human psychology enabled him to penetrate the human heart, to express the most poignant feelings and the most secret ambitions of men and women. These characteristics are most clearly seen in the stories written at this time: "Tini zabutykh predkiv" (Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors) (1911), a story of peasant life in the Carpathian mountains; "Podarunok na imenyny" (The Birthday Gift) (1912), where a bureaucratic father decides to give his son the pleasure of seeing a hanging but the boy fails to appreciate the honour; and

¹ Mykola Hrytsiuta. Literaturnyi Portret. Kyiv, Derzhavne vydavnytstva khudozhnoi literatury, 1968. p. 54.

"Koni ne vynni" (The Horses are not to Blame) (1912), which depicts the reactions of a family at a time when the peasants were demanding land distribution.

There are also other stories in which an ordinary man faces sharp crises. In "Shcho zapysano v knyhu zhyttia" (That which is Written in the Book of Life) (1910), Kotsiubyns'kyi portrays an old peasant woman who, feeling herself in the way, persuades her son to take her into the woods and leave her there to die. He does so, but returning home changes his mind. In the story "Son" (The Dream) we see an ordinary family affected by the dull routine of life. To find beauty and love the husband escapes into a dream world. And "Lyst" (The Letter) (1911) in which a young man's homecoming is ruined by the sight of animals being slaughtered for a feast in his honour.

But it is in his last two stories that Kotsiubyns'kyi achieves the full culmination of his literary development. In "Khvala zhyttiu" (In Praise of Life), he uses a few simple words in order to transform an unpleasant and sordid scene into a thing of beauty, without in any way preventing the reader from realizing its true character. In the story "Na ostrovi" (On the Island) (1912), he achieves beauty and harmony by optimistically depicting life as being interesting and good. The maturity and range of his style found in these stories raise Kotsiubyns'kyi far above the level of the majority of Ukrainian writers and make him a great European writer.

Kotsiubyns'kyi occupies an important place in nineteenth century Ukrainian literature. His works enriched the national culture and helped place it on a level with the world's best. As a realist he knew how to portray both people and nature in accurate detail. As an impressionist he penetrated the human heart and mind so as to understand people as they really are. He introduced into his stories the values of humanity, beauty and love. "He had a lyric and almost sentimental appreciation of nature by casting a roseate glow over a scene and giving a poetic picture in a few simple words of prose. From his earliest effort Kotsiubyns'kyi steadily deepened and broadened his range of subjects. He did for prose what Lesya Ukrainka

and others had done for poetry",¹ by introducing into Ukrainian literature universal values and themes as well as by making his people conscious of their past.

¹ Clarence A. Manning. Ukrainian Literature; studies of leading authors. Jersey City, Ukrainian National Association, 1944. p. 97, 102.

CHAPTER III

PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE AND ACQUAINTANCE OF BOTH AUTHORS WITH EACH OTHER'S WORK

Although Maxim Gorki was Russian and Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi was Ukrainian both writers were products of the same socio-political system. Both had passed through the same school of life. At an early age both had to provide for themselves and to make their way in a world which was cruel, callous and merciless. They lived in a society which provided little or no opportunity for men of humble origin to acquire an education or positions of responsibility on their own merits. Yet each had the intelligence and drive to rise above the society in which he lived and to become a great man of letters in his own right.

Although Kotsiubyns'kyi did have the benefit of some formal education, both he and Gorki were largely self educated. They lived at a time when Tsarist Russia was undergoing a period of rapid industrialization. In Russia, in the latter part of the nineteenth and during the early years of the twentieth century, the demand for social and agrarian reform, long overdue and held back by the near-sightedness of Russian Tsarist autocracy, had a profound influence on intellectuals. It was inevitable that both Gorki and Kotsiubyns'kyi would be swept up in the great movements and ideologies current at that time and designed to provide simple solutions for complex social problems.

Both men played an active part in the Populist movement of their day and both suffered a period of disillusionment when the movement collapsed. Both were confronted by a State Church which in spite of evolutionary reforms and good intentions on the part of individual clergymen was part and parcel of Tsarist autocracy and served as one of its instruments of suppression. The resentment that both men felt against the reactionary role of the Church manifested itself in a feeling of anti-clericalism and later in outright atheism. This was also a time when revolutionary Marxism was

becoming widespread among part of the new industrial working class and some of the intellectuals. If both writers were attracted to its philosophy it was more for its humanitarian ideals than as a source of political dogma.

No doubt these two like-minded men read the same journals and newspapers, in which their literary works were printed. In a letter to Vasyl' Lukych, dated September, 1892, Kotsiubyns'kyi inquires about a monthly literary-political journal Ruskaia mysl' (Russian Thought) which periodically carried works by such authors as V. Korolenko, A. Chekhov and M. Gorki.¹ Kotsiubyns'kyi began to appear in Russian publications in the late 1890's. In 1897, the journal Detskoe chtenie (Children's Reading) printed his stories "Ialynka" and "Kharytia" which had been translated by M. Perelihin. In 1898, the Vladikavkaz newspaper Kazbek and the journal Niva, No. 11, carried translations of the story "Posol vid chornoho tsaria". (Emissary from the Black Tsar). The translator of the story in Kazbek, was Hryhorii Kovalenko-Kolomats'kyi to whom Kotsiubyns'kyi wrote a letter of thanks on May 20, 1898.²

The following year the journal Zhizn', (Life), No. 12, published in St. Petersburg, printed a translation of the story "Dlia zahal'noho dobra" (For the Common Good). The translator, who used the pseudonym R. Ol'gin, was Ruvyn Solomonovich Strel'tsov. It is significant, that the same issue of Zhizn' carried Gorki's story "Dvatsat' shest i odna", (Twenty-Six Men and a Girl).

Kotsiubyns'kyi's story "Dorohoiu tsinoiu" (At a High Price) was printed in 1902, in Kievskaia starina (Antiquities of Kiev). In 1903, the newspaper Russkie vedomosti (Russian Information), No. 202-203, carried a translation of "V putakh shaitana" (In the Paths of the Devil) by L. Shramchenko. Iuzhnoe obozrenie (Southern Observer),

¹ Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi. Tvory v shesty tomakh. Vol. 5, p. 35.

² Ibid. p. 260.

No. 2251-2252, published in Odessa, carried a translation of the story "Na kameni" (On the Rock) by Ia. Liubich. At this time Kotsiubyns'kyi took the first step in establishing personal contact with Gorki by sending him the first volume of his works which had appeared in the publication of Vik.¹

In 1904, the journal Russkoe bogatstvo (Russian Wealth) published in St. Petersburg, issued a new translation of "Na kameni" by L. Shramchenko. The publication of this translation was encouraged by V. Korolenko whom Kotsiubyns'kyi first met in 1903, in Poltava, at the unveiling of a monument to Ivan Kotliarevs'kyi. That same year the journal luzhnye zapiski, (Southern Notes), No. 46, printed the story "Posol vid chornoho tsaria" translated by M. Slavins'kyi while Russkoye bogatstvo printed "Tsvit iablune" (The Apple Blossom) translated by L. Shramchenko.

In 1905, the journal Nauka i zhizn' (Science and Life) carried the first part of Kotsiubyns'kyi's story "Fata Morgana" translated by O. Novodvors'kyi. In 1906, the journal Obrazovanie (Education) printed an article about Kotsiubyns'kyi in which I. V. Ivanov, under the pseudonym I. Johnson, reviewed the author's first book published in Kiev in 1903. In the same year the journal Russkaia mysl' issued a second translation of the short story "V putakh shaitana".

In 1907, Russkoe bogatstvo carried a translation of the story "Vin ide" (He Comes). That same year the story "Smikh" (Laughter) was printed in Kievskaiia iskra, (The Kiev Spark), No. 19, translated by N. Gubarev and in Vestnik inostranoi literatury, (Chronicle of Foreign Literature), December issue, translated by O. Vishnevs'kaia. She later translated Kotsiubyns'kyi's story "Pe-kopt'or" which was printed in the journal Vestnik znaniia, No. 8-9, in 1909.² It is almost

¹ Mykola Hrytsiuta. Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi; literaturnyi portret. Kiev, Der. Vyd Khud. Lit. 1958. p. 54.

² A list of the publications in which Kotsiubyns'kyi's works appeared in Russian translation are given in M. C. Hrytsiuta; Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi u slov'ians'kykh literaturakh. Kiev, Akad. Nauk Ukr. R.S.R., 1964. pp. 9-23.

certain that Gorki and Kotsiubyns'kyi read each other's works in these journals.

Unfortunately, no further evidence can be found, thus far, testifying to each author's personal knowledge of or acquaintance with the other prior to their first meeting in Capri on June 2, 1909. The fact, however, that on April 15, 1909, Kotsiubyns'kyi wrote to Volodymyr Korolenko requesting that he write a letter of introduction to Maxim Gorki,¹ then living in Capri, testifies to the fact that Kotsiubyns'kyi knew about Gorki and was probably well acquainted with his literary works. The need, however, for a formal letter of introduction indicates that Gorki had no personal knowledge of Kotsiubyns'kyi other than certain literary works of his which he may have read in Russian translation.

¹ Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi. Tvory v shesty tomakh. Vol. 6, p. 92.

Dear Aleksei Maksimovich,

On the basis of our old friendship, allow me to recommend to you Mikhail Mikhailovich Kotsiubyns'kyi, a talented Ukrainian writer and a friend of mine.

Due to circumstances of ill health, he will also come to live in Capri, and has asked me to aid him in making your acquaintance.

On this occasion I'm sending you greetings and wishing you all the best.

V. Korolenko.

April 15, 1909.
Poltava, M. Sadovaia, 1.

CHAPTER IV

COMMON MEETINGS AND JOURNEYS

After returning to Europe from his visit to the United States, Maxim Gorki settled in Capri in October, 1906. He had already contracted tuberculosis in his early youth and had been recently exiled from Russia for taking part in illegal political activities. His works had already been translated into a number of European languages and the royalties he received from their publication made him financially independent. By this time he had established himself as an outstanding man of letters and his home became the centre of literary and political discussion. He was inundated with appeals for help and advice from a host of aspiring Russian writers. He took them all seriously, would spend many hours covering the manuscripts, which they sent him, with marks, comments and corrections.¹ During his stay on the Island he was visited by many outstanding writers, artists and journalists.

Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi arrived on Capri on June 1st, 1909, staying at the Hotel Royal, No. 23. We have Iu. Zheliabuzhs'kyi's account of his first meeting with Gorki.

...As Mykhailo Mykhailovich announced himself, Gorki quickly approached him, smiled and pressed his hand long and firmly saying, 'Isn't it wonderful! Isn't it wonderful!' Then he at once came close and embraced Mykhailo Mykhailovich, and being deeply moved, smiled. It was at once understood that although they had met for the first time, they both admired and deeply respected each other.²

¹ Richard Hare. Maxim Gorky; romantic realist and conservative revolutionary. London. Oxford Univ. Press, 1962. p. 86.

² Literaturna Hazeta, April 22, Kyiv, 1946.

Kotsiubyns'kyi himself described this first meeting on June 2nd in a letter to his wife dated June 16, 1909 (3.VI.909).

Gorki received me very well, maybe too well, for he tired me out. I went to see him at two o'clock and he didn't let me go until eleven o'clock; there I dined, drank tea and read newspapers. Gorki makes this impression on me: this is a Pylyp Salko, I only in a finer form. He has fine blue eyes and talks a lot. True, we all spoke on literary themes which interested both of us.

Gorki has a large family, that is, his wife, who already has a granddaughter. They have all come home for the summer and the whole villa, which occupies thirteen rooms, is filled with people. When they sat down to eat it was as in a hotel. They live well, like nobility, it appears that they are well off. They often invite me to visit them or to go for a boat ride, but I don't want to do this often. I feel better being alone. Also coming to Capri are Amfiteatrov,² Bunin,³ Lunachars'kyi⁴ and Ielpat'ievs'kyi.⁵ That means that there will be a few very interesting acquaintances.⁶

During this entire stay in Capri, and also during his later visits in 1910 and 1911,⁷ Kotsiubyns'kyi maintained close contact with Gorki and was always included in his group. His life in Capri was closely tied with Gorki's; he was

¹ Pylyp Salko was a civil servant in the Chernihiv county court and a friend of M. Kotsiubyns'kyi.

² O. V. Amfiteatrov. (1862-1923). A Russian writer.

³ Ivan Oleksiiovich Bunin. (1870-1953). A well-known Russian poet and novelist.

⁴ Anatole Vasilovich Lunachars'kyi. (1854-1933). A Russian writer, critic and statesman. He became the first Soviet Minister of Education.

⁵ Serhii Iakovych Ielpat'ievs'kyi (1854-1933). A Russian writer.

⁶ Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi. Tvory v shesty tomakh. Vol. 6, p. 105.

⁷ Kotsiubyns'kyi paid three visits to Capri: June 1-27, 1909; June 2-July 22, 1910; and November 19, 1911 to March 20, 1912.

present at literary readings held in Gorki's home and went on fishing trips and excursions together with Gorki and his family. In almost all of the letters he wrote to his wife from Capri, he spoke of Gorki.

...Tomorrow morning I'm going to see the green grottoes and something else, and after lunch to Gorki's to go fishing. Letter dated June 18, 1909 (5.VI.909), Capri.

I spend whole days on the sea, where there are all sorts of strange things, which one can only talk about. I have wonderful friends. Gorki and his family have, probably thanks to Korolenko, received me as a relative and I often go sailing with them. Yesterday evening we returned from Tore del Greco, a city just below Vesuvius, where we went to see the local festival. There was Gorki and his wife, the well-known sculptor Gintzburg, who came here to make Gorki's statue and myself. Here I made the acquaintance of Aleksins'kyi, a deputy to the second Duma and others. Soon Amfiteatrov, Bunin, Iepat'ievs'kyi and Lunachars'kyi will be here.¹ Letter to his friend Illi Shraga, dated June 22, 1909, (9.VI.909).

Kotsiubyns'kyi describes his excursions with Gorki and his friend in greater detail in the following letter written to his wife on June 22, 1909 (9.VI.909):

Gorki invited me to go by yacht to Tore del Greco, a city right below Vesuvius, for the folk festival, and together with the well-known sculptor Illia Iakovych Gintzburg, who came here to make a statue of Gorki, we left Sunday morning by yacht. We travelled for six hours by sea...spent the night there--travelled to Sorrento...where we had lunch and from there back to Capri and supper at Gorki's.

Even before this I had again spent a day at Gorki's. He, Gintzburg, Aleksins'kyi (deputy to the second Duma) --went to see the grottoes and fished...and in the evening Gorki received a tour of local teachers (50 people).²

¹ Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi. Tvory v shesty tomakh. Vol. 6. p. 112.

² Ibid. p. 114.

Gorki and Kotsiubyns'kyi were drawn together by a common interest in literature and discussions about literature. At these meetings Gorki would read his newly written works to his friends and visitors, and engage them in lively discussions in which a certain amount of constructive criticism would usually be offered. From these meetings Kotsiubyns'kyi derived a personal satisfaction and an outlet for his ideas and thoughts. These meetings not only prevented a possible spiritual stagnation but also provided the intellectual stimulus which all great writers need. Although his poor health required that he have ample rest and quiet, he enthusiastically welcomed any opportunity to spend a literary evening with Gorki. He speaks of this in a letter to his wife, dated July 3, 1909 (20.VI.909):

I arrived at 7:30 P.M. for supper, and found a letter inviting me to Gorki's to hear his story. Although I left immediately, I was late and heard only the end. It's such a pity for they say that it was a success (it's called "Leto", from peasant life in present times). Gorki cheered me up by promising to send me the story, but it's still too bad. Later we all went to spend the evening at the well-known astronomer Meiyer's home... We quickly fled from that place and spent the rest of the evening at Gorki's staying so late that I came home after 1:00 A.M.

Gorki and Kotsiubyns'kyi continued to correspond with each other after Kotsiubyns'kyi's departure from Capri. Much of this correspondence concerned the translation into Russian and the publication of Kotsiubyns'kyi's works by the publishing house Znanie. The two authors also exchanged books and literary materials on Ukrainian folklore. Thus, when Kotsiubyns'kyi arrived on Capri a second time, on June 3rd, 1910, a close friendship already existed between the two writers. He was warmly received and welcomed. He describes this meeting in a letter to his wife, dated June 16, 1910, (3.VI.910):

¹ Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi. Tvory v shesty tomakh. Vol. 6. p. 125.

After breakfast I went to Gorki's. There they received me as their own, embracing and kissing me, generally they are very sympathetic to me. There is a writer Piatnits'kyi¹ living with them...we went for a walk...tomorrow I have to dine with them.²

The two months spent in Capri during the summer of 1910 followed the familiar pattern. Kotsiubyns'kyi was sought out by Gorki and invited to fishing trips, excursions, picnics and literary evenings. However, it was the cultural side of their friendship which Kotsiubyns'kyi valued the most. In a letter to Alexandra Aplaksina, dated June 23, 1910, (10.VI.910) he writes:

Here I have a large library dose at hand (at Gorki's)...soon Shaliapin will be here and I'll hear him at Gorki's...They didn't allow me to finish the letter. They came and took me deep sea fishing...After supper...we sat until twelve midnight. Literature, literature and more literature...Tomorrow or after tomorrow³ Gorki will read me his new play which he wrote for the German theatre.

Gorki's hospitality to Kotsiubyns'kyi is also verified by a letter to his wife, dated June 24, 1910, (11.VI.910):

...Yesterday Gorki and his wife dropped in, and dragged me by force to their place for dinner, later tea and discussions until 11:00 P.M....They value my friendship and are always striving to please me in some way. Already all sorts of excursions and pleasantries have been planned,--a trip to the theatre in Naples, fishing trips and picnics--and all this especially for me.⁴

¹ Konstantin Petrovich Piatnits'kyi. (1864-1938)--One of the founders of the publishing house Znanie where Kotsiubyns'kyi's works were published in Russian translation.

² Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi. Tvory v shesty tomakh. Vol. 6, p. 173.

³ Ibid. p. 181.

⁴ Ibid. p. 182.

In spite of the beneficial effect of the warm Mediterranean climate of Capri, Kotsiubyns'kyi's health was slowly deteriorating. In addition, he had a bad heart, he suffered from nervous tension, and he was also deeply concerned about the welfare of the family he had left behind in Ukraine. When his wife failed to write him for several days, he underwent a state of anxiety and depression, although Gorki and his family always went out of their way to make him comfortable and happy. These solicitous attentions, however, robbed him of the much needed rest for which he had come to Capri. Kotsiubyns'kyi complained of this to his wife in a letter, dated June 28, 1910, (15.VI.910):

...Usually Gorki and his whole family arrive after lunch and insist that I go fishing. He read me a new drama,¹ a happy vaudeville, commenting on life, very interesting. Naturally, he obviously wants to get to know me better, but that's often inconvenient for me, for I stay too long and go to bed late. I don't know how to avoid it, although he is very concerned about my health, not allowing me to tire myself out when we go walking together... True, it turns out that he takes up half my day.²

Gorki recognized in Kotsiubyns'kyi a true friend and comrade. He saw in him a man of high intellectual ability, capable of great perceptiveness and deep sensitivity to the life around him. It was because he could speak on a level of intellectual equality that he discussed his literary problems with his friend and confided to him his plans for future work. That Kotsiubyns'kyi could appreciate the significance of this friendship is shown by a letter he wrote to another friend, Mykhailo Zhuk, dated July 15, 1910, (2.VII.910):

¹ Gorki's play, "Chudaki".

² Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi. Tvory v shesty tomakh. Vol. 6, p. 184.

I have become very close friends with Gorki, we see each other almost every day; when I don't visit for a long time, he comes to see me, we go for walks, sit together and conduct endless discussions on literary themes. Sometimes he reads me his new works or tells me about his plans for future work...here there are other interesting companions; writers, painters, the international set. I have made the acquaintance of many of them.¹

Kotsiubyns'kyi left Capri on August 4, 1910, journeying through to the Carpathians before arriving home in Chernihiv. By this time the Znanie translation of his works into Russian was well under way. Subsequent correspondence between the two writers related to their preparation for publication. The following year Kotsiubyns'kyi was unable to spend the summer of 1911 in Capri because of financial difficulties and family sickness.² However, the Kiev "Ukrains'ke tovarystvo dopomohy nautsi i shtutsi" (Society for Aid to Scholarship and the Arts) awarded him a yearly pension of 2,000 rubles on condition that he give up his job in the civil service and devote his time entirely to literary work. This enabled him to spend the winter months, November to February, in Italy, where Gorki's wife Maria Fedorovna had made numerous enquiries about comfortable and inexpensive lodgings.³

When he arrived in Capri on December 2, 1911 for his third and last visit, he immediately encountered difficulties in finding suitable lodgings; his finances were not adequate enough to allow him to rent heated quarters. Gorki, correctly assessing his poor state of health, prevailed upon him to join him in the Villa Serafina, a gesture which provided Kotsiubyns'kyi with the necessary material assistance needed to spend the winter months in Capri. In a letter to his wife dated December 6, 1911, (23.XI.911), he expressed his sincere appreciation for the hospitality which Gorki had accorded him:

¹ Ibid. p. 195

² See Letter XX in Appendix.

³ See Letter XXI in Appendix.

I finally have lodgings...Oleksei Maksymovich moved me to his place. They gave me a nice, clean even luxurious room with a private entrance...I eat with them...at one o'clock lunch and at seven o'clock dinner.

The island is deserted. There are no guests. The writer Bunin, Ganeizer,¹ P'iatnyts'kyi and some other young writers are now living here.²

The relationship between Gorki and Kotsiubyns'kyi during this third stay in Capri now apparently began to change. Initially their friendship began, as on previous visits, with literary evenings and excursions. Kotsiubyns'kyi now indicates that he spends more time alone with himself. In a letter to his wife dated December 23, 1911, (10.XII.911) he writes:

Now during the last few days--I visit less often; although there are evenings when Oleksei Maksymovich reads his new works--and then I see him again with friends...After tomorrow it's Christmas...On Monday, Bunin will have dinner with us, and then we will all go to church to see the festivities.³

The former close contact with Gorki was resumed after the new year, maintained as it was by a common interest in literature and literary criticism. At this time both Gorki and his friends were experiencing a period of great literary creativity. New works were being written and discussed. Kotsiubyns'kyi attended the readings of these new works which probably contributed to stimulating the creative talents of his friends. In a letter to his translator Mykhailo Mohylians'kyi,⁴ dated January 14, 1912 (1.1.912) Kotsiubyns'kyi writes:

¹ Evhen Ganeizer. (1861-1938)--A Russian writer, journalist and critic.

² Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi. Tvovy v shesty tomakh. Vol. 6, p. 302.

³ Ibid. p. 314.

⁴ Mykhailo Mykhailovich Mohylians'kyi. (1873-1944)--A Ukrainian publicist and critic. Published works of literary value. He translated most of Kotsiubyns'kyi's works. First published in various newspapers and journals, they were published in separate editions in 1911 by the publishing house Znanie. These translations were accepted by Gorki.

I'm thinking of trying to write something about Capri... Here we have endless literary evenings. Bunin read about five of his stories (some very powerful). Gorki also read for two evenings, as well as some of the young authors of which there are quite a few. In other words--literature after lunch and after dinner, before supper and after supper discussions, arguments, readings, and again readings.¹

Towards the end of January Kotsiubyns'kyi begins to withdraw into himself. Some of his time is spent in writing short stories.² However, deteriorating health, loneliness and homesickness as well as a shortage of money, result in brooding and depression. He appears to have lost interest in life. He visits Gorki very rarely and seldom mentions him in letters to his wife or friends. In a letter to his wife dated January 31, 1912, (18.1.912) Kotsiubyns'kyi reveals his state of mind at the time.

I live a very quiet, modest, monotonous, routine life. I almost never visit --sometimes I drop in for a minute to Bunin's or the Prakhav's and that is all.³

And in another letter, dated February 9, 1912, (27.1.912) he writes:

I've seen very few people in the last while, I have no new friends... I must tell you that for some time now I live a very routine life, without personal impressions, alone...⁴

Kotsiubyns'kyi was at heart a very modest man and perhaps a bit overly selfconscious alongside such writers as Gorki and Bunin. In a letter to his wife, dated February 26, 1912, (13.11.912) he confesses that:

Sometimes we read Bunin's new stories. I read my new works to no one because no one would understand them...

¹ Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi. Tvory v shesty tomakh. Vol. 6, p. 330.

² "Lyst" (The Letter); "Podarunok no i menyny" (The Birthday Gift) and "Koni ne venni" (The Horses are not to Blame).

³ Ibid. p. 340

⁴ Ibid. p. 344.

Gorki wrote a very nice story "Try dni" (Three Days) and later seven more Russian Tales, very simple but witty and well written. Generally he writes very well now. Bunin also wrote a lot--all fine works.¹

It may be, however, that Kotsiubyns'kyi's philosophy of life and understanding of literature were at variance with those ideas held by Gorki and Bunin. Thus, he refused to read his new works not because his friends did not understand Ukrainian but because they could not understand his interpretation of life or style of writing in his new works. Unlike Gorki, Kotsiubyns'kyi saw man in harmony with nature regardless of his social and economic circumstances. There is, however, no evidence in the correspondence available to show that there was any serious disagreement between Gorki and Kotsiubyns'kyi. Later letters between the two writers indicate that they parted on good terms. However, in a letter to O. Aplaksina dated March 3, 1912, (19.II.912) Kotsiubyns'kyi confided to a friend that there had been some disagreement between Gorki and Iakubovich.

Iakubovich has taken up quite a lot of my time. Unfortunately for me, I introduced him to Gorki and later regretted it, for Iakubovich brought dissonance to our group with his blackhundred ideas and only confused me... during the winter... I wrote very little, and only two small stories and am thinking of completing a third.²

Kotsiubyns'kyi left Capri on April 2, 1912, (20.III.912) never to return again. Behind him he left a close friend and comrade. His friendship with Gorki had helped him to further his career as a writer, for through him he had met some of the foremost writers and artists of Europe. In return he had revealed to Gorki the wealth of Ukrainian literature and folklore, and helped him to become acquainted with a culture relatively little known to him and that was distinctly different from his own.

¹ Ibid. p. 356.

² Ibid. p. 360.

CHAPTER V

LITERARY RELATIONSHIP AND INFLUENCE

The friendship between Gorki and Kotsiubyns'kyi was described by the Ukrainian poet Pavlo Tychyna as a great poem of friendship and love. At their very first meeting both authors immediately became friends and shared their common enthusiasm for literary work. To this Gorki himself bears witness when he writes to the Ukrainian poet I. Iu. Kulyk:

These mutual interests sprang up as a consequence of our first friendship which was very amicable and close. We read to each other excerpts from our works and discussed what each thought of the others work. When one speaks about "influence" one can say it was mutual.¹

Thus, the problem to be discussed in this chapter will be to determine to what extent the two respective authors influenced and inspired each other.

Kotsiubyns'kyi listened to Gorki when he discussed literature or read his new works, and often described such occasions enthusiastically in letters to his wife and to others. Gorki, for his part, had long conversations with Kotsiubyns'kyi and valued his ideas and advice very highly. Commenting on these discussions in later years, Gorki noted that Kotsiubyns'kyi "very often spoke about democracy, about the people, and this was always pleasant for me to listen to, pleasant and instructive."²

The final two words, which speak for themselves, refute the thesis about the pupil status of Kotsiubyns'kyi in relation to Gorki. While vacationing on Capri during the years 1909-1910, Kotsiubyns'kyi met Gorki often and during the winter of 1911-12, he even lived in Gorki's home. Here the writers read their works to each other, exchanged ideas and shared creative inspirations.

¹ Mykola Matviichuk, "Kapriis'ki novely Hor'koho i Kotsiubyns'koho", Zhovten' No. 3, L'viv, Vydavnytstvo Kameniar, 1968. p. 103.

² Maxim Gorky. Literary Portraits. Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, n.d. P. 257.

They were never troubled by the question of borrowed themes or motifs, because they were, so completely different in their approach to composition and style.

The personal correspondence between Gorki and Kotsiubyns'kyi, which began in 1909 and ended in 1913, offers ample opportunities for assessing the extent to which the two writers inspired and influenced each other. Until recently Soviet literary criticism has tended to elevate Gorki to the role of teacher and to reduce Kotsiubyns'kyi to the status of a pupil. Even Gorki's own statement about their mutual influences on each other was totally ignored by those critics who have discussed the relationship between the two writers. The reasons for this, apart, of course, from the attitude of paternalism which Russians commonly adopt toward the Ukrainian language and its literature, are to be found in the fact that when these works are read in their Russian translation and are then compared with original Russian works, the beauty and originality of the Ukrainian language is inevitably lost to the reader.

The approach used by western literary critics has been to judge a writer on his own merits and to expect that his works will reflect an originality of thought and an artistic style peculiar to the author himself. The fact that at one time or another he may have been influenced by other writers is of secondary importance. It is with this view in mind, that we will discuss the problem of the literary relationship between Gorki and Kotsiubyns'kyi. Unfortunately, since available source materials are incomplete an exhaustive and definitive study is not yet possible.

The Influence of Gorki on Kotsiubyns'kyi

There has always been a tendency in Soviet literary criticism to over-emphasize Gorki's influence on Kotsiubyns'kyi and to ignore Kotsiubyns'kyi's influence on Gorki. The fact remains, of course, that Gorki influenced Kotsiubyns'kyi profoundly and in many ways. But, this influence was most often felt in areas that had little to do with writing. In his literary works Kotsiubyns'kyi developed an originality and a literary style which are entirely his own and in no way resemble those of Gorki, even though we find occasionally in both writers a certain similarity of themes. Some critics at one time attempted to link Kotsiubyns'kyi's story "Koni ne venni" (The Horses are not to Blame) with the sixth tale of Gorki's cycle "Skazki ob Itali" (Tales of Italy) and to discover influences that have since been refuted as having no basis. This problem will be dealt with in detail in our next chapter.

Inevitably a writer of Gorki's stature and importance must have had a great effect on Kotsiubyns'kyi. It was largely through Gorki's efforts that Kotsiubyns'kyi's works were translated into Russian and published by the publishing house Znanie, thereby gaining for their author a much wider readership than he could have hoped to have had his works remained only available in Ukrainian. This wider audience increased his prestige as a writer and helped him financially. When the stories were being translated, Gorki offered valuable advice regarding the engagement of a translator and the need to include a critical essay on Ukrainian literature in the first volume.¹ Later when the book appeared in print Gorki read it carefully, sent Kotsiubyns'kyi a copy of the mistakes made by the translator and offered suggestions for improving the initial version.²

¹ See Letter V in Appendix.

² See Letter XIII in Appendix.

After reading the corrected proof sheets of the first volume and pronouncing Mohylians'kyi's translation to be satisfactory, Gorki then went on to encourage him to publish Volumes II and III in the spring of 1911.¹ When they received the first volume, both Gorki and his wife praised it highly, predicting that it would sell out quickly and that a second edition would be necessary. In a letter to Volodymyr Hnatiuk, dated January 12, 1911, (30.XII.910) Kotsiubyns'kyi writes from Chernihiv:

My book in its Russian translation has had some success, at least in Russian literary spheres. I receive letters from Russian writers, personally unknown to me, who praise me...Gorki is already thinking of a second edition of the first volume, being certain that it will sell out quickly. In a few days they will begin to print the second volume.²

Later, when for some reason reviews of his book escaped the notice of Kotsiubyns'kyi, he wrote to Gorki to describe a situation that seemed to him disheartening.³ Gorki immediately replied to point out his error and, drawing his attention to a number of favourable reviews that had actually appeared, urged that the second volume be published.⁴ It was this kind of moral support that Kotsiubyns'kyi needed to encourage him to continue his literary work at a time when the state of his health was noticeably deteriorating. This was one of the reasons why he was so anxious to visit Capri again for the third time. Apart from the fact that the climate of Capri was beneficial to his health, he realized that it was only there that he could find the proper environment for rest and work. In Capri, Gorki's extensive library was at his disposal and the people who visited Gorki provided him with the intellectual stimulus which he needed,

¹ See Letter No. X in Appendix.

² Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi. Tvary v shesty tomakh. Vol. 6. p. 243.

³ See Letter No. XVI in Appendix.

⁴ See Letter No. XVII in Appendix.

as a writer. In a letter to his wife, dated December 13, 1911 (30.XI.911) Kotsiubyns'kyi writes:

I make the acquaintance of only those who come to see Gorki... I have lots of reading material, more Russian newspapers than I need, about fifteen kinds.¹

Gorki's literary output was very high at this time. Kotsiubyns'kyi told his wife, in a letter dated February 26, 1912 (13.II.912), that: "Gorki wrote a very nice story "Tri dnia" (Three Days) and later seven more Russian tales."² It was probably under this sort of stimulus that Kotsiubyns'kyi settled down himself to write three stories³ of high literary merit. Gorki not only interested Kotsiubyns'kyi as an artist but also because of his many faceted life. The fact that his friend was there in Capri gave him the idea of writing something about an emigrant, an idea which co-incided to some extent with advice given him about the same time by Mohylians'kyi. In one of his letters his translator had suggested that he work on this theme: an emigrant on Capri, "where the luxuriant nature of the island grieves for the one left behind in the homeland, where the villages are poor and nature is sparse." In reply Kotsiubyns'kyi wrote to him:

Regarding the suggested theme for which I thank you very much, it seems that by some strange coincidence our thoughts coincided. A similar theme had come to mind when I looked upon Gorki. At the moment I haven't yet decided to use it, for although I'm closely observing the nature and life of Capri and have jotted down quite a few impressions in my notebook, I'm still afraid. It's necessary to digest, think over and understand everything.⁴

¹ Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi. Tvory v shesty tomakh. Vol. 6. p. 311.

² Ibid. p. 356.

³ These stories include "Lyst" (The Letter), December 15, 1911; "Podarunok na imenyny" (The Birthday Gift), January 4, 1912; and "Koni ne venni" (The Horses are not to Blame), March 2-15, 1912.

⁴ Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi. Tvory v tr'okh tomakh. Vol. 3, p. 359-360.

Kotsiubyns'kyi had already written a story about Capri, called "Son" (The Dream), on May 28, 1911, in Chernihiv. It was followed by the last two stories written before his death: "Khvala zhyttiu" (In Praise of Life) completed on May 5, 1912 and "Na ostrovi" (On the Island), completed some time in June, 1912. These stories, together with "Son" offer the finest examples of his impressionistic style. Although the initial idea may have come by observing Gorki, the landscape and the characters they portray are presented in a style characteristic of Kotsiubyns'kyi. In a letter to his wife dated January 15, 1912 (1.1.1912) he emphasizes this fact.

I want to write something about Capri, the nature, the sun, the sea, the people and a little about myself.¹

Finally we must mention that much of Gorki's influence on Kotsiubyns'kyi was of a nationalistic nature. At this time Gorki was favourably disposed to the many nationalities that made up the Russian empire. He was sympathetic to their cultural and national aspirations, and he supported their desires for regional autonomy but not for outright secession. As a socialist he approved of national self determination but as a Russian patriot he looked on the Slavic nations as being ethnically and linguistically related. Whether Gorki advocated the now obsolete theory of Pan-Slavism is not known, but he did envisage a federation of nations democratically united and, naturally, led by Russia. With this in mind, he asked Kotsiubyns'kyi to write for the journal Sovremennik articles on the Ukrainian cultural question and an essay on the history of Ukrainian literature.²

Kotsiubyns'kyi enthusiastically sympathized with and supported Gorki's

¹ Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi. Tvory v shesty tomakh. Vol. 6, p. 330.

² See Letters XXVIII, XXX, XXXIII and XXXIV in Appendix.

federalist program¹ and although he was seriously ill in the hospital he began collecting materials for the articles. However, Gorki's liberal attitude towards the Ukrainians did not win sympathizers for his cause from among his Russian compatriots, and an article in Ukrainskaya zhizn' expounding his views was strongly criticized.² Nevertheless, he continued to raise the question of Russian-Ukrainian relations in the newly reorganized journal Sovremennik. Unfortunately, Kotsiubyns'kyi's interest and participation in this project was brought to an end by his untimely death in April, 1913.

Kotsiubyns'kyi's Influence on Gorki

Much has been written about the influence of Gorki on Kotsiubyns'kyi, but despite the evidence of Gorki's own words there is complete silence about Kotsiubyns'kyi's influence on Gorki. The irrefutable fact remains that Kotsiubyns'kyi added a new dimension to Gorki's life by revealing to him in closer perspective the beauty and originality of the language, literature, and folklore of Ukraine. His association with Kotsiubyns'kyi made Gorki realize that the Ukrainians were a distinct nation and a people that had linguistic and cultural traditions entirely separate from those of the Russians. When he discovered in them a prime example of national and cultural suppression within the Russian empire he began to understand the problems of nationalism more fully, or at least to see them in a clearer perspective. He took a stand against the contemporary great Russian chauvinism and the Tsarist pattern of autocracy.

He went to great lengths to study the distant past of the Ukrainian people and it was revealed in the customs, traditions and folklore still preserved in the

¹ See Letter XXXI in Appendix.

² See Letters XXVII and XXXII in Appendix.

remote parts of Ukraine. He gathered his information not only during discussions but through scholarly publications which Kotsiubyns'kyi, who had a deep interest in Ukrainian culture, folklore and traditions procured and forwarded to him. In a letter to his friend Volodymyr Hnatiuk dated June 16, 1909 (16.VI.909), Kotsiubyns'kyi mentioned that, "M. Gorki is very interested in our songs and tales. Please send him your ethnographic publication, even at my expense if other means are impossible." Hnatiuk replied immediately, on June 21, 1909, "I'm sending Gorki eleven volumes of the Ethnographical Anthology.¹ In another letter to V. Hnatiuk dated Chernihiv, August 4, 1909, Kotsiubyns'kyi confesses that, "several times Gorki and I discussed you and he became very interested in your works."²

Kotsiubyns'kyi went to great lengths to locate books that would be useful to Gorki. In his very first letter to the Russian author, dated August 19, 1909, he wrote:

Only now am I sending the promised books, as my wife had difficulty locating them. Pay special attention to the book Literatura Ukrainskoho fol'klora 1777-1900,³ it might prove useful for your work as an index of ethnographic materials.⁴

Later in a letter dated November 5, 1909 (23.X.909) he sent Gorki a book by V. Klouston.⁵ Throughout their entire friendship he continued to collect and to transmit Ukrainian books to his friend. Even as late as March 8, 1912 (8.III.912), Kotsiubyns'kyi wrote again to Volodymyr Hnatiuk, telling him:

¹ Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi. Tvory v shesty tomakh. Vol. 6, p. 107.

² Ibid. p. 134.

³ A bibliographic list compiled by B. Hrinchenko and published in Chernihiv in 1901.

⁴ Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi. Tvory v shesty tomakh. Vol. 6, p. 136.

⁵ An English researcher who wrote a book called, Folktales and Riddles, How They are Lost and Reappear, translated from the English and edited by A. Krems'kyi in Lviv.

"I received Hamm's book,¹ thank you very much, it was very useful to Gorki..."²

During his return journey from his second visit to Capri in 1910, Kotsiubyns'kyi spent two weeks in the Carpathian Mountains at the summer house of the Ukrainian historian M. Hrushevs'kyi. He wrote Gorki a letter, dated September 9, 1910, (27.VIII.910) in which he described the natural beauty of the mountains and mentioned the quaint customs of the Hutsul people who live in this area.³ He returned for a second and extended stay during the months of July and August, 1911, in order to collect material for a novel he was preparing to write about the Hutsuls. We have a long letter, dated July 29, 1911, (16.VII.911), which he wrote to Gorki from the Village of Kryvorivnia in the Carpathians and in which he comments on the psychology and the beliefs of the Hutsul people.⁴ It is always the people and their relationship to their environment that interests Kotsiubyns'kyi, the same interest that we already noticed in his Capri stories, where the common man as a product of his environment is portrayed as being deeply rooted in the traditions and beliefs of his forefathers. We find this same preoccupation reflected to a considerable extent in some of Gorki's works, particularly in his "Skazki ob Italii".

Gorki and Kotsiubyns'kyi both read and evaluated each other's works and offered each other constructive criticisms. The fact that Gorki took his friend

¹ John Hamm, Folklore in Ethnology.

² Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi. Tvory v shesty tomakh. Vol. 6, p. 365.

³ See Letter IV in Appendix.

⁴ See Letter XX in Appendix.

into his confidence and valued his opinions highly is brought out in a letter written by Kotsiubyns'kyi to Mykhailo Zhuk, dated July 15, 1910 (2.VII.91):

We sit together and conduct endless discussions on literary themes. Sometimes he reads to me his new works or tells me about his plans for future works.¹

In another letter, dated [October, 1910] he thanks Gorki for sending, through the office of Znanie, the latest issue of Sbornik containing Gorki's play "Chudaki". He comments favourably on the play but notes that in his opinion it is inferior to "Gorodok Okurov".² In another letter, dated December 20, 1910 (7.XII.910), he praised very highly two new works "Vstrecha" and "Vassa Zheleznova", describing the latter as "powerful and original".³ But he reserved his greatest enthusiasm for "Zhizn' Matveia Kozhemiakina". After having read the second part of the novel, he wrote his friend an enthusiastic letter in which he declares that "Kozhemiakin" was the finest piece of literature Gorki had ever written. He praises its language, its style, and its characterization. He calls it a "magnificent work" and "a school for Russian novelists."⁴ Gorki replied in a letter, dated May 6, 1911 (23.IV.911), thanking Kotsiubyns'kyi for his compliments and discussing the problems he was having with the third part of the novel.⁵ One of the last works by Gorki which Kotsiubyns'kyi was to read was the story "Tri dnia" (Three Days). He wrote its author to tell him that the story had given him as much pleasure as if he had written it himself.⁶

¹ Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi. Tvory v shesty tomakh. Vol. 6, p. 195.

² See Letter VIII in Appendix.

³ See Letter XII in Appendix.

⁴ See Letter XVIII in Appendix.

⁵ See Letter XIX in Appendix.

⁶ See Letter XXVII in Appendix.

Thus it can be seen that Kotsiubyns'kyi provided Gorki with the encouragement and moral support that creative writers always need. Gorki recognized in Kotsiubyns'kyi a man of integrity and sincere honesty, who could stand up for his principles. He, therefore, accepted Kotsiubyns'kyi's advice and criticism because they came from a sympathetic friend and an honest well-wisher.

It was, however, during Kotsiubyns'kyi's third trip to Capri that his influence on both Gorki and his other friends was profoundly felt. By this time the relationship between the two authors was firmly established and Kotsiubyns'kyi was welcomed into Gorki's home as a close friend of the family. A number of Kotsiubyns'kyi's stories had already been translated into Russian and were being published in many literary journals. In a letter to his wife, dated December 11, 1911, (28.XI.911), he writes that:

I have news that the first book of Sovremennik will carry my story "Shcho zapysano v knyhy zhyttia" (That Which is Written in the Book of Life) and in the third book (March) - "Son" (The Dream). Here everyone has become interested in Ukrainian literature, thanks to the translations of my stories, and they pay me compliments. ¹

In another letter of the same date, he wrote to his translator, Mykhailo Mohylians'kyi, remarking that:

Oleksei Maksimovich praised you, 'at least there is one man, who introduces the Russian public to Ukrainian literature--and does it beautifully!' It seems to me that here everyone is becoming more and more interested in our literature. ²

At this time a large number of writers and editors, vacationing in Capri, were looking for contributions to their journals. They turned to Kotsiubyns'kyi ³

¹ Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi. Tvory v shesty tomakh. Vol. 6, p. 306.

² Ibid. p. 308.

³ Ibid. p. 326. In the journal Zavety for the year 1912, books I-III, a translation of Kotsiubyns'kyi's story "Tini zabutykh predkiv" was printed.

and asked him to organize a Ukrainian section in the journal Zavety in order to acquaint the Russian reader with the literature, the cultural life, and the history of Ukraine. The direct result of his presence in Capri can be noticed in a letter to his wife, dated January 7, 1912 (25.XII.911) where he writes that:

Generally, because of me they show a great interest in everything Ukrainian here; everything Ukrainian is in style; whether this is for long or sincere--I don't know.¹

He was also aided in popularizing Ukrainian literature and culture by a number of Ukrainians who visited the Island. He welcomed their presence in a letter to his wife, dated March 8, 1912, (8.III .912), in which he writes:

All the time there is a hum of the Ukrainian language in Capri as my countrymen arrive; we now have three...and can set up a Shevchenko evening.²

This interest in Ukrainian literature and culture by Russian tourists visiting Capri must have also made an impression on Gorki. He became more fully aware of the largest non-Russian national group within the Russian Empire and at times he showed himself sympathetic to its cultural and political aspirations. He even became directly involved in Ukrainian literary activities when Kotsiubyns'kyi prevailed upon him to contribute a story for a collection then being prepared in honour of the writer Ivan Franko.³

The extent to which Kotsiubyns'kyi's influence is reflected in Gorki's literary works is difficult to ascertain for in spite of their close friendship and

¹ Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi. Tvory v shesty tomakh. Vol. 6, p. 326.

² Ibid. p. 365.

³ The collection, printed in 1916, was compiled in honour of Franko's forty years as a writer, 1874-1914; Gorki contributed his story "Luka Chekyn". Kotsiubyns'kyi died before he was able to write a story for it.

adherence to a common interest in literature, each writer maintained his own and different style of writing. Although Kotsiubyns'kyi's stories have strong sociological and psychological overtones they were written in a distinctive impressionistic style. Gorki's writing, although thematically biographical and sociological, depicts the decay and disintegration of Russian nineteenth century society. Unlike Kotsiubyns'kyi's optimistic view of life which he portrays in bright colours and where he shows man in harmony with nature, Gorki paints the gloomy and negative aspects of life depicted against a background of stark realism. To Gorki Russian pre-revolutionary society was bankrupt, decadent and hopeless. In this society man rises above his environment only to serve as an instrument for destroying the old in order to build something new.

Nevertheless, both writers influenced each other to the extent that in each other's company, they added a new dimension to their lives. This influence, however, did not extend to their literary works which, in spite of certain thematic parallels, retained the original style, language and form of their respective authors.

CHAPTER VI

A COMPARISON OF WORKS WRITTEN DURING THE CAPRI PERIOD

The years 1909-1913 were significant for both Gorki and Kotsiubyns'kyi. By this time both writers had reached the stage of full intellectual maturity. They had already written an impressive number of works of high literary value and both were recognized as outstanding authors at home and abroad. Furthermore, each author had developed his own individual style. Gorki was a realist, deeply conscious of the social problems affecting society in his day. Kotsiubyns'kyi on the other hand, was an impressionist with realistic inclinations. He maintained that there is a spiritual bond between man and nature; his works reveal man in harmony with nature, enjoying and appreciating its beauty; to him poverty and low birth are not necessarily reasons for misery and unhappiness.

Kotsiubyns'kyi was a psychologist as well as an impressionist. As a psychologist, he skillfully examined the poignant, paradoxical emotions during moments of human tragedy, e. g., the story "Khvala zhyttiu". His stories are not broadly drawn with complicated plots, but rather short pictures of nature and subtle psychological studies that probe human sensitivity and emotion with dignity and beauty.

We will analyse books and stories that were written concurrently and which have themes in common. They will include: Gorki's "Skazki ob Itali" (Tales of Italy) and Kotsiubyns'kyi's novellas "Son" (The Dream), "Khvala zhyttiu" (In Praise of Life) and "Na ostrovi" (On the Island). We will also refer to the stories "Tini zabutykh predkiv", "Podarunok na imenyny" and "Koni ne venni" as examples of psychological impressionism.

During the last years of his life Kotsiubyns'kyi often mentioned in letters to his wife and friends that he was anxious to write something about the Island of

Capri to which he had become so closely bound. Thus his novella "Son" appeared in May, 1911. It is the story of a middleclass couple to whom life has become a monotonous routine. To escape this bourgeois existence the hero, Anton, relates to his wife a recurring dream, and depicts in vivid pictures, an enchanted island on which he meets a beautiful girl.

Kotsiubyns'kyi's second novella, "Khvala zhyttiu" was written in May, 1912. It is a chronicle of the Sicilian city of Messina which was destroyed by an earthquake on Christmas Day, 1908. A detailed description of the destruction and despondency is followed by an episode involving a "red-haired charlatan" who sells a fake cosmetic. The author converts this episode into a deep philosophical and artistic generalization, a passionate hymn to the life giving strength of dreams and hopes.

The third Capri novella, "Na ostrovi", written in June, 1912, was Kotsiubyns'kyi's last literary work. It consists of nine emotional and psychological études of the life of the island, joined together by the subtly painted portrait of a lyrical hero who reacts to its natural beauty. Complex psychological associations and thoughts, which guide the lyrical hero, bring him to an organic union with the tumultous life of the island and culminate in a powerful glorification of life as depicted by a blossoming century plant "with a wreath of death on its forehead."

Gorki's "Skazki ob Italii" began to be printed concurrently with Kotsiubyns'kyi's Capri novellas. In these "tales" Gorki portrays a country of common working people who are creating a new Italy. They fight for their democratic rights and in the process of the struggle create in their midst a socialistic ideology. Throughout Gorki's stories man is continually struggling, sometimes with himself or against the elements but most often against those in society who are exploiting him. True happiness, as depicted by Gorki, is to be found in working collectively towards a common goal. Man's spiritual nature is portrayed in his profound faith that in the end he will triumph over his adversaries.

Kotsiubyns'kyi had completed writing his Capri stories by the end of June, 1912 prior to departing for the Carpathians. Gorki, on the other hand, published his "Tales of Italy" much later but in the same year. For in a letter, dated November 2, 1912, he writes:

My book of "Tales" is being published in Moscow, --when they are released I'll send them...you will enjoy them.¹

To which Kotsiubyns'kyi replies, "I'm impatiently waiting for the promised "Tales". I know that they will bring me much happiness."²

When he received the book from Gorki, Kotsiubyns'kyi replies that he read it:

...immediately with exceptional pleasure. How much love for humanity. What a comprehension of his soul and understanding of nature. What a wonderfully brilliant book! ...I'm not giving up hope of drinking together with you in honour of the "Tales", a flask of "Viapso."³

It is unfortunate that Kotsiubyns'kyi's enthusiastic praise for Gorki's works as well as their close friendship has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. Many Soviet critics upon reading Kotsiubyns'kyi's Capri stories in Russian translation have treated them as an imitation and a plagiarization of Gorki's "Tales of Italy". Others have contrasted Kotsiubyns'kyi's novellas with Gorki's Tales and dismissed them as an unsuccessful elaboration of Gorki's themes. However, Gorki's and Kotsiubyns'kyi's Capri stories are based on various artistic and stylistic devices that correspond to the individual artistic view of the world as seen by each author.

Gorki's literary aspiration was to portray the revolutionary development of the new man of the future, a man who would be really free in every sense of the word, dedicated to the task of working for the common good of humanity. This utopian ideal may be attributed to the author's socialistic principles. It

¹ See Letter XXXII in Appendix.

² See Letter XXXIV in Appendix.

³ See Letter XXXV in Appendix.

has been noted that some of Gorki's Italian tales are based on Russian revolutionary realities. For example, in his stories "The Strike" and "The Children of Parma", he portrays the people as united in a common struggle against employers who are backed by official authority. His characters, however, are anonymous types rather than fully developed individuals and the rapid change in mood on the part of the general populace, from hostility to full fledged support of the strike, is rather unconvincing. Similarly, the sympathetic response of the citizens of Genoa to the children of Parma is understandable although the political rationalizing on the part of some of the characters is open to question. It is unfortunate that Gorki shifts from the position of a writer depicting an episode in the struggle for life to that of a propagandist.

Kotsiubyns'kyi's revolutionary is quite different. He is an individual filled with the spirit of idealism and self-sacrifice and not part of a mass swayed by human instinct. In his novella "Son" the thoughts, emotions and aspirations of the Ukrainian intellectual are factually presented as being awakened by the events of the Revolution of 1905. The narrator portrays the heroine of his dreams as a revolutionary participating in these events.

During the revolution she fought there (in the Caucasus) with the army. She had lain in ambush in the mountains, made difficult crossings, tireless as the finest youth and as indifferent to death. At night she crossed the swift Kura on inflated rafts, in order to provide her comrades with ammunition. She was wounded by a cossack. She rolled up her sleeve and showed me the scar as I stood before her and then knelt.¹

We may compare this to Kotsiubyns'kyi's novella "Na ostrovi"; here the brilliant landscape of the island and its people are seen through the eyes of a lyrical hero who is a Ukrainian. The difference is that, to Gorki, the ethnographic details of the life of the Italian people serve only as a background against which their creative energy can be displayed. He portrays them as idealized people,

¹ Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi. Tvory v tr'okh tomakh. Vol. 2, p. 304.

striving to build a new and more meaningful life.

It has been noted that in Soviet literature, Gorki's "Skazki ob Italii" have become a brilliant star in the literature of socialist realism. On the other hand, Ukrainian scholars maintain that Kotsiubyns'kyi's works from his final years, including his Capri stories, introduced a new phase in the development of pre-revolutionary Ukrainian literature. That he began as a realist and developed into a modernist is shown by his impressionistic style. However, he continued to write of village ethics rather than to follow the trend of Western European modernists with their urban themes and their decadent morality.¹

Both writers shared a common philosophy of life and common aesthetic principles which provided them with themes and guided their artistic style. In almost everyone of Gorki's tales there is a landscape. It is like a solemn song in honour of men who by their labour increase the natural beauty of the country, e. g., "The Tunnel". Contrasted with this is the aimless stumbling around the world of the parasitic egoists who waste their whole lives on petty hatreds. Such an enemy of life is the selfish mercenary in the eleventh tale, "The Mother of a Traitor". Greedy for glory, the traitor loses not only his native land but also the love of his people.

In Kotsiubyns'kyi's Capri stories the landscape has an artistic and aesthetic function. The brilliant imagery in the novella "Na ostrovi" serves to show how the extra-ordinary nature of a distant country brings the lyrical hero closer to the common people. By meeting peasants and fishermen he is distracted from the monotonous life of the hotel with its pretentious and impudent tourists. By his emotional ex-

¹"M. Kociubyns'kyj (1864-1964)". Woman's World, English Section, June, 1965. At that time many of the early twentieth century modernistic writers of European literature were under the influence of the then popular philosophy of Nietzsche, Schopenhauer, Hartmann, Freud and others. As a result the basic themes of these writers revolved around the biological and social inferiority of women, the solitude of men in nature and society, and the power of the blind subconscious instincts of man and their influence on human deeds. Such modernistic aesthetics and values were alien not only to Kotsiubyns'kyi but also to Ukrainian modernism.

periences the hero slowly identifies with the people and with the life of the island. "He listens to the quiet shimmering of the leafless grapevines and the sighing reply of the spring soil and with this he sees the veined hands of the peasants whose bronzed faces look up at him in friendly greeting".¹ Deeply moved by their sincerity, he remarks: "Oh how good it is to gather smiles and to smile back in return!" Here the background serves to uplift the lyrical hero spiritually and to restore his confidence in life.

In the final episode we see the tropical century plant common to Capri irresistibly reaching out to the sun, in order, once in its lifetime to burst into bloom and die. Kotsiubyns'kyi appropriately ends the story with the phrase, "Ave mare! Morituri te salutant!"² This personification of nature is also characteristic of a number of Gorki's Italian tales.

Kotsiubyns'kyi's first Capri story "Son" provides a similar example of natural landscape influencing the mood of the hero. The narrator, Anton, is bewitched and falls deeply in love with a strange girl whom he has met by chance on the island. Their mutual love blossoms under the influence of the island's enchanting natural beauty. Here, in describing their meeting, the author portrays a background of beautiful imagery:

I saw the moon rise, as the sea laid a golden carpet under its feet and the palms waving hundreds of fans, greeted--'hosanna!' I immediately felt a warm breath of wind colliding with the brilliance, the smell of the sea, the wild grasses quietly waving among the olive trees and the aromatic surf striking us in the face.³

Here we see the landscape portrayed in organic union with the attitude and feelings of the hero who is protesting against the monotonous middleclass existence

¹ Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi. Tvory v tr'okh tomakh. Vol. 2, p. 424.

² Lat. "Hail to the Sea". "Those who are about to die salute you!"

³ Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi. Tvory v tr'okh tomakh. Vol. 2, p. 311.

of his family. It shows that the natural beauty of the island harmonizes with the social aspirations of the narrator. These dreams contain the unblemished purity of human relations and the full worth of human happiness. They denote a protest against the narrowness and complacency of life. However, Anton's dream does not negate reality but comes closer to it by creating a desire to struggle against the soul destroying mediocrity of life in order that man's life may be complete and more meaningful. According to Kotsiubyns'kyi their lives were uninteresting because of the dullness of their routine. Martha, the wife, is partly to blame in that;

She had not known how to guard life, to preserve its beauty. Daily she had been throwing it away in trifles, in the useless filth of existence, until she had turned it into a foul pit. Poetry can not live in such an atmosphere and without it life is a crime.¹

This is the real gist of Kotsiubyns'kyi's work. The same idea is also present in Gorki's tales.

Furthermore, the hero, who identifies with the natural beauty of the island reaches far beyond the borders of his personal interests. Observing the sea, the girl dreamily says:

The sirocco brings to me the heat of Africa and the aromas of Egypt and I dream about the land of white sands and black people; about cactuses, palms and pyramids. A wave rolls from Africa and as a distant brotherly greeting kisses the cliffs. And that wave that washed the feet of an Arab now washes over my feet, as a symbol of unity...²

In his novella "Khvala zhyttiu" Kotsiubyns'kyi pays tribute to man's eternal and indestructible striving for life and beauty, even when surrounded by death and destruction. Seeing a group of women buying a useless cosmetic from a fake peddler during the aftermath of a horrible earthquake, the author writes:

¹ Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi. Tvory v tr'okh tomakh. Vol. 2, p. 314.

² Ibid. Vol. 2, p. 300.

I at once saw the distant green hills flooded with joyous sunlight, the orange groves, the endless silken expanse of blue sea and my soul sang out over this cemetery in praise of life...¹

Thus, the beauty of nature perceived through the prism of life can overcome even the forces of death. Both Gorki and Kotsiubyns'kyi depict in their stories, the eternal struggle between good and evil, life and death, and man and the elements of nature. And in all these stories it is good that triumphs over evil, life that overcomes death and man who conquers his environment.

There is some thematic similarity between Gorki's tales and Kotsiubyns'kyi's novellas. Both have a common background and composition in that they take place in Italy. In many instances both authors create parallel characters and situations. In their stories "Giovanni Tuba" and "Na ostrovi", both of the main characters are fishermen faced with the problem of old age. However, the treatment of the subject matter and portrayal of character is, in each case, totally different. Gorki's nineteenth story "Giovanni Tuba" portrays the life of a man completely devoted to the sea. As a young man Giovanni is a fisherman and a coral diver who earns his living from the sea. Yet the sea is depicted as being hostile and dangerous:

...the treacherous sea with its eternal song that fills one with an irresistible desire to sail away into its distances. Many a man has the sea lured away from the dumb, stony earth which demands so much moisture from the skies, so much toil from man and gives so little joy in return.²

Giovanni devotes his whole life to it and when he is old he is cast upon his island home like a derelict. Unable to work he turns to his relatives who are too poor to welcome another mouth to feed. Unwanted and too old to work for a living,

¹ Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi. Tvory v tr'okh tomakh. Vol. 2, p. 420.

² M. Gorky. Tales of Italy. p. 205.

Giovanni drowns himself in the sea he loved so much.

Gorki's Giovanni is characterized as a man alienated from his natural environment and seeking to find a place for himself in strange and unknown surroundings. He is attracted by the outward beauty of the sea and is inexplicably drawn to it:

Tuba gazed hungrily at the blue sea with the eyes of one under whose feet the earth pitched and rolled. He gazed, drinking in the salty air until he was drunk with it, becoming absent minded, indolent and disobedient as is always the case with those who fall under the sea's spell, who fall head over heels in love with the sea...¹

Yet although Giovanni finds refuge on the sea he becomes further alienated from his fellow men:

He was timid on land, he walked the earth cautiously, suspiciously, and he was silent with people, gazing at them searchingly with the keen eye of one accustomed to plumbing the treacherous deeps and not trusting them.²

There is no harmony between Giovanni and the sea. It grudgingly provides him with a livelihood and he is forever suspicious and mistrustful of it. His life is wasted on the sea and at the age of eighty he returns home a physically broken man. However, it is too late to find acceptance among people whom he had never really known and the tragedy of his life only makes him desperate. Gorki leaves us with the final image of a pathetic old man forced by hunger and loneliness to take his own life:

One night he set out down the hillside, crawling over the sharp stones like a crushed lizard and when he reached the waves--they met him with their familiar murmuring splash against the earth's dead stones, a sound far more gentle than the voices of men...³

¹ M. Gorky. Tales of Italy. p. 206.

² Ibid. p. 209.

³ Ibid. p. 210.

Gorki also raised the problem of old age and the need to find life useful and meaningful at the end. However, his story is pessimistic and depressing. There is no warmth or sympathy either from the people or nature itself. He has artistically portrayed the fate of the totally alienated man, for whom there is no hope, only death.

Kotsiubyns'kyi depicts a similar person in the seventh *étude* of his novella "Na ostrovi". However, the old fisherman Guiseppe, unlike Gorki's Giovanni, is completely in harmony with his environment. He is depicted as "always singing". He is treated with kindness by his friends who provide him with food and respect. But it is on the sea that Guiseppe is master. He understands its language and "gathers fish as a farmer would harvest grain from his fields".

Kotsiubyns'kyi creates a mood of joyous harmony. His hero can see the beauty of nature which is around him. Unlike Giovanni, Kotsiubyns'kyi's Guiseppe is useful and needed in his old age. By painting boats and doing some fishing he makes a small but useful contribution to life and for this he earns the respect of his fellow men. Guiseppe is not a burden on society and therefore he retains his self-respect. He sees beauty not only in the sea but also in nature, as is shown by his joy in viewing the blossoming orchards and vineyards:

Guiseppe...immediately begins to sing. He awakens the sea. True his song has a little sulphur from Vesuvius and a bit of a donkey's braying but-- that's nothing. The sea likes it.¹

Here nature is not hostile but friendly and co-operative. Guiseppe has learned all the secrets of the sea and it rewards him with its bounty. The author conveys an optimism by portraying the background vividly and clearly. One can smell the seaweed, fish and iodine as well as see the colour and beauty of the marine life. Kotsiubyns'kyi's story ends on a tone bordering on ecstasy, which contrasts vividly with the sombre ending of Gorki's "Giovanni Tuba".

¹ Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi. Tvory v tr'okh tomakh. Vol. 2, p. 430.

Gorki's sixth story "Midday" and Kotsiubyns'kyi's eighth in the novella "Na ostrovi" also have a similar theme although each story has its own style. In Gorki's story a young man tells an old fisherman that he has fallen deeply in love with a beautiful American tourist. He was hired to take her out in his boat and although they spent the entire night on the sea, he was unable to communicate his love for her because of a language barrier. The young man rationally explains to the old fisherman why he found the girl so desirable.

In Kotsiubyns'kyi's story the hero also falls in love with a foreign tourist. He persistently follows her around and deludes himself into thinking that she has also fallen in love with him. When their eyes meet he imagines that she had vowed to love him forever. In a short space of time the lover experiences ecstasy, joy, jealousy, anger, indifference and hope. Finally he imagines that they have tacitly agreed to meet the following day. However, when he returns to the same place next day, he can only smell the smoke of a steamer disappearing in the distance.

Both stories have the common theme of unrequited love. Yet the style and treatment of the subject is totally different for each story. Gorki's hero is coldly rational. There is very little sentiment from either the young man or the girl. The conversation between the young man and the old fisherman is restricted to making philosophical observations about love and happiness. Kotsiubyns'kyi's hero, on the other hand, takes the reader through all the emotions experienced by the lover, without speculating on the practicality of this unrealistic love.

Kotsiubyns'kyi's characters are as uncomplicated, integral and guileless as is his treatment of nature. They search for beauty in life and do not passively accept the injustices of the harsh world in which they live. They can find happiness and fulfillment in their lives in spite of adverse circumstances. Gorki's characters also search for a better and more meaningful life. However, they are

often the artificial creation of the author and appear unrealistic and not in harmony with their environment. It is only when Gorki allows his characters to develop naturally, without the artificial injection of an ideology, that they become real people.

A more detailed analysis of both Gorki's and Kotsiubyns'kyi's works reveals that, while Kotsiubyns'kyi wrote under the influence of nature, Gorki himself influences nature through his ideology. Thus, Kotsiubyns'kyi's style is strictly realistic. In his "Tales of Italy" nature is personified as an untamed force waiting to be conquered and placed in the service of man. Man himself is depicted as an immature organism slowly evolving to a higher stage of life. Man's problems and his inability to cope with them are attributed to a social system which does not have his best interests at heart. According to Gorki it will only be through collective action that man can create a society which will truly serve his own interests.

Gorki's use of imagery, personification and symbolism only accentuates the realism of his stories. However, his realism falls short in that he idealizes the common man and exaggerates the negative qualities of the wealthy. This is most evident in his stories "Brother and Sister", "The Intelligentsia" and "Pepe". Even his revolutionaries are depicted as naive idealists common to pre-revolutionary Russia rather than Italy. In pursuing their ideal they often lose their individuality as they do in the stories, "The Propagandist", "The Trouble Maker" and "Young Italy".

The stories in which Gorki is most successful in capturing the warmth and sentiment of the Italian people, are: "Flowers", "The City", "Vendetta", "The Nativity", "Nuncia" and "Easter". Here Gorki leaves himself out entirely. Instead of creating a situation in which he can stage his interpretation of life, he transports the reader into a world which is distinctly Italian. The characters are real people with their

own psychology, customs and traditions. Yet they have a sense of dignity, pride and honour which raises them far above the circumstances into which they were born.

It has already been mentioned that by the time they met on Capri both Gorki and Kotsiubyns'kyi were well established as writers. However, Kotsiubyns'kyi had already evolved from the stage of realism to impressionism before meeting Gorki, as seen in his story "Intermezzo" written in September, 1908. His works written during this period, such as "Tini zabutykh predkiv" (Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors), "Podarunok na imenyny" (The Birthday Gift), "Scho zapysano v knyhu zhuttia" (That Which is Written into the Book of Life), "Koni ne vynni" (The Horses are not to Blame) and including his Capri stories, embody elements of psychology, folklore, mysticism and symbolism. Gorki, on the other hand, utilizes his literary talents as a weapon for fighting against the evils of contemporary society. By 1913 he appears to have reached a literary plateau in his creative life. Having lived away from his homeland for a number of years, he reverts to writing autobiographical novels.¹

During this period both authors write stories on themes from Italian life. They also portray the natural beauty of Italy and the charm of the Mediterranean Sea. But, above all, they depict people who live lives far different from their own. The characters, found in the works of both writers, struggle to find purpose and meaning in their daily lives. Although their ultimate goals are not fully achieved, they do find beauty and love in their lives. There is, however, no evidence to show that either writer wrote any of his works under the direct influence of the other.

In his story "On the Island" Kotsiubyns'kyi completely crosses over to impressionism while still retaining elements of realism. Gorki, on the other hand, continues as a realist. It is at this point that the two authors part company as far as

¹ "Detstvo" (My Childhood) (1913); "Moi universitety" (My Universities) (1923); "V liudakh" (My Apprenticeship) (1916).

literary style is concerned. For while Kotsiubyns'kyi searches for beauty and harmony in both man and nature, Gorki views life more pessimistically and depicts it as a constant struggle for survival. Kotsiubyns'kyi's literary work was cut short by his severe illness and untimely death in April, 1913. It is difficult to ascertain what fresh avenues his mature genius would have led him to explore.

CHAPTER VII

GORKI'S EULOGY TO KOTSIUBYNS'KYI

A number of literary portraits of M. M. Kotsiubyns'kyi have been written by friends and acquaintances who met or knew him during his life time. Among them the most valuable literary portrait is perhaps the one written by M. Gorki in the middle of 1913, not long after the death of his Ukrainian friend.

In this article Gorki did not set himself the goal of writing an exhaustive essay about the life and literary endeavours of the Ukrainian writer. He fills his essay with thoughts about the essence of the beauty to be found in the world and in people. From the large number of facts known to him, Gorki carefully selected only a few and with them drew the image of a selfless fighter captivated by a great love for his people and his country.

In addition to being an ardent patriot Kotsiubyns'kyi did indeed display that deep sentimentality which is so characteristic of his people. Even amidst the Mediterranean beauty of Capri he was constantly reminded of his native Ukraine. Once Gorki remarked that:

One day, catching sight of a clump of pale pink hollyhocks by the white wall of a fisherman's hut, his face was lit up with a smile and he took off his hat to the flowers, saying in the Ukrainian language: 'Greetings friends!' How do you get on in a strange land?'¹

On another occasion Kotsiubyns'kyi imagined that he saw the familiar faces of home in the people of Capri. Returning from a walk he said:

Fancy--on the way to Arca Naturale there's a hut just like the ones at home! And the people in it too--the grandfather decrepit and sage, sits on the doorstep with his pipe, and the women, and the dark-eyed girl--a perfect illusion. All but the mountains, the rocks, the sea. Everything else, even the sun, is just the same.²

¹ M. Gorky. Literary Portraits. Moscow Foreign Languages Publishing House, n. d. p. 262.

² Ibid. p. 263.

But it is Kotsiubyns'kyi the man that Gorki wished to portray. In spite of all that he had suffered both materially and physically, Kotsiubyns'kyi never lost his faith in the inherent goodness of the common man. To him every human being possessed a measure of that goodness which is to be found in all human beings. He felt that sympathy, love and kindness can be universal and that, perhaps, they are so natural to man that they can even pass over into the consciousness of dogs and other animals near to man.

M. Kotsiubyns'kyi always showed understanding and sympathy toward people caught by unfortunate circumstances. Being a man of principle and integrity, he considered the interests of the common people as being the highest goal toward which man could dedicate his life. Gorki recognized this quality in him when he wrote:

In the world of ideas, beauty and goodness, he is 'our' type of person, one of the family and from the first meeting one will want to see him often and speak with him more. A person who thinks things out, he is somehow close to everything good and in him boils an organic hatred to everything base.¹

Perhaps it was his rapidly deteriorating health that created in Kotsiubyns'kyi that insatiable desire for life, or he may have had a premonition that he had not long to live. Gorki recalls that he often wrote about his illness and poor health, regretting that it prevented him from devoting more time to writing. Although "he knew that he was soon to die", writes Gorki, "he believed in the ultimate victory of reason and will over death." It was this intense desire to live which created in him a deep love and appreciation for beauty in both man and nature.

Having suffered much during his early life, Gorki could be extremely sensitive to the needs of others. He exulted with Kotsiubyns'kyi over the enchanting

¹ M. Gorki. About Literature. Kyi v, Radians'kyi Pysmenyk, 1949. p. 115.

beauty of the Carpathians and grieved deeply over the death of the Ukrainian composer N. V. Lysenko. On the other hand, Kotsiubyns'kyi shared Gorki's deep sense of loss over the death of L. N. Tolstoi. To Gorki he spoke about, "the destiny of his native land, of its future, its people whom he loved so dearly, of its literature and the useful work of the now prohibited "Prosvita".¹ Gorki called him, "a man of lofty spiritual culture."

Gorki concludes his essay by saying that Kotsiubyns'kyi's death was to him a great personal loss. He pays a glowing tribute to his friend calling him an honest man who loved humanity and who knew how to work for the happiness of his native land.

¹ Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi. Tvory v shesty tomakh. Vol. 6, Pp. 34, 85. Prosvita was a liberal, cultural and educational organization. First organized in L'viv in 1868 it spread throughout the Western Ukraine and later to Eastern Ukraine. Under its initiative public lectures and concerts were organized and libraries and reading rooms were set up. Its purpose was to raise the cultural level of the Ukrainian people and awaken in them a sense of national identity. The Revolution of 1917 ended its existence in Eastern Ukraine. In the Western Ukraine, then under Polish occupation, it continued to exist until 1939 when it was forcibly disbanded by the Russians.

The Chernihiv Prosvita was set up on January 9, 1907 with M. Kotsiubyns'kyi as its head. However, the Russian tsarist authorities interfered with its activities, allowing it to exist only on paper. It was finally banned on July 25, 1911, as an organization "capable, by its existence, of creating social unrest and disturbances".

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The personal contacts and literary relationship of Maxim Gorki and Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi began with their personal meeting in Capri on June 2, 1909. There is very little evidence to show that either writer had a personal knowledge of the other before this date. However, it is probable that both writers had already read some of each other's works, many of which were published in the same newspapers and journals.

The Capri period of Gorki and Kotsiubyns'kyi's friendship continued until the latter's death in April, 1913. During this time Kotsiubyns'kyi had paid three separate visits to Capri and had established a close friendship with Gorki and his family. He accompanied them on excursions and fishing trips and was often invited to their home for dinner or to attend literary readings and discussions. At these literary gatherings they acquired many mutual friends from among the numerous Russian and Ukrainian writers, artists and intellectuals in attendance.

During this period Gorki resided permanently in Capri while Kotsiubyns'kyi's permanent residence was in Chernihiv, Ukraine. Therefore, the two writers corresponded with each other between visits, (see Appendix). Their correspondence shows clearly that they respected and admired each other greatly and shared common ideals. They encouraged each other in their literary work and offered constructive criticism to each other during readings of their works. Gorki also arranged the translation and publication of Kotsiubyns'kyi's works by his publishing house Znanie. Kotsiubyns'kyi on the other hand, introduced to Gorki the cultural and literary heritage of the Ukrainian people and acquainted him with their national and political aspirations.

During this period both authors wrote a number of works which have parallel settings, themes and characters. However, a comparison of their styles, composition and moods reveals profoundly divergent methods. By this time both writers had reached full intellectual maturity and this is reflected in the originality of their literary styles, which developed continuously during their period of friendship: Gorki continued along the path of realism while Kotsiubyns'kyi moved towards impressionism. By 1913 the difference between the forms of their works is very great.

After Kotsiubyns'kyi's death in 1913, Gorki continued to honour and respect the Ukrainian writer. He recognized and appreciated Kotsiubyns'kyi's deep sensitivity and love for humanity as well as his profound patriotism and his love for his native Ukraine and its people.

Conclusions

The objective of this thesis has been to examine and describe the relationship between Maxim Gorki and Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi as manifested in the personal, intellectual and literary aspects of their association. The careful study and analysis of their correspondence and relevant source material reveals that the close friendship of the two writers resulted in certain mutual benefits for both authors. Gorki provided Kotsiubyns'kyi with friendship and encouragement during the latter's visits to Capri. During his third visit Kotsiubyns'kyi even lived in Gorki's home. Although Gorki arranged for the translation and publication of Kotsiubyns'kyi's works, this aspect of their relationship should not be over emphasized, since the latter's works had already been translated and published in Russian newspapers and journals before the two writers ever met personally. Kotsiubyns'kyi, on the other hand, introduced Gorki to the wealth of Ukrainian culture through personal discussions of its literature and by procuring for him a

number of books on Ukrainian folklore and ethnography. This information made Gorki more sympathetic to the plight of the numerous nationalities living within the Russian Empire. He encouraged the publication of works by Ukrainian and Byelorussian writers and condemned the discriminatory practices of Russian autocracy.

Intellectually both writers provided each other with the creative stimulus and encouragement necessary for literary work. By attending literary discussions in Gorki's home, Kotsiubyns'kyi became more fully aware of the intellectual and cultural currents of contemporary Europe. However, he was familiar with Western European literature even before meeting Gorki. Therefore, Kotsiubyns'kyi's friendship with the Russian writer only furthered his knowledge of European literary thought but did not introduce him to it for the first time. Furthermore, Gorki and Kotsiubyns'kyi met for long periods after the formative period of their literary development was completed. Their close friendship served only to enrich their lives but not to alter them significantly as it came too late and was too short in duration.

An analysis of the literary works of both authors, written during this period, reveals that, in spite of thematic parallels their mutual friendship and influence did not affect the style, form and language of their respective works. Each writer retained and developed his own original style of writing. Gorki continued to write as a realist using themes current in contemporary Russia while Kotsiubyns'kyi's works showed a definite trend to impressionism with elements of realism and naturalism. This trend is most fully developed in his last two stories.

In the course of writing this thesis a number of problems arose which could not be resolved because the relevant archival material was not available. As yet no concrete evidence has been found to prove that Gorki knew about Kotsiubyns'kyi before 1909. Furthermore, although both writers attended the

same literary gatherings and conducted extensive discussions on literary topics while in Capri, there is no record of the content of these discussions. In spite of a decline in the frequency of their correspondence after Kotsiubyns'kyi's third visit, there is no evidence of any serious disagreement or differences between the two writers during the winter of 1911-12. The solution to these problems will be found as new archival material is brought to light.

On the basis of our analysis the personal contacts and literary relationship of the two writers, Maxim Gorki and Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi, can be summed up as follows. Both authors established a close friendship because they shared common ideals and a common interest in literature. They began to correspond in 1909 and on the basis of this correspondence we see that the two writers read and valued each other's work highly. In reminiscing about Kotsiubyns'kyi, Gorki wrote, "If we are to speak about influences, perhaps they are mutual". The study conducted in this thesis reveals that this mutual influence did not extend to their literary works although it probably did affect their attitude toward contemporary social and political problems. The practical result of their friendship was the publication of two volumes of Kotsiubyns'kyi's works in Russian translation by Gorki's publishing house Znanie. By the end of the nineteenth century Ukrainian literature had taken its place in the ranks of world literature. Gorki and Kotsiubyns'kyi were part of the literary trend of their respective countries and their works reflect this trend.

The following appendix contains forty letters in English translation arranged in chronological order. There are sixteen letters of M. Kotsiubyns'kyi to M. Gorki; fourteen letters of M. Gorki to M. Kotsiubyns'kyi; nine letters of M. F. Peshkov (the wife of M. Gorki) to M. Kotsiubyns'kyi and one letter of V. I. Kotsiubyns'ka (the author's wife) to M. F. Peshkov. They have been translated from the original Russian using the contemporary spelling of personal and geographic names based on the Library of Congress system of transliteration.

The letters of M. F. Peshkov to M. Kotsiubyns'kyi and the letter of V. I. Kotsiubyns'ka have been included in the following correspondence because of their relevance to the problem discussed in this thesis.

Letters XXXVIII and XL are placed at the end of the correspondence because they have no specific date. These are short notes which M. Gorki and his wife wrote to M. Kotsiubyns'kyi during the latter's stay in Capri.

The dates which are presented in square brackets at the beginning of some letters, are post marked dates. Dates appearing on the right hand side of the letter or given in parenthesis in the body of the thesis are based on the old Julian calendar used in the Russian empire before 1917.

These letters have been taken from the following sources: Maksim Gor'kii, Sobranie sochinenii v tridsati tomakh. Moskva, Gos. izdat. Khud. Lit., 1949-55; Mykhailo Kotsiubyns'kyi, Tvory v shesty tomakh. Kiev, Vydavnytstvo Akademii Nauk Ukraini'koi R.S.R., 1962; Lystuvannia, M. Kotsiubyns'kyi--M. Gorki. Kharkiv, Derzhavne Vydavnytstvo Ukrainy, 1929.

I

M. Kotsiubyns'kyi - M. Gorki

August 19, 1909

August 6, 909

Chernihiv (Severianskaia

Sol [šlvěnný] D [om], No. 3

I stand guilty before you, most respected Aleksei Maksimovich: I'm sending the promised books only now as my wife had difficulty in locating them. And even then I haven't received all of them, it's impossible. Have a look at the book, Literatura Ukrainskoho Fol'klora, 1777-1900;¹ it may prove useful for your work as an index of ethnographical materials. I'm sending you, for the pattern, three copies of opened letters with designs of old embroidery on towels. Should they be of interest to you, write to me and I'll send you a whole series. Please don't think that you will inconvenience me, on the contrary, the pleasure will be mine.

I'm constantly reminded of you and your whole family, being sincerely grateful for your good care of me. Generally, I have so many wonderful memories of Capri that I'm living with them even today. I have such a strong desire to return, to the island of wonders, and to the Villa Spinola.

The absurd rumours about your eviction from Capri alarmed our gullible public and created an uneasy frame of mind. I must admit that I myself was disturbed, in spite of my skeptical view of newspaper reports. Who has the inclination or need to spread such rumours?

How do you feel Aleksei Maksimovich? I sincerely hope that you will make good use of the summer, soak up more sun, take walks, and go fishing more often, so that you may have a store of energy for the winter for capturing peoples souls.

Please extend my regards and sincere thanks to dear, kind Maria Fedorovna.² How is Evgenia Fedorovna's³ health?

¹ Literatura Ukrainskoho Fol'klora 1777-1900--A biographic list compiled by B. Hrinchenko and published in Chernihiv in 1901.

² Maria Fedorovna Andreeva (1872-1954), a Russian actress married to Gorki in 1903.

³ Evgenia Fedorovna--the sister of M. F. Andreeva.

If Maria Sergeevna ¹ is still visiting on Capri, wish her success in her work and all the best. To your whole family regards and greetings.

Your friend,

M. Kotsiubyns'kyi.

P.S. Did you receive my book in German translation, sent to you from Vienna? Dr. Jensen ² wrote me from Stockholm stating that he will be leaving in the fall on a tour of Sweden, giving lectures on your works.

¹ Maria Sergeevna Botkina--the daughter of a well-known professor of medicine who lived on Capri in 1909.

² Alfred Jensen (1847-1922) --a Swedish literary historian specializing in Slavic literatures; the author of articles about Ukraine and a large monograph about T. Shevchenko which was published in 1916. In April, 1909, while staying in Chernihiv, he became acquainted with Kotsiubyns'kyi. That same year he published a collection of Kotsiubyns'kyi's works in Swedish translation.

II

M. Gorki - M. Kotsiubyns'kyi

Capri, 28, 9, 09.

Dear Mikhail Mikhailovich!

Be kind enough to excuse my incivility--that I did not take it upon myself until today to reply to your letter, parcel of books, post cards and to all your complimentary attention, which I sincerely value and for which I am cordially thankful.

Perhaps I'm partly justified by my life of servitude--work with no end! The school where on Sunday I read two lectures on literature--and the need to prepare for it; autumn--manuscripts written during the summer are coming in--coming in by the tons! The authors, impatient by nature, demand immediate replies. K. P. Piatnyts'kyi¹ has arrived and I am obligated to review with him all the work of Znanie for the past nine years--it's no joke.

Don't think that I exaggerate my problems--it's not true.

Arriving here are the working people--strange children and I rest with them spiritually from the pizzicato and pricks of "culture". At this time, according to opportunity, they become acquainted with the true culture--found in the Neapolitan Museum, in ancient churches, and in Pompei; we will even be in Rome.

They look closely, they judge well and on the whole--it is wonderful to have placed my democratic soul among them.

And between duties--we occupy ourselves with music; a good man lives here, the director of the Moscow Society of Musicians named after Sakhnovskii. The composer is writing an opera and symphony, and organizes evening concerts on holidays--my working public is to be found even here in this place.

Of course, all this--is like living outside fortress walls with a summer program, but what of it?--I always valued the pleasure of being a heretic

¹ Kostiantin Petrovych Piatnyts'kyi--one of the editors of the Russian publication Znanie, which in 1911 printed in two volumes the selected works of M. Kotsiubyns'kyi in the Russian language.

very highly. I received all your parcels--including the books on the origin of myths that you promised me--remember?--I am very grateful, very touched by your admiration. Generally I am not spoiled by it! In the same way my dear M. M.--I cordially thank you! We often talk about your life here.

When you see Vladimir Galak,¹ respectfully extend a greeting from a student and admirer. Recently I happened to reread all his books--for lecture purposes and what pleasure it gave me.

Very few know him and it would be worth while, in the interests of the greater dissemination of literature among the reading public--to publish all his books in Znanie--seriously!

As you understand I am tired after all this and not very strong but this does not prevent me from feeling that life--is the most magnificent occupation for a man of my character!

With this--I send you my regards, firmly shake your hand and once more--thank you!

And I'll simply say--that I'm very pleased, that I met you and that you brought forth a great liking in my soul! But forgive me if this "explanation in admiration" seems to be somewhat coarse or out of place to you.

Greetings to your family and children also--of course.

A. Peshkov.

Capri, Presso Napoli.

¹ Volodymyr Galaktionovich Korolenko. (1853-1921) --A writer of mixed Polish and Ukrainian descent. After the Polish uprising of 1863 his family declared itself Russian. He belonged to the Populists and lived in Nizhni Novgorod.

III

M. Kotsiubyns'kyi - M. Gorki.

23.X.909 Chernihiv
(Severianskaia 3).

Many thanks to you, dear Aleksei Maksimovich, for your wonderful letter and for all that good that I saw in you and received from you. You are right, in one's recollection of Capri and in particular of our friendship; how warmly and brightly it grows on the heart. I think that I can frankly, without fear of being misunderstood, admit, that I have come to like you very much and feel grateful to the circumstances which brought us together.

I didn't reply to you immediately upon receiving your letters, having been ill. Now I feel so much better that I am able to write--and my first letter is to you. Lying in bed, I always thought, with the persistence of a sick man that you will remember your promise and send me "Leto".¹ The article by Amfiteatrov² exceeded my wishes; from it I learned that the story has already been published. If it is not particularly difficult for you, I would very, very much beg of you, dear Aleksei Maksimovich, to send me "Leto" in envelopes or by any route which you find convenient. One wants to rest so much after being irritated by the unhealthy odour of the premature Andreev.³

How is your "Uezdnyi Gorod?"⁴ The more I think about your theme, the more interesting it seems to me, to be worthy of the most serious attention and work. For some time now I was not feeling well and did not write anything. Along with this letter I am sending you Klausman's book. I will be very happy if it will be of use to you. I'm sure that you will not forget your sincere, devoted friend, M. Kotsiubyns'kyi.

Most respected Maria Fedorovna⁵ my cordial greetings. Our whole family sincerely wishes you health.

¹ "Leto"--a story by M. Gorki.

² O. V. Amfiteatrov, (1862-1923)--a Russian writer and journalist, after 1917--a white emigre.

³ Leonid Andreev (1871-1919)--a Russian novelist and dramatist, belonging to the symbolist school.

⁴ A story by M. Gorki--"Matvei Kozhemiakin" published by mistake as "Andrei Kozhemiakin."

⁵ Maria Fedorovna Peshkov--wife of M. Gorki.

IV

M. Kotsiubyns'kyi - M. Gorki

27, VIII-910. Chernihiv.
(Severianskaia, Sob. D. No. 3).

Dear Aleksei Maksimovich!

I promised to write you from Stockholm but in the meantime it so happens that I did not go to Sweden. In Vienna a letter awaited me with the news that the journey to the Skerries cannot take place due to the illness of my friend's wife. Naturally I did not wish to inconvenience Jensen, with my visit and would have liked to return to Capri, where I found it so pleasant. But owing to the distance, instead of Capri, I decided to spend the balance of my holiday resting in the Carpathians, on the Hungarian border. I spent almost two weeks at the summer home of M. Hrushevs'kyi¹ and as a matter of fact, I'm not even sorry that I replaced Sweden with the Hutsuls (Carpathians). If you could only know what a marvellous, almost fairy tale region it is with dense green mountains, with ever murmuring mountain streams clear and fresh as if having been born yesterday. The national dress, the customs, the whole tenor of the life of the Hutsul--nomads, who spend the whole summer with their herds on mountain pastures, is so distinctive and beautiful that one feels himself transported into some new, unknown world. How wonderful it would be, if you could come at least once to the Carpathians.

I couldn't restrain myself, while preparing for the mountains, I naturally overtaxed my health but it was beautiful, exceptionally beautiful and that is important. All the time I reminisced about you and Maria Fedorovna, all your, very dear to me, family to whom I am obliged. You are right dear Aleksei Maksimovich, being with you was so pleasant, so cordial (do not read if you do not wish) that you will always remain with me, as something bright, and unforgettable. I don't know how to express my gratitude but then I feel it very deeply and keenly.

¹ Mykhailo Serhiiiovych Hrushevs'kyi (1866-1934). A Ukrainian scholar, historian and statesman, head of the Shevchenko Scientific Society in L'viv and editor of the journal Literaturno-naukovyi vistnyk.

The children were full of ecstasy over your gifts, and Oksana¹ was very disappointed that I didn't bring your photograph. That "bubble" already likes you as a writer. Everyone is preparing to write to you but will not really do so at the moment; after summer holidays all will be in an industrious frame of mind. In the beginning I too was submerged in an avalanche of work. But I will bear it, none theless. At the moment one can't even think about literary work, I'm setting it aside for autumn.

I'm gradually collecting some books for you and when the collection is complete I'll send them.

How are things, how is your work coming along, are the fish catching? My impressions are so vivid that I still feel the essence of Capri, as if I left it only yesterday. When you have a free moment and the inclination--write to me. It brings me great satisfaction.

To Maria Fedorovna, my greetings and sincere respects. If any one from the family is still at Capri--I send my cordial greetings.

Vira Iustinovna (my wife) asked me to send greetings to you and thank everyone for treating me so well.

Prof. Hrushevs'kyi sends his best wishes. I kiss and embrace you. Good health and success in your work.

Yours,

M. Kotsiubyns'kyi.

Please extend my greetings to Konstantin Petrovich.² Unfortunately, the editorial office of Znanie did not send a catalogue to our office, as we had agreed with Konstantin Petrovich.

¹ Oksana Kotsiubyns'ka, Kotsiubyns'kyi's daughter.

² K. P. Piatnits'kyi. See Page 73.

V

M. Gorki - M. Kotsiubyns'kyi

Capri, 8, 9, 10.

Dear Mikhailo Mikhailovich!

To the accompanying letter,¹ I replied that the prerogative of choosing a translator remains with the author and gave G. Vasin your address.

I do not know him. Do you think, that "a critical" essay is necessary?

If so, then in my opinion, it would be better if that essay would be written by a Little Russian.

How did you arrive? Did you see Strinberg?²

How is your health?

All of us send greetings to you. My greetings to your wife and children.

I didn't forget about the photo but I don't have it yet.

I shake your hand.

A. Peshkov.

I cordially greet you, your wife and the young public, I firmly grasp your hand. I wish you all the best and--till we meet again next spring.

Mariia³

¹ To this letter M. Gorki added a letter from Vasin, who requested that the publication Znanie provide him with a translation in the Russian language of the works of M. Kotsiubyns'kyi. From a later letter of M. Kotsiubyns'kyi to M. Gorki we see that Vasin was refused, because Kotsiubyns'kyi procured a translation of his works earlier from M. Mohylians'kyi.

² August Strindberg (1849-1912)--A Swedish writer.

³ Mariia --Gorki's wife.

VI

M. Kotsiubyns'kyi - M. Gorki

9, 22, IX, 910. Chernihiv.

Dear Aleksei Maksimovich!

It seems that our letters passed each other. Did you receive my letter (registered)?

I don't know Vasin, whose letter you sent me. He did not turn to me but even if he did, it would be too late as all the stories for the first volume are already translated by Mohilianski, and at the present moment I'm checking the manuscript.

No "critical essay" is necessary, of course. If they like the book they will read it even without "the essay". In unfavourable circumstances no critical essay will help. And it's unnecessary except as a "last resort".

I don't feel very well, and Capri is the only place for me. The natural beauty of Capri and the people blend so harmoniously and have such a wholesome effect on my psychology that it positively revitalizes me.

How is your work progressing? If you could know, with what impatience I await the sequel to "Okurov",¹ that splendid work which one is obliged to follow with enthusiasm; how your talent has strengthened and developed, having already grown, it seems, to its full height. I sincerely wish you a good frame of mind and the spiritual inspiration indispensable for work.

Should Iurii Andreevich² still be in Capri, remind him of my request that he send me the photograph which he took of us on the day of the second (for me the last) fishing trip. That group photo would be a very priceless souvenir.

Most respected Maria Fedorovna I sincerely thank you for the postscript to your letter and for the good wishes which are very dear to me.

¹ From M. Gorki's story "Matvei Kozhemiakin".

² Iur Andriiovich Zheliabuzhs'kyi, son of M. F. Peshkova.

Please extend my sincere greetings to everyone. My mother, wife and children thank you very much for your attention and send their best wishes.

Please do not forget.

Yours,

M. Kotsiubyns'kyi.

VII

M. Gorki - M. Kotsiubyns'kyi

Capri, 29, 9, 10.

Dear Mikhailo Mikhailovich!

I didn't answer your letter because I couldn't get the photo for Oksana,-- my photographers are courtiers--tormentors! They take them and then you beg them for sixteen days--give me the little pictures! And they procrastinate.

I sent you the letter of that nobody Vasin--Did you receive it?

We are living as always, various Russian people visit, at the moment we are awaiting the actor Samoilov. The weather has been bad since Sunday, it rained and the whole island wept, but today the weather became settled, magnificent, caressing and bright. They began bringing the grapes, late for this year.

The Italians are terrified by cholera and--the fine fellows! Energetically took after it! Zina,¹ travelled to Naples daily and upon returning was obliged, by strict order, to visit the doctor five times under threat of arrest for not fulfilling his commitment.

I am a little out of sorts, I don't sleep and my nerves play havoc. I'm very concerned about the Romanian-Turkish alliance, it is very bad for us! It's clear, that the Germans are preparing to strike us hard and we are all still dozing.

I wish you all the best, greetings to the family.

A. Peshkov.

¹ Zenovii Aleksiiovich Peshkov, son of M. Gorki.

VIII

M. Kotsiubyns'kyi - M. Gorki

Forgive me Oleksi Maksymovych¹ that I was unable to write to you, I was ill and they operated on me. Then it did not hurt me much because the operation was performed under chloroform. Now I feel better and I want to thank you for the gift. I find your photograph most pleasing. I would like to be able to see you in real life. Maybe if father has money we will come to Capri. Iurko, Ira, Roma² and I thank you and Maria Fedorovna very much for the nice gifts which you sent us through father.

Oksana.

Yes, Dear Aleksei Maksimovich, misfortunes befell me. We had five sick people in our home for almost a whole month, not counting me. And here you grieve me with your indisposition, although it seems that I have not caused you any harm. My request is boring. I know that very well but still don't make a decision: Take care of yourself. Such is the responsibility of those who always ought to be young, strong and cheerful. Otherwise, how do you inspire that love of life which is greater than that lived by your reader?

I remember that I ought to thank you, for sending, via the office of Znanie, the last issue of Sbornik. Thank you very much, "Chudaki"³ appealed to me very much even though you were dissatisfied with the play. Very nice characters and circumstances, an interesting problem, the whole play is transparent and clear. But it isn't equal to "Gorodok". You know that I'm positively fretting over the sequel. It's such a work (I'll tell you straight--great) that because of it you will have to reconcile yourself with your unloved writer--Gorki.

Therefore only health is necessary, I wish it to you in the greatest quantity, it isn't harmful.

This time I will not tire you with a long letter, all the more so since I can't write something pleasant at the moment.

Good health.

I kiss and embrace you warmly. Do not forget.

M. Kotsiubyns'kyi.

¹ The letter begins with Oksana's letter (Kotsiubyns'kyi's daughter) written in Ukrainian.

² M. Kotsiubyns'kyi's children.

³ A work by M. Gorki.

M. Pieshkova - M. Kotsiubyns'kyi

2.XI.910

Dear Mikhail Mikhailovich

Don't be angry at us and Aleksei Maksimovich for the long silence for during this time there took place at our house a very solemn event; our Zinovii Alekseevich got married to a girl called Lidia Petrovna Burago. The event took place on the 31st of October in Naples, and he met his wife in the home of Aleksander Valentinovich Amfiteatrov, where they, together with Aleksei Maksimovich were guests in Spezia. His wife is pretty and fair-haired, a tall lady, highly, impressive and a darling, they are temporarily living with us.

You understand how such an event occupied our time and what a turmoil our house is in even until today.

I will write my son Iurii Andreevich Zheliabuzhski regarding the photographs, so that he can send them to you. His address: Pb.¹ Lesnoe, Bol'shaia Spasskaia Dom No. 64. At the moment he is very worried about his exams, but I believe that he'll find time to fulfill your wishes.

It is unfortunate that you are not feeling very well and it's a pity that you are unable to live on Capri permanently! Aleksei Maksimovich is also not feeling very well; having worked a little too hard he has frayed nerves, so that the doctors have persistently advised him to abandon his work and take a rest, better still to take a trip. He has already travelled to Florence, Pisa, Lucca, Siena, Assisi, and now he will rest at home before travelling again, probably somewhere in the south, perhaps to Sicily. We will leave the young ones, and the elderly alone, will go and see the world.

From the bottom of my heart I wish you all the best, please accept and extend my greetings to your wife and adorable children. All the best!

Mariia Peshkova.

¹ Pb. --Petersburg, now Leningrad.

X

M. Gorki - M. Kotsiubyns'kyi

Dear Mikhailo Mikhailovich

I had guessed that you were not feeling well; all the time I thought of you with a feeling of anxiety and more than once M. F. and I had told each other that there must be something wrong over there! I wanted to write and ask--but in those circumstances one is always hesitant to disturb something--by arriving in a home uninvited.

What was the illness? What was wrong with Oksana? You didn't write.

Today, along with your letter, I received your books¹ in four letters,--the translation appeared adequate to me,--are you correcting it? It would be good if you could publish the second and third volumes by spring in order that you may come and spend the summer here in peace!

V. G. Korolenko sent me Zapiski² --I took that excellent book in my hands and read it over again. And I will read it often,--I like it all the more for its serious tone and that kind of profound modesty, so little known in our contemporary literature. Nothing spectacular, except what comes from the heart. The voice is quiet but pleasant and rich, a genuine person's voice. And on every page you feel an intelligent human smile, well thought out, a great experienced soul. Beautiful!

I was shocked by "Begstvo" (Escape) by Lev Nikolaevich,³ having understood this caper as the fulfillment of his sacred wish to turn "the life of Count Leo Tolstoi" into "a life which is in the holy fathers of our nobleman Lev,"--I wrote V. G. Korolenko in regard to this bitterest letter, which I didn't have time to send when all of a sudden, bang!--a telegram: Lev Tolstoi--has died! I cried out from grief and cried the whole day--for the first time in my life. I cried so agonizingly, disconsolate and much that I wrote about Tolstoi was naturally not for publication and generally it was necessary to pour out my sorrow. I wanted to post all the writings to V. G.--but in the evenings a pack of correspondents arrived on the island with the news that--Tolstoi is living!

¹ The first volume of stories by M. Kotsiubyns'kyi in Russian translation published by Znanie.

² "A History of My Contemporary" by V. Korolenko.

³ Concerning "Ukhod" (Departure) of L. Tolstoi from Iasna Poliana; 28.X.1910 old calendar.

I dismissed the correspondents, and somewhat tired from being upset, I again began to spit blood. Of course, the accursed wind is to blame for that,--blowing like mad, whistling day and night, my nerves are tense.

I am now living in strained expectation of news about him from Russia, that soul of the nation, genius of the people. In that soul there is much that is alien to me or simply hostile, but I didn't think that I liked the man Tolstoi so deeply and avidly. They force me, having begun endeavours to make a "Legend" out of him in order to make him a basis for a "religion"--the religion of fatalism, so ruinous for us people and passive as well.

I read the newspapers and see with devastating clearness how savage we are, how shameless and--how slavishly and idolatrously we live in the dark tangled souls of ours. It is painfully embarrassing.

I am writing "Kozhemiakin" very carefully. The theme is severe and becomes more severe, always requiring more thought and careful attention. It is as if walking a tight rope.

I am sending you as a souvenir "Vstrecha"¹ (The Meeting), perhaps you will get a few smiles while reading it.

I am recommending to your attention a book by Aleksei Tolstoi,--although disorganized, his stories are still winners. He shows promise of becoming a great, first rate writer, do you agree? Probably Znanie sent you Surguchev and Shmelev? The first also promises much but til now is a little careless and a useless show off, similar to a telegrapher in a shabby steppe station. He likes little motley neckties, let us think that it will pass with him.

And the second--a good painter of genre. However,--you will see for yourself.

Not bad, in the second book of Vestnik Evropy there is a model of Chirikov. It is both funny and sad as it continues. Previously he was carried away by Bunin's "Derevnei".

¹ A play by M. Gorki.

An event--at our house, Zina got married. It took place very quickly and one may say unexpectedly for him also. Now he sours in the stream of happiness; it is very comical to look at him and his large wife.

But if you could have seen what the Capricians were doing at that wedding! They almost brought us all to tears with their simple happiness.

I'll end this long letter not wishing to tire you with triviality.

Good health and good cheer.

Sincere greetings to your wife, I am writing to the children separately. What a glorious letter Oksana sent! Obviously a beautiful person. Kiss her for me. Kiss her, and the other three--also, of course.

A. Peshkov.

In Byelorussia there are two poets Iakub Kolas and Ianko Kupala--very interesting fellows! They write so primitively simple. So affectionate, sad and sincere. Ours could use a few of these qualities! O God! How wonderful that would be!

A page is inserted in my book--a song with notes, nothing like a Byelorussian hymn--ought to be.

That thing upsets me. It is morose.

And who taught them,
not one million
to carry injustice
awakened their dream?
Poverty, sorrow!

Glorious!

Remember--the great Russian song

We are not travelling alone.
We are led by poverty,
bitter need!

That is an epigraph to our history, the history of passive people. That is the cry of village blood poisoned by fatalism. Inscribed under that misfortune is L. N. Tolstoi and brought forth as a philosophical basis, originating from him, subordinate to him, and called upon by him.

M. Peshkova - M. Kotsiubyns'kyi

17/XII/910

Dear Mikhail Mikhailovich--good day.

How is it that you were visited by such an unwelcome guest as illness?

From the bottom of my heart I hope that it will soon abandon you so that you may all be healthy and that in the summer you can come to Capri with the whole family, I believe, that two--three months here would completely cure you and strengthen you all and one may settle in so comfortably and cheaply.

We received your first volume and read it with great satisfaction. Although I have already read in German, the book which you were kind enough to give me during your first visit,¹ but even the first reading was a great pleasure. Thank you for the good times!

I received a letter from Amfiteatrov, He also writes about what a pleasant, kind writer Kotsiubyns'kyi is, I know that in a letter to Aleksei Maksimovich, Amfiteatrov writes about you even better and I'm happy that your works have reached the Russian reader.

Aleksei Maksimovich is terribly busy at the moment--completing Kozhemiakin and overwhelmed with requests to give something to old and newly appearing journals and newspapers; he works day after day, relaxes very little; and here L. N. Tolstoi has died and there is an explosion of banality over his grave, newspapers write about Russia and Russian reality, etc. etc. He has become very thin, pale...

We dream of travelling to Rome in February to the world's fair which, according to rumours promises to be very interesting. One wants very much to visit Sicily.

¹ In the year 1909 Kotsiubyns'kyi's stories were published in Vienna in the German language under the title Pro Bono Publico. Novellen Von Mychajlo Kozjubynskyi. Wien, 1909".

I'm in great ecstasy from my travels over Northern Italy.--Siena appeared as a kind of fairy tale, Pisa, Lucca--all that A. M. can remember, he recalls and relives in brilliant colours. And during that trip Zina found himself a wife, a Kuban cossack, Lidia Petrovna Burago--completely like a Caesar, he came, he saw, he conquered and--was conquered. And may God grant them much happiness.

Soon the holidays will be here. I hope that you, your wife, children and your mother may greet and spend them in good health and in happiness. I firmly grasp your hand and look forward to seeing you in summer.

Maria Peshkov.

An excerpt from Amfiteatrov's letter to A [Iekse] M [aksimovich]

Dear A. M. I have as little time as a devil in Hades. I'm as tired as a dog and in addition to that I can't tear myself away from work in order to write to you --what a fine writer that Khokhol Kotsiubyns'kyi is and how pleased I am with his book, released by Znanie. I received it today and read excerpts between duties, and now I have all of it in my head and am glad. Among others I like his Crimean tales, viewed objectively, they are all so exotic and observantly strange. But everything that is from Ukraine, Poland and Bessarabia is magnificent¹. The soft tone of Turgenev's pupil although, he already worshipped Knut Hamsun¹ ("Debut"). How astonishingly fine.

¹ Knut Hamsun, (1859-1952)--A Norwegian writer of the modernist school. His later works are characterized by pessimism.

XII

M. Kotsiubyns'kyi - M. Gorki

7/XII/910. Chernihiv.

Dear Aleksei Maksimovich!

I am very much to blame before you and I am ashamed of myself for replying to your letter so late and that I'm writing to thank you for your letter only now. Thank you very much, dear Aleksei Maksimovich. One wants to believe that thoughts and feelings can be conveyed over a great distance -- then you would know how thankful I am to you for your kindness. I read "Vstrecha" (The Meeting) with extreme pleasure; each work reminding me of your voice and motions -- and I began to remember that evening on Capri so clearly when I read it.

I am presently greatly influenced by "Vassa Zheleznova",¹ a profound, powerful and original work. And how wonderfully it is written! Take a lump of clay, and from it fly bright sparks and they illuminate such hiding places that one even becomes awe-struck. There it is -- it is a bottomless, obscure maternal feeling -- the beginning of everything living! As far as I'm concerned -- a great work has been created. And one wants to say thank you -- in the name of art!

It was painful for me to read, that you took the death of Tolstoi so hard. I'm, of course, not surprised, but the deterioration of your health disturbed me greatly. How are you feeling at the moment? Better?

It was also difficult for me but (I don't know if I ought to be ashamed) it's a good thing that greatness exists in this world. Death, however, really determines its extent, rather than life.

I'm reading Surguchev and Shmelev (again thank you!). Surguchev appeals to me less than Shmelev, who in my opinion, is more powerful, profound and brilliant. In any event it's very good that Znanie published them; there is hope that both will write themselves out.

The volume of A. Tolstoi is lying on my table waiting its turn. I like that author very much. I have already shared my impressions of his stories with you.

¹ A work by M. Gorki.

But something is wrong with me. I'm not getting any better, not working, no cheerfulness. I want to believe that everything will quickly pass, but so far it is very bad. That is why I was unable to reply, in good time, to even you, although to exchange a word with you brings me great happiness. I would like to see all of you very much, how you are living now, how is Maria Fedorovna getting along and Zinovii Alekseevich (with his wife of course)? Are they all at their old place, are you all looking at yourselves, as Icarus, the sun, who burns daily or have you moved into the Villa "Serafina"? Are you comfortable there? Don't be surprised that even trifles interest me. That happens when the heart becomes closely bound to something. Well, good health, above all health, I sincerely kiss and embrace you. Don't forget, to Maria Fedorovna, my sincere greetings and best wishes. All the best to Zinovi Alekseevich and his wife.

Yours,

M. Kotsiubyns'kyi.

Our whole family sends regards to your family and thanks for the souvenir. Oksana is in ecstasy over your letter. At the moment she is lying in bed with a sore throat. Do not forget, yours truly,

M.K.

XIII

M. Gorki - M. Kotsiubyns'kyi

Dear Mikhail Mikhailovich!

I read your book with great pleasure, and sincere joy.

I'm sending you a copy of the notes made while reading, regarding mistakes made by the translator. Not "izba" (peasant's cottage) but -- saklia (dwelling of Caucasian peoples, ed.), and not "voz" (cart), but -- "vozok" (closed sleigh). Voz in great Russian will be -- a loaded cart. On the 25th page "solitary as a finger", a paraphrase of the saying "all by oneself" -- obviously? Not very clever.

And one may not tear a bomb apart with his bare hands, obviously -- "An explosion", but to speak about it needlessly. As to the second edition, for which, I believe, we won't have long to wait, those errors ought to be removed -- right?

There is no time to write more. I'm very busy.

Greetings to the whole family. What about the second volume? When are you thinking of coming here?

Good health, I firmly grasp your hand.

A. Peshkov.

XIV

M. Kotsiubyns'kyi - M. Gorki

19/XII - 910. Chernihiv.

Dear Aleksei Maksimovich!

You encouraged and advised me very much with your letter. If the book appeals to you -- it was worth writing. You understand me. Even such a great artist as you, is familiar with the feeling of dissatisfaction with oneself. I have succumbed to it. My stories always seem colourless, uninteresting and even unnecessary to me and how embarrassing it is before the literary world and before a reader. One publishes -- with great reluctance. Therefore, approval, not anykind naturally, is so precious and so encouraging.

I thank you.

Looking through the first volume, I also noticed many errors, mistakes and misprints. And all because I didn't read the proof sheet. I quickly looked through the manuscript, not stopping for the requests of the translator regarding the stylistic side of the translations, as M. M. Mohylians'kyi had promised to work on the translation and advised me not to keep the manuscript. So it didn't turn out well. He checked much of it. If the book reaches a second edition, it will certainly be necessary to make corrections. Mohylians'kyi promised to prepare the material for the second volume by about the middle of January. Now I will certainly read the proof sheets.

But enough about business.

I want to know how you are living. Are you well, are your nerves better?

Maria Fedorovna cheered me up with the news, that "Kozhemiakin" is coming to an end. I am awaiting it with impatience. It is my favourite work.

We had our first, new, fluffy snow. A light frost. Nature is so clean and brisk, that I have even begun to work. I look at fir trees, at the orchard covered with puffy snow, at the sleighs flowing through the sound of bells, and I think; wouldn't it be wonderful if Aleksei Maksimovich could be here! At times one wants to be on Capri and it draws one to it. As you know it must be beautiful there now. But when I'll be ready to go -- I don't know yet. Most of my free time is in summer, in June.

The new year is approaching. I wish you health, above all health and success in your work. I kiss and embrace you.

Our whole family sends you best wishes and greetings.

Do not forget, yours,

M. Kotsiubyns'kyi

XV

M. Peshkova - M. Kotsiubyns'kyi

Capri 12. 3, 11

Dear Mikhailo Mikhailovich

I am again writing to you, in place of Aleksei Maksimovich... He--is writing completing the third part of Kozhemiakin--He is hurrying Konstantin Petrovich, by writing a story for Sovremennik,--he is hurrying Amfiteatrov, Berlin begs that he give almost anything, M. K. Tordanskaia... All that is already written, but it is still necessary to check it, rewrite it, as he always does, before handing it to me for copying on the Remington... This is why I'm replying instead of him.

Allow me to begin with a straight forward question--How are you, my dear sir, do you feel ill? Would it not be better for you to take your suitcase and come to Capri where you always feel better? Aleksei Maksimovich and I are most certainly waiting for you to come here, and with smoke and speed. Do you know that a Villa Esposito was found with the most marvellous view, very well furnished, four rooms for sixty-five lira a month with all the furnishings, in addition very nice linen, and the landlady herself, my God, it's no exaggeration--an angel in the flesh. This is a description for you; our friend is living there at the moment, a Siberian, a young man. He has prison nerves and there are some days, when he does not get out of bed, does not eat nor drink.

The landlady has understood his circumstances in her own way and on seeing him come in, she comes into his room with a large dish of beans and sausages, a bottle of wine and a glass. She speaks in Italian which he naturally doesn't understand and only waves his hands at her, yelling "niente, niente" but understands that the landlady is disconcertedly--explaining to him that she understood precisely that he has, "niente nella tasca"¹ and begs him not to disdain to accept a treat from her. The little fellow, very emaciated, ate the food brought to him although he swallowed with difficulty because of nerves. He later related that he did it so as not to insult the kind old woman.

My Iurii² has been away a long time, since the month of October, even since the end of September he has been living in Pb., (Petersburg) in Lesno, Bol'shaia Spasskaia, 64. I'll send him a scolding for not replying to your letter and not sending the picture, but allow me to say one thing on his behalf--he is preparing for his exams. He was diligently occupied all this year and is not well, as the winter is unfortunately rigorous and he has only a fall coat, therefore, he has caught a cold...

¹ Means "Nothing in the pocket".

² Iur Zheliabuzhs'kyi, son of M. F. Peshkova.

I look forward to seeing him, Katia and Zhenia next summer. But what will happen! It is the same everywhere, everything is dreary for me, and here we have an epidemic, O Lord.

We've moved into the Villa Serafina. It is pleasant here, there is more sun, and Aleksei Maksimovich spends more time out of doors, and thanks for that! And as far as foreign countries are concerned naturally, scandal has spread again. G. bought himself a new villa for fifty T. Confidentially -- we pay 1200 Fr. a year. Only don't you tell anyone -- let them think, that we are -- wealthy. Aleksei Maksimovich warmly greets you, your mother, wife and children. I endorse his regards with all my heart.

Be in good health and visit us here. It seems that interesting company is preparing to come: there will be Tikhonov, Chaikovski, Brodski (an artist), Gorelov (also), Zhukov (sculptor), and Gintzburg our most pleasant guest is preparing to come.

I firmly grasp your hand.

M.

XVI

M. Kotsiubyns'kyi - M. Gorki

11 March, 1911, Chernihiv.

Dear Aleksei Maksimovich!

According to my calculations, you ought to receive this letter on your birthday. I embrace you and kiss you with a feeling of deep admiration and, with the warmest and sincerest wishes for health, strength and good spirits.

It is with great pleasure that I am sending you these wishes, It's wonderful to know that there exists somewhere a brilliant, magnificent soul. A source of goodness and beauty, to whom one may say with an open heart; all the best!

As for Maria Fedorovna's letter. Thank the good woman for remembering! I learned that you are working very hard, that "Kozhemiakin" is almost finished. I am waiting for the sequel to that work with understandable impatience and -- if that isn't strange I am a little afraid whether it will be equally as good as the beginning. Of course, these misgivings are even funny to me, all the more so, since they are completely groundless, but when you know that something beautiful is being created, you automatically put your feelings of uncertainty to the test. Will it turn out right?

Although Maria Fedorovna strictly interrogated me as to my reasons for feeling ill, everyone should know that there is something wrong with me. My heart is functioning worse and worse. Now and then one is compelled to go to bed, official duties tire me out so much, that there isn't strength enough left to do anything else. Fall and winter have been almost a complete loss for me; during that time I was able to write only one small story. True, the preparation for printing and proof reading of the second volume of my "stories" took up much time. A day or two ago I checked the last proof sheets and breathed a sigh of relief and .. of sadness. The first volume, evidently didn't evoke any kind of interest. Three months have gone by since it was published and not one journal has noticed the book. It's possible that such a fate awaits the second volume, Then it will be very embarrassing for me to know that I misled Znanie.

I am patiently waiting for summer. Capri is calling me all the time, and I'm afraid to think about it, since I'm not confident that I will be able to travel there again, as I was unable to earn anything during the winter, -- which means that a difficult insuperable obstacle has been created. And meanwhile, a four-room villa for sixty-five lira, with a kind landlady, beckons and smiles. Nevertheless, I would willingly reconcile myself with very modest circumstances, if I could only be near you and your very dear family again in Capri. As long as I will have hope I want to hope.

Good health to you, dear Aleksei Maksimovich. My mother, wife and children send you their best wishes on your birthday and they send greetings to Maria Fedorovna. I kiss the hands of dear Maria Fedorovna and thank her for her letter from the bottom of my heart. Greetings to Zinovi Alekseevich and his wife and Konstantin Petrovich.

Do not forget yours,

M. Kotsiubyns'kyi.

XVII

M. Gorki - M. Kotsiubyns'kyi

[Capri, 31, 3, 11.]

Mikhail Mikhailovich, My dear, you -- are wrong.

The first volume brought forth many reviews and, in my opinion, some were quite interesting. Even Rech, whose relations with Znanie are not friendly, honoured your book with a good and not inane review. There was a review in Sovrmennyi mir and in Amfiteatrov's Sovremennik and in a host of provincial papers as well.

You should send Amfiteatrov a translation of the story, written by you last winter?

The publication of the second volume creates an interest in the first as well and I believe that you will soon be here.

I am very distressed by the circumstances of your health and your state of mind; if I was able -- I would try in every possible way to hasten your arrival here.

Perhaps that will take place.

Greetings to your family and to Oksana especially.

Good health and -- au revoir!

I am very tired, busy and angry.

And at your place, have they come to the 83rd article?¹ Good, good! This naturally will push Rus' to the left faster.

And yet if they begin a fight with China -- Oh!

While waiting for pleasant events -- I wish you good spirits.

A. Peshkov.

¹ The 83rd article of the Criminal Code of Imperial Russia, passed in 1906 during the period of reaction following the Revolution of 1905, which gave local authorities arbitrary powers to curtail individual freedoms.

M. Kotsiubyns'kyi - M. Gorki

7/VI-9II Chernihiv.

Dear Aleksei Maksimovich!

I am writing under the influence of the second part of "Kozhemiakin". All the time, until I finished reading it, I had a terrible feeling of dread; what if, after such a high inspiration with which the first part was written,--and although it is a beautiful work (bad, would of course, not be worth waiting for), the tone falls, but nevertheless this was not the case. Reading it to the end, I breathed a sigh of relief, having felt complete satisfaction. It is an understatement to say; well done. The second part is as magnificent as the first. An epopee of a Russian city, the spread of suburban life in breadth and in depth. One began feeling terrified and horrified at that commonness which Kozhemiakin registered so calmly. It was as though a page from the historic life of the people was opened, entering the beginning in the dark past and the end touched by yesterday: intimate, familiar but poorly developed. The background is so beautiful that it would be difficult to wish for anything better. And what strange people are on that background, everywhere marble, everywhere a chisel. You succeeded remarkably, most often, with Markush. And everything--people, emotions, nature--everything is so light, bright, clear and what's more a striking experience. And after all one feels some kind of emotion to the end, a well thought out synthesis. Unequaled beautiful similes. In that respect I considered Anuncio¹ the greatest master. But now I see that, in comparison, he is often a little artistic, artificial, and pretentious while you are unconstrained, free and as graceful as the gallop of a wild steppe horse (excuse the comparison). About the beauty of the language, there is nothing one can say; it is a school for Russian novelists.

I am writing you my impressions, dear Aleksei Maksimovich, not as a critic (I don't sin in that respect) but as your simple reader, one of many, and yet by right a person to whom a feeling for beauty is not alien. I simply wanted to express my enthusiasm and my sincere gratitude to you. Naturally the story is not yet finished. From the bottom of my heart I wish you health and strength for future work. And dear Maria Fedorovna, I want to heartily congratulate her on your marvellous work. Only I'm not sure whether she'll want to accept my congratulations.

About myself, I can't report anything good. I'm basically ill, feeling nervous and am unable to work. However, all that is unimportant. I'm ashamed only before A. V. Amfiteatrov, who, not seeing the general picture, was unable to write anything for Sovremennik until now.

¹ Gabriel D'Anuncio, a well-known Italian poet.

XX

M. Kotsiubyns'kyi - M. Gorki

16/VII - 911. Village of Kryvorivnia in the Carpathians.

Dear Aleksei Maksimovich!

My hopes for a summer trip to Capri collapsed so suddenly that for a long time I didn't have the strength to reconcile myself to it or to even write you. It happened that I had to take my younger son to the Crimea as the doctors threatened him with all kinds of misfortunes, and the money, saved for the trip to Italy, was spent for that purpose. I spent the month of June in Simeiz, and in July decided to go to the Carpathians, to the Hutsuls. The venture is inexpensive and not without benefit. I spend all my time taking excursions into the mountains, riding horseback on a Hutsul horse, as light and graceful as a ballerina. I spent time, in remote places, accessible to only a few, on "Polonynas" (mountain pastures, ed.) where the Hutsul -- nomads spend the whole summer with their flocks. If you only knew how majestic nature is here, what a primeval life it is. The Hutsuls -- are the most original people, with a wealth of fantasy, and with their own distinctive psychology. A die-hard pagan throughout his whole life, the Hutsul wages a struggle with the evil spirits, inhabiting the forests, mountains and waters. He accepted Christianity only insofar as it decorated his pagan cult. How many beautiful tales, legends, superstitions and symbols are to be found here. I'm collecting material, enjoying nature, looking, listening, and learning,¹ I hope to tell you something about it when we see each other.

We will see you this winter. The fact is that in August I will leave the civil service for good. Totally unexpected, I received from "The Ukrainian Literary Society"² a life-long stipend of two thousand roubles with the condition that I not work. Our winters are so severe and so harmful for me that I cannot live in the cold climate of Chernihiv and have decided to spend the cold months -- November - February -- in Italy. Naturally, before anything else, I will settle in Capri, which left many precious memories bound up in me. Thus I live with the hope of soon seeing you. I would like to live inexpensively in Capri, as my family will remain in Chernihiv; the children are studying, and that requires assistance. I'm relying on the help and advice of my dear Maria Fedorovna to whom I'm writing separately.

¹ These observations gave M. Kotsiubyns'kyi material for his story of Hutsul life "Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors".

² Existed in Kiev; then called "The Association for Aid to Scholarship and Art."

How is your health, dear Aleksei Maksimovich? Are you working on "Kozhemiakin", don't tire yourself out with too much work, are you sleeping well, are you taking walks? I would like to know everything about you and would be very grateful if you would write me, in Chernihiv, at least just a few words as I will be leaving home on the first of August.

I am now living with the ethnographer Hnatiuk¹ who asks that I send you his greetings and wants to know if folk tales from the lives of the "Opryshki" -- roughneck robbers, the peoples' heroes of Hutsulshchyna (The Carpathians) -- interest you. He could send you a collection of such stories.

Good health. I heartily embrace and kiss you, Au Revoir.

Greetings and best wishes to all of yours and Konstantin Petrovich.

Yours,

M. Kotsiubyns'kyi

XXI

M. Peshkova - M. Kotsiubyns'kyi

Dear Mikhail Mikhailovich,

Thank you for remembering and for the congratulations as well as the good wishes. We often mentioned you and regretted that you were not with us. We went on some kind of big "Pesca" and caught an enormous shark about two and one-half meters long; present in it were about four companions! It's a pity that you and your children were not there! Lodgings can, of course, be found.

- 1) Weber's board and lodgings if you remember -- on Piccola Marina, there you may have a room facing south and full board -- rather decent -- for five Lira a day.
- 2) An apartment with a servant for 100 Lira (it is understood without lights and heat). Very clean and a well-furnished apartment. In addition, one may have a very nice table at Gaudeamus¹. Two courses for breakfast and three for dinner for 90 Lira a month with wine.
- 3) Rooms in the Villa Pasquale are from 25 - 30 Lira each. In addition to these one will naturally always be able to find other lodgings, particularly during the winter months.

Dinners from Gaudeamus¹ could be brought to your home.

¹ Volodymyr Mykhailovych Hnatiuk (1871-1926) a well-known Ukrainian ethnographer and publicist.

Generally one may settle comfortably on Capri for 200 - 225 Lira, but it's obvious that one could do it much cheaper. For example, if you take one meal from Gaudeamus' and in the morning eat eggs, milk and fruit or anything of that kind. Then in Piccola Marina itself two rooms with a kitchenette are being let for 60 Lira; board may be had at Filomen's, who keeps a small restaurant; there they don't know how to prepare a variety of dishes but everything served is fresh and quite tasty.

So -- you are always welcome, we'll be waiting for you and I suspect that our beautiful Capri will not be found wanting.

From the bottom of my heart I wish you and your whole family well.

Maria Peshkova.

13/VIII - 911.

XXII

M. Gorki - M. Kotsiubyn'skyi

Dear Mikhail Mikhailovich!

I'm very happy that you finally have decided to come here! It's a good thing.

You'll sit here and write about the Hutsuls, and we -- will publish. Some very pleasant people have come here, there is a very good musician, interesting artists, and writers drop in from time to time.

This summer is the hottest in years and -- the bathing -- is magnificent. It's a pity that you will come too late to take a dip in the sea.

To Hnatiuk -- a bow and best wishes. If he sends the book -- I'll be very grateful.

Hrushevs'kyi has come out in the Russian -- Muscovite -- language, in the first volume -- what a mind and what a great European.

I'm in a hurry to get to the sea. I have been sitting behind a desk too long and am getting tired.

We are waiting for you!

Wishing you the best of health!

Regards to Oksana and the whole family. M. F. -- writes.

A. Peshkov.

XXIII

M. Kotsiubyns'kyi - M. Gorki

17/X - 911 Chernihiv.

Dear Aleksei Maksimovich!

I've just read in the papers that, owing to deteriorating health, you are going to Cairo for the winter. Although I got used to everything connected with your name during the absurd newspaper scare, I naturally hope that the last news, carrying similar fabrications, has appeared and all anxieties are over.

How are you feeling, dear Aleksei Maksimovich! I beg of you -- write me a few words about yourself and if you have no time then perhaps Maria Fedorovna will be so kind as to inform me about your health.

The fact that for a long time, there has been no sequel to "Okurov" disturbed me. Now I'm slowly putting two and two together and worried.

Several times I began to write to you, but was very busy, hurrying to finish my "Hutsuls"¹ in order to have the opportunity to go to Capri for the winter. I'll depart during the first days of November, approximately between the fifth and tenth, meaning that we will soon see each other and that fills me with sincere joy. I already miss you. Out of respect, I won't begin to explain myself to you for even without it you know my feelings for you and your family well.

I am unable to write more at the moment, being rushed by newspaper items. I heartily kiss you and wish you health, only health. I kiss the hand of dear Maria Fedorovna with a feeling of respect and devotion. My whole family sends you sincere wishes to quickly return and greet Maria Fedorovna.

Yours,

M. Kotsiubyns'kyi

I am impatiently waiting for a reply.

¹ "Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors".

XXIV

M. Gorki - M. Kotsiubyns'kyi

[Capri, 5. 11. 911]

Dear Mikhail Mikhailovich!

The newspapers are, of course, howling. I am as healthy as can be and am not going to Cairo, but have been waiting for you -- yet since early October. Some people from the Carpathians were also waiting for you but left, as you didn't arrive in time.

The end, "Kozhemiakin" is at the publishers -- as you see, everything is in order!

I'm reading Russian newspapers and burning up with anger, with shame and with anguish. And to think that there can be found among Russian journalists, valiant people who call Italy a "lunatic asylum".

We teach everyone and everybody, but learn nothing. Everywhere people are coming out as judges, and yet so "competent", that to tell the truth, it's embarrassing to live here and have to look the Italians in the eyes.

But, you come all the same. I'm waiting impatiently!

Greetings to the family, I shake your hand.

A. Peshkov

XXV

M. Peshkova - M. Kotsiubyns'kyi

Dear Mikhail Mikhailovich.

You promised to send me a postcard while on the way home so that we would know how you were travelling -- and here there isn't any news from you -- it isn't nice to forget friends so quickly, there's a fine fellow for you!

Tomorrow, your doctor, Boris Aleksandrovich is going home to Moscow -- this very Sunday morning.

I haven't had any news from Aleksei Maksimovich til now, except telegrams stating that he is apparently in good health and well. Perhaps, God grant, he will soon be on his way back home.

The weather here remains cool, but clear, the roses have blossomed, the tulips and geraniums are in full bloom. -- today we planted your cucumbers. Don't forget to thank Vira Iustinovna for me, please!

Well, keep well and write about yourself. My sincere regards to your mother, Vira Iustinovna, Iuri, Oksana, Iryna, Roman and you yourself.

Your devoted servant,

Maria Peshkova.

24/6.IV.912

XXVI

M. Peshkova - M. Kotsiubyns'kyi

[Capri, 17.5.12]

Dear Mikhail Mikhailovich.

We were very pleased to receive a few lines, first from Oksana -- the darling and later from you and Vira Iustinovna. Just what I thought has happened, you are indisposed! Well, thank God, that now those bad times are passing and you will completely recover during the warm, summer days.

A. M. returned some time ago. He remained in Paris three weeks and they compelled him, as you perhaps know, to read for an evening session there, at which there were about 6,000 people. It is quite natural that he returned with a cough and bronchitis, as there were unprecedented cold spells there as now there is unprecedented heat.

Now he is again sitting uninterrupted working, being continually upset, of course, trembling and he speaks now even more, in view of the danger of possible complications, of a war with Turkey, etc. etc. Material affairs remain in these circumstances even still worse, which may be the natural result of idle living in Capri by the head master and manager of all business. The situation may be summed up as being the same as before, but these are naturally trifles, compared to greater, common problems.

A sad event happened here, the husband of A. N. Kolpinskaya shot himself in Florence for unknown reasons, but more than anything from various material misfortunes and failures -- you most likely remember her. The authoress, whom I advised not to bother Aleksei Maksimovich ... I feel very sorry for him, he was a very fine man, and perished so tragically!

At the moment she's in Florence, and her debts are naturally here ... Oh my God, how pitiful it all is, my dear Mikhail Mikhailovich!

I want to thank you for Iuri; not long ago he wrote me a long letter; saying that because of exams he is now working very hard. There will be thirty-four of them, and how they will turn out -- who knows, but -- I'm worried!

Well, keep well! I warmly grasp your hand, regards to you, V.I., your mother and all your children. Write about yourself, when you have the inclination and from the bottom of my heart I wish you all the best.

Aleksei Maksimovich, of course, sends sincere greetings.

Maria.

I'll probably receive the money any day -- it hasn't come yet. I'll let you know when.¹

XXVII

M. Kotsiubyns'kyi - M. Gorki

15/V - 912 Chernihiv.

Dear Aleksei Maksimovich!

Disregarding my promise, I didn't write you because of illness. Nevertheless, I was with you spiritually all the time and (this is not sentimentality) missed you. All the time I had a feeling that you would not last long enough for me to see you. I would give anything for the opportunity of seeing you again.

Is everything the same as before, you being a prisoner in your office, having so little free time? I believe that summer will not allow you to overwork, that the sea and fishing will demand their rights. Yes, all my hopes are placed on the fish.

Have you read Zavety?²

I haven't seen it; they haven't sent it to me. Basing my judgments on the contents of the first book, published in newspapers, I may conclude that all conversations with paper victors, about whom I warned Hrushevs'kyi and others, are stuck between the book shelves of your office and there they remain. It may seem strange but even then I had such a feeling of foreboding. Only I didn't want to annoy you with my doubts. You know that broad mindedness and honourable relations with people, regardless of the nationality they belong, can be found in only a few select people. The majority regard that question with indifference.

¹ The money was ^{borrowed} from M. F. Peshkova by M. Kotsiubyns'kyi before departing from Capri for Chernihiv in March, 1912.

² A monthly which began publishing in St. Petersburg in April, 1912.

On what are you now working, dear Aleksei Maksimovich? That is not idle curiosity on my part. Here I am becoming engrossed with your story "Tri dni" (Three Days). Even a soured, disappointed reader in contemporary literature will be captivated. And for me it's such a pleasure, as if I myself had written "Tri dni".

By the way, you somehow expressed the wish to send anything at all, even a small paragraph to Ukrainska zhizn'.¹ If you haven't changed your mind, send it. It's very important for the journal and for us all.

I have already begun to work. I have written two stories and want to try to put my impressions of Capri in order.

I'm again thinking of going to visit the Hutsuls in the middle of July, to observe life and collect material for my stories. If it could be possible, it would be such a pleasure to come to Capri for at least a week!

So, keep well. I heartily kiss and embrace you. Relax more. My whole family sends you their regards and best wishes.

Do not forget, yours.

M. Kotsiubyns'kyi

Could you not send me the address of I. A. Bunin?

¹ A monthly, published in Moscow in 1912, in which Gorki published his article: "About the Russian Intelligentsia and national questions". in No. 9, 1912.

XXVIII

M. Gorki - M. Kotsiubyns'kyi

[Capri, 5. 6. 12]

I received your wonderful letter, Mikhail Mikhailovich, — and I became a little sad, you see I also am used to you and like you very much. Are you not planning to come here again? It has become so beautiful here.

The fish — does not help. She lures, but I don't go. I'm sitting at home and writing various things. Now I'm occupied with the "International League", attempting to establish a world-wide organization of all peoples for some kind of a planetary parliament. The basic idea of the league is presented by Wilhelm Ostwald in his article; "Universal Brain"; now they, Ostwald and Demel, have both drawn up a "proclamation", — it will probably be printed in Zaprosy zhizni.

Surguchev lived here at my place for about a month, in your room — Have you read "Gubernatora"? Tell me how you like it. I think the author has good inclinations.

Zavety (Precepts) — have annoyed me greatly and I will not have anything to do with them anymore. So — we will confine ourselves to one "pas", oh "The Rus people, the sun's children", a clumsy people.

I'm writing something in Ukrainskaya zhizn', cautiously approaching one theme, but I don't know if I can cope with it.

Why are you always visiting the Hutsuls, are we worse than them? It's a pity. Move here, you will bask in the sun. I ought to interrupt this letter — I want to send it off today, and it will soon be — time.

Regards to everyone, M. F. also.

I firmly grasp your hand, keep well.

A. Peshkov.

Bunin's address is: Moscow, Stolovyi Pereulok, D. Muromtseva. We received the money — thank you and greetings to everyone.

M. F.

XXIX

M. Peshkova - M. Kotsiubyns'kyi

[Capri, 31, 7.12]

Dear Mikhail Mikhailovich,

I don't know myself whether you're home at the moment but I'm writing there as I know that Vira Iustinovna will forward my letter and postcard to your place of residence.

How are you getting along?

Iuri has come home and we often mention your name which is very pleasant for us.

Not long ago we went on a grande pesca and regretted that you were not with us.

How is your whole family getting along, — although we are not personally acquainted, it seems to me that I know them all through you, and that all the sorrow and joys of your family are not strange to us.

Presently there is a mass of people on Capri, one group of Russian artists numbered 17 men! And our Aleksei Maksimovich has left, as usual, for a time in Allasio, and his absence, as always, is felt by all. They await his return with great impatience.

When do you think of again being on Capri? How are you feeling? I'm so ill at ease for not being able to secure all that comfort and care for you as if I wanted it myself, although I know that you, out of your own goodness, do not censure us and would not visit if something was wrong.

All of us from small to big, who know you, send you many regards and wishes for the best.

We still have two pigeons and four puppies, in the orchard three kittens and in a large cage — four show offs. My "family" is growing.

Keep well, don't forget us, write about yourself. Sincere greetings to your wife, mother and children, I shake your hand amicably and respectfully.

M.

XXX

M. Gorki - M. Kotsiubyns'kyi

Dear Mikhailo Mikhailovich!

The journal Sovremennik will be revised as of January, 1913. In that journal I would like to provide freedom of opportunity to federalist ideas and to wide regional independence. You know my views on that score.

I'm turning to you with a request: isn't it possible to place an article in the January or February issues of Sovremennik on the theme "Cultural questions of Ukraine"? Therefore, an essay on the history of Ukrainian literature would be necessary. The articles must be of a pedagogical character and calculated to capture the attention of a broad section of public opinion. Please help, Mikhailo Mikhailovich!

How did you spend the summer and how is your health? It was very interesting here during the summer; a large number of Russians arrived here, one group of artists numbered seventeen men! Among them were very talented people, having written some beautiful works.

There were writers who, like Sasha Chernyi, proved to be a very modest, pleasant and intelligent man. Evgenii Aleksandrovich Liatskii, the author of a book about Goncharov, and publisher of Chernyshevski's tragic letter, a very outstanding person. And still many other people, who were interesting in various ways.

The summer was bad; mythical, somewhat vague and hot. But that did not stop us from living, it only prevented us from enjoying ourselves.

We often talked about you, and you did not send one letter during the whole summer!

Many regards to your family.

Keep well and help Sovremennik. Send the manuscripts to the editorial office. Haven't you a story? Don't show it, so that it may be translated from the Ukrainian?

I firmly grasp your hand.

A. Peshkov.

Capri. 1912.X.7

M. Kotsiubyns'ky - M. Gorki

9/X - 912. Chernihov.

Dear Aleksei Maksimovich!

In a letter to Maria Fedorovna I explained in detail the reason for my long silence, although you ought to have received my greetings sent to Capri from the Carpathians, at the end of July.

I don't feel well, dear Aleksei Maksimovich. I am constantly sick, continuously and severely; worst of all, — I can not work. One is left with no alternative but to try out heroic means — to lie in the hospital for a long time and submit oneself to inspection by all kinds of specialists, and so I'll leave for Kiev in a day or two.

Your letter pleased me; how good it would be if you could succeed in having your program printed in Sovremennik! That would be new and significant, the need for it is now recognized by many. I naturally sympathize wholeheartedly and am prepared to help. Even today I am making a copy of the material that will be necessary for you. I am presently informing you that I'll send you the material as soon as I receive a reply. I'm confident that you will have both articles by the specified date.

I have no new stories at the moment as I didn't write all summer, I travelled to the Carpathians for research purposes, working long and successfully, collecting a large amount of interesting materials for my stories but all that is now being hidden and I don't know when I'll be in condition to begin working. Naturally, it will be a pleasure to send you the first thing that I write. But how I miss you and your works! I haven't read anything since "Three days", although I did hear rumours that you worked during the summer. Cheer me up with any kind of news, even if it originated earlier in Berlin rather than in Russia. You know how much pleasure it will bring me.

I also heard that your reply to the journal's questionnaire was published in Ukrainskaya zhizn' and I'm waiting with great impatience, to see it, but unfortunately the last book of Ukr. zhizn' has been held up somewhere and I'll have to wait a few days.

I have decided to fulfill my promise to you (you asked about it yourself) and send something for the jubilee collection in honour of Franko. For the time has already come and manuscripts are arriving at the address: Austria, L'viv (Lemberg), 21 Supins'ki St., The Shevchenko Scientific Society, Iv. Kryvets'kyi. Remind Iv. Alek. Bunin about it?

I would like to see you very much even if for a short time. It seems that I would be cured with one meeting. Do not forget me, dear Aleksei Maksimovich. My permanent address — City of Chernihiv. I want to know how you are feeling, are you in good health, and what are you doing.

My whole family sends you warm greetings and best wishes.

I kiss and embrace you sincerely.

Yours,

M. Kotsiubyns'kyi.

M. Gorki - M. Kotsiubyns'kyi

Dear Mikhail Mikhailovich!

I'll send the stories to L'viv in a day or two, they are already finished, but there is no time to make the final corrections.

Just as Andrianople is surrounded by the Bulgarians, so am I with various affairs and they are all increasing; I'm depressed under pressure from them. We organized a library and museum on the history of the struggle for liberation in Russia — that business should have been started long ago and it has begun only now.

And then — the journals. My Russian countryman felt an "uplifting of the soul" and wishes "to direct his problems to their natural solution", as one clever joker writes me. Everyone everywhere wants to publish journals: in both capitals, in the provinces, and in the outlying districts, while complaining, that they haven't any money for the journals. In other words — "the business" — is a heap! It is necessary to write all of them a letter, proving that without money you won't even taste cabbage.

I'm very sorry that you weren't here during the summer, — very sorry! Although the summer itself was not extraordinary — wonderful people had come here and now we are having glorious weather; so unusually bright, calm and pleasant, one day — it rains, the wind is blowing, followed by three, four days of beautiful summer weather, it's even strange!

I'm following events in the Balkans very closely, hoping that the Slavs will all gain from the results. And along with that, I'm anxious for Rus'. — All the more anxious. In line with signs of doubtless animation, some kind of painful process of disintegration is taking place, one feels as incurable fatigue. I'm working now. I wrote five small stories about the past, — you know the subjects of almost all of them.

In Moscow a book of "Tales" is being published, I'll send it when it comes out, they will appeal to you. Soon Alekseich's story will come out, — how will the reader like it?

On the whole — I'm living as always, but I'm not living, I'm either sitting behind a table or behind a writing desk. When ever will it come to the point that I'll fall on the floor and lie there motionless for two months.

I wrote the article for Ukrainskaya zhizn' badly and I'm ashamed. But how the great Russian patriots rail against me for it! I envy them — for, having so much free time, they are able to write in length and in detail.

Keep well, dear Mikhail Mikhailovich!

Regards to your family.

A. Peshkov.

2/XI. 912.

XXXIII

M. Kotsiubyns'kyi - M. Gorki

26. X. 1912 (old calendar) Kiev.

Dear Aleksei Maksimovich!

Have you and Maria Fedorovna received my letters, sent not long ago from Chernihov?

I have finally been taken to Kiev and placed in a clinic like a "wretched heart patient". However, sometimes I feel fine and at times I ache all over. What fine people visit me everyday, bringing me everything I like — flowers, books and themselves. The same sun that's shining in my window, is warming you — and that makes one feel warm and pleasant.

The article for Sovremennik on the topic of cultural questions was promised by S. A. Efremov, who competes with you on details. Please write to Prof. A. S. Hrushevs'kyi, (brother to the historian, Prof. M. S. Hrushevs'kyi) about Ukrainian Literature. How are you getting along? Write and send me anything you've published. Make me happy. My address: Kiev, Bibikovskiy Boulevard, No. 17, University Clinic of Prof. Obratsov. I kiss you both and am waiting for news.

Yours,

M. Kotsiubyns'kyi

Yesterday, I felt very ill, the death of a very close friend -- N. V. Lysenko has grieved me.

Vladimir, Nik., Leontovich sends greetings to you.

XXXIV

M. Kotsiubyns'kyi - M. Gorki

December 1st, 1912. Kiev.

(Bibikovskiy Boulevard, 17. Clinic of Prof. Abramtsov, Room No. 9.)

Dear Aleksei Maksimovich!

I swear, by that patch of grey sky accessible to me, which most likely hangs blue over you, that I was presently preparing to reply to you, but "ill fate" follows fast on my heels and wrecks all my plans. While in bed I managed to catch pleurisy and some other kind of painful filth -- it was even necessary to have a morphine injection, in general -- swinishness. They had already decided to allow me to sit for half an hour in a chair, I was so happy and suddenly -- I'm again no better off than before.

It's bad. But enough about sicknesses.

I can imagine how energetically you were preparing for the voyage on the Sovremennik, recruiting a crew, laying in supplies, getting up steam. And I, of course, am glad to help you in any way I can. A. S. Hrushevs'kyi agreed to prepare an article on Ukrainian literature for Sovremennik by the 20 - 25th of January and asks that I inform you about it. S. A. Efremov -- has already been a month in Moscow -- Petersburg, but will soon be back then I'll certainly have a talk with him concerning the article on the topic of "Ukrainian - Russian relations".

I was deeply moved by the beautiful part of your letter written on occasion of the death of Lycenko.¹ Allow me, dear Aleksei Maksimovich, to share in print those few lines with Ukrainian readers. They are very beautiful.

¹Between letters XXXIII and IV there is missing a letter from Gorki, where he writes Kotsiubyns'kyi concerning the death of M. V. Lycenko.

I'm waiting with impatience for the promised "Tales". I know that they will bring me much happiness in my "house".

I have already replied to the letters of Alekseich and Bor. Alek., but they are silent, perhaps they are too lazy. I send regards to them.

I feel that I've written you something incoherent. But that's not important. It's only important (for me, naturally) that you should know that far away there is someone, who sincerely admires you, thinks of you, and wants to see you with all his heart. I kiss you. How is your health?

Regards and best wishes to the most respected Maria Fedorovna.

Do not forget,

Yours,

M. Kotsiubyns'kyi.

XXXV

M. Kotsiubyns'kyi - M. Gorki

29.XII.912

Kiev, Universitetskaya
Klinika.

January 11, 1913.

Dear Aleksei Maksimovich!

I kiss and embrace you and I wish you health in the new year so that you may work as successfully as you did in the last.

Thank you for your wonderful letter and for the "Skazki". I received both publications without hindrance and read them at once with great pleasure. How much love there is for the common man, what a comprehension of his soul and understanding of nature. What a magnificently brilliant book! And if I haven't quenched my thirst after reading it (as I once promised you) then the reason for it will be a *Vie Maggiore*.² I'm not giving up hope of drinking together with you, in honour of the "Skazki", a bottle.¹

I'm turning to you, dear Aleksei Maksimovich, for advice and the reason for having decided to disturb you is that I have been unable to find K. P. Piatnyts'kyi's address. The fact of the matter is that Konstantin Petrovich, after over a year having gone by, has not communicated with me either personally or by letter concerning an offer from Znanie to publish the third volume of my short stories. In the meantime the Moscow "Writers' Publishing House" requests that I publish with them on more favourable terms. Therefore, being unable to locate Konstantin Petrovich, I'm turning to you with the request that you put an end to my doubts and tell me whether it would be inadvisable on my part to transfer from Znanie to The Writers'...

Although I'm unfamiliar with your motives, I'm, nevertheless, encouraged by the fact that you published your "Skazki" not at home but in Moscow.

What a pity that I'm unable to be with you! I'm literally grieving for you and for Capri. Please extend to I. A. Bunin and Vira Nikolaevna my sincere greetings and good wishes; I'm writing Aleksei Aleksievich, Boris Aleksandrovich and Ivan Egorovich. I'm ending this letter, feeling tired, as can be noticed by my handwriting. Once more I greet you from the bottom of my heart. Do not forget.

Yours,

M. Kotsiubyns'kyi.

And I always continue to lie here -- a series of small improvements and serious relapses -- I don't know when I'll be strong enough to receive permission to breathe some fresh air.

¹In an article by Hryhoryi Matviichuk, entitled "Capri stories of Gorki and Kotsiubyns'kyi, p. 104, published in the literary journal Zhovten' No. 3, 1968, this paragraph ends with the words "a flask of Viapso".

²*Vie Maggiore* -- Italian, probably *viemaggiore*--much more.

XXXVI

V. Kotsiubyns'ka - M. Peshkova¹

My dear, good, Maria Fedorovna!

I personally value your goodness and sincerity and on behalf of my family and myself I want to extend to you my unbounded gratitude for your sympathetic consideration for us.

Mikhail Mikhailovich always lived with the reminiscences of all Capricians and especially with yours, Maria Fedorovna. He was very distressed that he didn't have your picture and when, on one of my trips to the doctors in Kiev, I, on that occasion, brought your postcard picture, he was unspeakably happy.

Slowly failing and suffering terribly, he, during a moment of relief, made plans for the coming trip to the Caucasus and grieved very much that he would never see Capri or all of you, people very dear to him, living there. What a terrible illness, and what a martyr he was, not losing consciousness to his last breath and from time to time begging that someone help him to end his suffering. And together with that, such a thirst for life! His beloved work...children...would not let him go, he wept, wept often, and heartfelt grief tortured him. How terrible it all was!

One feels sorry for the children, who are at the age when they especially need a father more than anyone else. -- the poor things suffered deeply, experiencing the first terrible sorrow and feeling somewhat helpless. Exams have now distracted them a little.

The old blind mother² is only now experiencing her deep loss, perpetually mourning for Mikhail Mikhailovich and creating a terrible, distressing home situation. Thus we are all still living with our recent experience, where hope and despair struggled, finally -- the deep loss -- all this fills our life.

Once again, thank you, dear Maria Fedorovna.

I will never forget you.

I wish you happiness.

Vira Kotsiubyns'ka.

27th April, 1913.

¹ This letter was written after Kotsiubyns'kyi's death.

² Hlikeriia Maksimivna Kotsiubyns'ka, the mother of the author.

XXXVII

M. Gorki - V. I. Kotsiubyns'ka

12 or 13 25 or 26 April, 1913, Capri.

I know that words of sympathy are unnecessary in your sorrow. I respectfully greet you...and warmly hug the children...

Ukraine has lost a great man, -- she will remember his good work long and well.

XXXVIII

M. Gorki - M. Kotsiubyns'kyi

Dear Mikhail Mikhailovich!

Would you please dine with us today and tell me -- if you know -- the name, and patronymic of professor Sumtsov.

It is necessary for me to know!

A. Peshkov.

XXXIX

M. Peshkova - M. Kotsiubyns'kyi

Most respected Mikhail Mikhailovich!

We are now going to Piccola Marina to catch fish. Would you like to come with us? We would be very happy to have you.

M. Peshkov.

XL

M. Peshkova - M. Kotsiubyns'kyi

Most respected Mikhail Mikhailovich!

Yesterday evening our son, Zinovi Alekseevich, and Aleks. Nik. Tikhonov, about whom you have already heard a lot, has returned home. From everyone -- greetings to you.

At this time Aleksei Maksimovich is preparing to read his new story.

Would you like to come and listen to it?

I shake your hand.

Maria Peshkov.

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