LESKOV INTO ENGLISH
ON TRANSLATING СОБОРЯНЕ
(CHURCH FOLKS)

by

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ABSTRACT

After discussing variant approaches to translation and the characteristics of Nikolai Leskov’s prose, the study analyses the language in excerpts selected from Leskov’s novel-length chronicle, Соборяне. The samples illustrate the range of Leskov’s prose, including straight exposition, archaic language, colloquial language, and the skaz or frame story. Existing translations of these passages in English, French and German are analyzed and suggestions made for translations into English that capture as much as possible of the feel and nuance of the Russian original. The study concludes with a discussion of what is lost in the translation of language in the idiosyncratic style of a writer like Leskov.
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INTRODUCTION

One should translate only poems he cares very much for; poems he has been living with, more often than not, for many years. He translates partly out of dissatisfaction with the versions he has seen—not out of the certainty that he can do better, but out of a feeling he can at least do them differently… (John Frederick Nims)

Leskov was not a poet, and Соборяне is not poetry. But Leskov’s prose shares with poetry many of the characteristics that make the latter notoriously difficult to translate. And, in fact, Leskov for long was poorly served by his English-language translators. Except for the stories in the volume edited, and for the most part translated, by Professor William B. Edgerton (Satirical Stories of Nikolai Leskov, Pegasus, New York, 1969) most English translations of Leskov failed even to approximate Leskov’s intricate, inventive, idiosyncratic style. It was not until 2010, when this study had been completed, that an acceptable English translation of Leskov’s Соборяне was published.

Indeed, Leskov presents the translator with a much more difficult task than do the other great Russian prose writers of the nineteenth century. As Dmitrij Tschižewski remarked, “Er vermag … seine Sprache auf verschiedenen Wegen so zu bereichern wie keiner seiner Zeitgenossen.”

Richness of language is Leskov’s salient trait; it is the

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basis of his claim to literary greatness; it has defied most of his translators. This, more than any other single factor, explains Leskov’s neglect in the English-speaking world. Some perceptive critics have doubted that Leskov’s most characteristic language can be translated at all. D. S. Mirsky, for example, observed:

Leskov’s most striking originality lies in his Russian. His contemporaries wrote in a level and even style, avoiding anything too striking or questionable. Leskov avidly absorbed every unexpected and picturesque idiom. All the various forms of professional and class language, every variety of slang, were welcome to his pages. But his special favorites were the comic effects of colloquial Church Slavonic and the puns of “popular etymology.” These effects are of course untranslatable.”

But Mirsky’s discouraging judgment seems too categorical. Certainly no translator can capture all the rich nuance and overtone of Leskov’s language. Much of it, however, can be reproduced. One need only examine Edgerton’s translation of “The Steel Flea,” or Hugh McLean’s rendition of “Night Owls” to be convinced that malapropisms and the puns of folk etymology can indeed be conveyed in English.

This study, therefore, proceeds from the assumption that Leskov’s language is in fact translatable to a significant degree. The questions posed are how and to what degree. These questions cannot be answered in the abstract, but only from a detailed examination of concrete texts. These texts have been chosen from Leskov’s most important longer work of fiction, Соборяне, and have been selected so as to provide examples of the most characteristic traits of Leskov’s style and language. The passages will be studied to determine (1) what Leskov’s words convey to the Russian reader; (2) how other translators have rendered them; and (3) how they might be translated into English.

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5 Edgerton, op. cit., pp. 25-56 and 242-327.
recognizing that no translation can be considered final or definitive. This procedure should permit us to make informed judgments regarding how much of Leskov can be conveyed in English and to what degree of success.

Соборяне has been selected for this study for a number of reasons. First, it is the most artistically significant of Leskov’s longer works of fiction. Many consider it his masterpiece, and even those who feel that Leskov’s shorter works are sufficient to place him among the great artists concede that Соборяне is a fine and perhaps great work of art.⁶ Second, it contains representative samples of almost every stylistic device and linguistic peculiarity on which Leskov’s reputation rests. One can, therefore, base a study of Leskov’s language and style on this work without serious lacunae. Third, while one could also base a study of the translatibility of Leskov’s language on various shorter works, there is an advantage to dealing with excerpts from a single work. One of the problems facing the translator is reconciling rapid shifts of language and technique with the requirement for some sort of artistic unity in a given work. This problem can be perceived in its full dimension only in the context of a longer work containing disparate stylistic devices.

Finally, and perhaps decisively, there is a personal reason. I have, in Nims’ words, “lived with” Соборяне for many years, have found it a constant source both of delight and of insight into important aspects of Russian character and society. I was long distressed by the lack of a decent English translation of this classic. After all, the English-speaking reader can grasp the sweep and vitality of Tolstoy’s major novels, can be stirred by Dostoevsky’s psychological insights, and can enter the fin de siècle world of

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⁶ See, for example, Hugh McLean’s comments in his Nikolai Leskov, the Man and His Art (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), pp. 191-192.
Chekhov’s Russia, yet, for the reader without Russian, Leskov remained for well over a century hidden under the bushel of translation. Even though Margaret Winchell’s 2010 version is a vast improvement over its predecessor, Leskov’s language is so idiosyncratic that a close study of how previous translators dealt with the text may cast additional light on the text and suggest routes to further improvement. Translation of classical texts are best considered works in progress. It is hoped that this study and discussion of Leskov’s language in Соборяне can be helpful in evaluating the Winchell translation and also in suggesting approaches for the translation of other Leskov works not yet accessible in English.

Соборяне was published in 1872 in serial form in Katkov’s Russian Messenger and also in a separate book edition. It was composed over a six-year period, however, during which it underwent two name changes and substantial alteration of scope and concept. When Leskov began writing the work in January 1866, he had in mind a vast fictional history of several generations representing the major classes of eighteenth and nineteenth century Russian provincial society. By the time Соборяне was completed, it had been trimmed drastically to concentrate on the three members of the clergy in Leskov’s fictional Stary Gorod or Stargorod (Old Town), a small town which, one can infer (though the point is never made explicit) is located in Leskov’s native Orel Province. Other parts of the intended “history” were spun off into separate stories or never completed. Nevertheless, the final text is studded with references to characters and

events in the broader work, which are sometimes explicable only in terms of Leskov’s original concept. Therefore, we should take a cursory look at the publication history.  

Leskov began publication of what was eventually to become Соборяне in 1867 under the title Чающие движения воды (Waiting for the Moving of the Water). The title was taken from John 5:3 and refers to the scene at the pool of Bethesda where the infirm were waiting for an angel to stir the water, since the first to step in after the moving of the water would be cured. The three installments that were published recount the history of the Old Believer community in Stargorod, tell the story of Kotin Pizonsky, introduce Archpriest Savelь Tuberozov and Deacon Achilla, and include an early version of Tuberozov’s diary. Of the portions dealing with the Old Believer community, only a few names survive like fossils in Соборяне, but Tuberozov’s diary, in revised and expanded form, comprises a key segment of it. Publication of Waiting for the Movement of the Water was broken off after the three installments appeared, following a dispute with the publisher.

A substantial portion of Waiting for the Movement of the Water was slightly revised and published separately as a short story entitled “Котин доилец и Платонида” (Kotin the He-Cow and Platonida) in a collective volume of Leskov’s writings. The main character of the story, Kotin Pizonsky, appears briefly but significantly in Соборяне.

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8 While most of the comments which follow are based on a comparison of the various texts cited, I am indebted for several details to Thomas A. Eekman, “The Genesis of Leskov’s Soborjane,” California Slavic Studies, Vol. 2, pp. 121-140 and Hugh McLean, op. cit., pp. 173-190.


10 М. Стебницкий, Повести, очерки и рассказы (Спб., И. Тиблен, 1867).
The next abortive version of Соборяне appeared in 1868, when two installments of “Божедомы” (Dwellers in God’s House) appeared in the Literary Library, a minor journal that collapsed in bankruptcy after it carried the second installment.11 “Dwellers in God’s House” was subtitled “Episodes from the Unfinished Novel Waiting for the Movement of the Water,” and it omits the history of the Old Believer community and the story of Kotin Pizonsky, beginning instead with an introduction of the Stargorod clergy, then proceeding to cover the dispute over the walking sticks and Tuberozov’s diary. It thus corresponds in content to Book One of Соборяне, although Leskov made extensive stylistic revisions in the text between 1868 and 1872, when the complete work finally appeared. “Dwellers in God’s House” is, in effect, an intermediate draft of the first part of Соборяне. Leskov made strenuous efforts to place the work in another journal, but none were successful until he managed to sell it to Katkov in 1872.

Meanwhile, Leskov continued to utilize other parts of his original chronicle in separate works. “Old Times in the Village of Plodomasovo” and “The Plodomasovo Dwarfs” appeared in journals and in a volume of short stories in 1869.12 These deal with members of the nobility and their serfs. Boyarinya Marfa Andreyevna Plodomasova, whose history is recounted in the first, reappears in Соборяне, and the story of the Plodomasovo dwarfs was included in toto (with only minor stylistic revisions) in the later work.

After publication of Соборяне, Leskov turned once again to the provincial nobility in his A Decrepit Clan, but after the publication of three installments and a

11 Литературная библиотека, №№ 1 и 2, 1868.
12 Сын отечества, №№ 6-9, 1869; Русский вестник, № 2, 1869; Рассказы М. Стебницкого (Спб, И. Тиблен, 1869).
heated dispute with the publisher over editorial changes, Leskov stopped publication and ceased work on it. His grandiose plan to re-create all of Russian society in the microcosm of one town, with which he began in 1866, thus produced, finally one novel-length work (Соболяне) and several shorter pieces, most uncompleted. While the latter are of interest in themselves, it is clear that Leskov fell far short of his original aspiration. One can only agree with McLean’s observation that “The task of representing historical successivity within a series of generations seemed to tax Leskov’s powers beyond their capacity.”

As a result of the long struggle to complete and publish Соболяне, and the extensive changes Leskov made in the work during the six years of its composition, a number of ragged edges remain. Some dates are illogical, events of more than one year are attributed to the same one, some characters are introduced without adequate explanation or background in the text, and the like. Given the structure of the work, however, with its succession of anecdotes irrelevant to the main plot (but usually of importance for character development), these mistakes are hardly noticeable to the reader who does not search for them specifically.

Numerous alterations were also introduced into Leskov’s manuscript by his editors, either to prevent trouble with the censors or because some passages were distasteful to the publisher. These changes have never been studied systematically,

13 Русский вестник, №№ 7, 8, 10, 1874. Fifteen years later, Leskov revised and “completed” A Decrepit Clan for his Collected Works. The revisions, however, weakened the work artistically. See McLean, op. cit., pp. 268-270.

14 Ibid., p. 190.

15 These errors are listed in Thomas Eekman, op. cit., pp. 135-137.
though Russian scholars have called attention to them. Such cuts as have been noted in published scholarship and are relevant to an understanding of the final text will be discussed subsequently when we discuss the passages in question.

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By the time Соборяне finally appeared, Leskov had been publishing fiction for ten years, though his reputation was still precarious. He had, to be sure, written at least two short stories which deserve to be considered masterpieces—“Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk” and “The Battleaxe”—but the novels completed before 1872 (No Way Out, The Bypassed, and At Daggers Drawn) were deserved failures. The latter were shrill polemics against nihilism, and though not devoid of talent, were more akin to propaganda tracts than works of art. Until 1872, Leskov’s style had simply not jelled.

With Соборяне, Leskov found a vehicle which allowed him to display his strong points—his linguistic originality, talent for anecdote, and ability to create strong characters, while minimizing his weaknesses, such as plotting an intricate novel. It was his first and, as it turned out, only successful novel-length work. He was careful not to call it a novel, seeming to recognize that his talent was not suited to that genre as then understood. In labeling it a “chronicle,” he freed himself from the constraints of the “well-built novel” and left himself scope to string together tales and anecdotes extraneous to the ostensible plot.

But Соборяне is not merely the first of Leskov’s longer works to succeed artistically. It is also a repository of most of the stylistic devices and many of the themes that he employed later to create a series of masterpieces: the frame story or skaz, the use of highly individualized language for his characters, and the attraction to the eccentric and unusual, to name a few.

For a period, Соборяне was Leskov’s favorite among his works, although he occasionally referred to it disparagingly following his alienation from the Orthodox Church. In 1875, for example, he wrote his friend Pyotr Shchebalsky that he would no longer write it the same way.\(^{17}\) Still, he gave it pride of place in his collected works of 1889-90,\(^{18}\) which seems to indicate that it held a special place in his affection even after his rejection of Orthodoxy and enlistment among the Tolstoyans.

Соборяне is the only major work of nineteenth-century Russian literature that deals primarily with the Russian Orthodox clergy, and does so in sympathetic fashion. But this alone does not explain its survival as a classic. Соборяне continues to find devoted readers because of its vivid portrayal of three remarkable characters, Archpriest Savely Tuberozov, Deacon Achilla Desnitsyn, and the dwarf Nikolai Afanasyevich, and—most of all—because of the power of Leskov’s language. The challenge to the translator is to capture as much as possible of that quality.

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\(^{17}\) Н. С. Лесков, Собрание сочинений (Москва, 1958), т. Х, стр. 411-412.

CHAPTER ONE
APPROACHES TO TRANSLATION

Vladimir Nabokov held an emphatic view of translation (as he did of many other subjects). In the foreword to his monumental translation and annotation of Pushkin’s *Eugene Onegin*, he described “attempts to render a poem into another language” as falling into three categories:

1. **Paraphrastic**: offering a free version of the original, with omissions and additions prompted by the exigencies of form, the conventions attributed to the consumer, and the translator’s ignorance. Some paraphrases may possess the charm of stylistic diction and idiomatic conciseness, but no scholar should succumb to stylishness and no reader fooled by it.

2. **Lexical (or constructional)**: rendering the basic meanings of words (and their order. This a machine can do under the direction of an intelligent bilingualist.

3. **Literal**: rendering, as closely as the associative and syntactical capacities of another language allow, the exact contextual meaning of the original. Only this is the true translation.19

Upon examination, Nabokov’s definitions are less clear than the vigor of his assertions would suggest. Where do we draw the line between paraphrase and adapting one language to the “associative and syntactical capacities” of another? And what, precisely, is the “contextual meaning of the original”? Does it refer just to the immediate lexical context, or to the context in a broader sense, including the function of the word, phrase, sentence, or passage in the work as a whole? Nabokov’s own view was severely restrictive, as he made clear when he wrote, “In fact, to my ideal of literalism I sacrificed everything (elegance, euphony, clarity, good taste, modern usage, and even grammar).

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that the dainty mimic prizes higher than truth. Now “truth” is certainly the Holy Grail of the translator’s quest, but can we so lightly sacrifice all the qualities on Nabokov’s list as inevitably irrelevant to the truth of a literary work?

I think not. And, indeed, Nabokov’s Onegin translation, for all its lexical precision and the informative erudition of its annotation, does not convey to the English reader the magic of Pushkin’s art. Without at least a glimmer of that magic—which indeed can never be rendered in its totality in another language—the truth of the work is absent.

Aside from the deficiencies of Nabokov’s Onegin translation, his approach is open to objection in a more general sense. In sacrificing everything on the altar of semantic literalism, Nabokov seems to assume that there are precise equivalents to be found when moving from one language to another. Yet this is certainly not the case. As Edward Sapir put it:

The fact of the matter is that the “real world” is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group. No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached.

The translator must mediate between two different worlds of experience and expression, and his task is infinitely more complex than merely replacing one set of labels with another.

Mindful of Valéry’s dictum, “Fidelity to meaning alone is a kind of betrayal,” John Frederick Nims suggested a more suitable goal than Nabokov’s literalism: “To write

\[20\text{ Ibid, I, x.}\]

poems that will show, to some degree, what certain poems in another language are like.”

Expanding this suggestion, Nims continues:

The right question to ask about a translation of poetry is not “Is it faithful?” but “Does it produce an equivalent effect?” It seems excessive to demand of the poor translator that, since he is working with one of the greatest of lyrics, he must give us, as its equivalent, a lyric that will rank with the greatest in English—and then to condemn the translation as inadequate because it falls short of that demand.

Nims’ approach, which is as applicable to prose as it is to poetry, leads in a more productive direction than Nabokov’s. If the translator does not attempt to reproduce the effect of the original in another language, then what valid aim can he have? And yet, if we attempt to define “equivalent effect,” we encounter serious problems. The aim is presumably to produce an effect on contemporary speakers of one language equivalent to that of the original on speakers of its language. But neither effect can be determined precisely, and not only because each individual will experience a work of art in ways that are unique. Even if one puts individual variations aside, it is obvious that the translator can never re-create in his mind, feelings, and experience all the elements, the total environment, of the author’s artistic consciousness, much less that of the author’s original readership. Thus, it would seem that the epistemological problem in determining “equivalency” is inherently insoluble.

Nevertheless, one might object, we are dealing with art, not mathematics or precise philosophical reasoning. While we may be able neither to define, nor—if we could—to determine “equivalency” in an ultimate sense, the term has a useful, commonsense validity, and it is a mistake to strain for a degree of precision incompatible with art itself.

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22 Nims, op. cit., p. 306.
Perhaps. But George Steiner charted a path that may lead us out of the dilemma posed by the inadequacies of Nabokov’s approach and the imprecision of Nims’ equivalency. In a nuanced analysis of the translation process, which he calls “the hermeneutic motion, the act of elicitation and appropriative transfer of meaning,” Steiner focuses on the dynamics of the process rather than on the techniques employed. Steiner’s “hermeneutic motion” encompasses four elements; an investment of belief in the seriousness of the text, an incursive and extractive move, an act of incorporation into the receptor language, and, finally, the enactment of reciprocity, which when successful enhances and illuminates the original work.  

Further, in Steiner’s words:

> The work translated is enhanced. … Being methodical, penetrative, analytic, enumerative, the process of translation, like all modes of forced understanding, will detail, illumine, and generally body forth its object. … Where it falls short of the original, the authentic translation makes the autonomous virtues of the original more precisely visible. … Where it surpasses the original, the real translation infers that the source-text possesses potentialities, elemental reserves as yet unrealized by itself. … The ideal, never accomplished, is one of total counterpart or repetition—an asking again—which is not, however, a tautology. No such perfect “double” exists. But the ideal makes explicit the demand for equity in the hermeneutic process.

Steiner’s fourfold concept of the hermeneutic motion permits him to redefine “fidelity” in terms consistent with Nims’ “equivalency”:

> Fidelity is not literalism or any technical device for rendering “spirit.” The whole formulation, as we have found it over and over again in discussions of translation, is hopelessly vague. The translator, the exegetist, the reader, is faithful to his text, makes his response responsible, only when he endeavours to restore the balance of forces, of integral presence, which his appropriative comprehension has disrupted. Fidelity is ethical, but also, in the full sense, economic. By virtue of tact, and tact intensified in moral vision, the translator-interpreter creates a condition of significant exchange. The arrows of meaning, of cultural and psychological benefaction, move both ways. There is, ideally,

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24 Ibid., pp. 300-302.
exchange without loss. In this respect, translation can be pictured as a negation of entropy; order is preserved at both ends of the cycle, source and receptor.\textsuperscript{25}

Steiner’s approach also allows us to transcend the traditional distinctions of translation theory (of which Nabokov’s are but a variant). As Steiner puts it:

\begin{quote}
This view of translation as hermeneutic of trust (élancement), of penetration, of embodiment, and of restitution, will allow us to overcome the sterile triadic model which has dominated the history and theory of the subject. The perennial distinction between literalism, paraphrase, and free imitation, turns out to be wholly contingent. It has no precision or philosophic basis. It overlooks the key act that a fourfold hermeneia, Aristotle’s term for discourse which signifies because it interprets, is conceptually and practically inherent in even the rudiments of translation.\textsuperscript{26}
\end{quote}

Steiner’s concept of a four-fold hermeneutic motion provides a framework for approaching the task of translation and offers some purchase on the slippery slope that confronts the translator. It does not, however, provide a map or tactical manual for reaching the goal. Nabokov’s approach, however unsatisfactory, had the virtue of establishing a priority to which all else would be sacrificed. Yet, this “virtue” became a flaw. As Steiner observed in the passage above: each of the traditional approaches to translation has only contingent validity, and attempts to adhere rigorously to any one are bound to rip the translation from its moorings in the original text.

To ask at the outset whether a translation should be “literal” or “paraphrastic” is to pose the wrong question, for the method of translation used can only be determined in the dynamic interplay of judgments involved in the process of assimilating a text in one language and reconstituting it in another. In poetry (to which, along with scripture, most commentary on translation is specifically addressed) elements such as rhythm, sound and measure take on an importance equivalent to, and sometimes greater than, the lexical

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., p. 302. \\
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., p. 303.
\end{flushright}
definition of the words. No element has absolute pride of place. In a process that can never yield a definitive result, the translator must balance off inevitable sacrifices so as to preserve as much of what a poem is as is possible using alien materials in an alien milieu.

The translator of prose normally works under fewer formal constraints than does the translator of poetry, but the process is in principle identical. He or she must first grope toward a thorough understanding of the text itself, in terms of its language and culture. Having thus assimilated the work, the process of reconstitution begins. And it is crucial to determine not only what words, phrases and sentences “mean,” but how they function in the work. Does the fact that a phrase is laconic have functional relevance? If so—as will almost inevitably be the case—then semantic precision should not be sought in discursive verbiage. Are there interior rhythms of alliteration crucial to the effect the passage produces? If so, a method must be found to approximate the effect in the other language. Is an image one which carries different connotations in the receptor language? If so, a different image must be selected to achieve a similar effect. In short, the translator of prose should no more sacrifice everything to an ideal of semantic literalism then the translator of poetry.

The final element in Steiner’s fourfold process recognizes one characteristic of effective translation which is often ignored or decried by critics and theorists. This is the element of reciprocity, which in part implies that the language of the translation is altered in the direction of the original language. On the most superficial, but immediately obvious, level, this involves incorporating words characteristic of the alien culture which have no equivalent in the other. When done successfully, and in the context of sufficient contact of the cultures to produce frequent repetition, such words often pass into the
vocabulary of the other language, thereby enriching it. English, of course, has acquired
the bulk of its literary vocabulary by borrowing, and the process continues apace. The
language is enriched in its precision and expressiveness when words like gaucho, samurai
and toreador, not to mention chaise longue and pizza, come into common use.

The process of bending a language in the direction of another can occur in a more
profound and comprehensive sense than scattered lexical borrowings. Even when direct
translation is not involved, the style, syntax—even grammar—of a foreign language can
be imitated: we can speak meaningfully, for example, of Milton’s Latinate or Carlyle’s
Germanic style. Some translators have gone so far as to try to force their language into
the mold of the other (Browning’s *Agamemnon* in “Greek English” and Chateaubriand’s
*Paradise Lost*, which incorporates English syntax and principles of word formation, are
cases in point), but such extremes of purposeful imitation are rarely, if ever, successful.
Still, this should not obscure the point that some “bending” is not only inevitable, but in
fact desirable, since it can, when properly and judiciously employed, facilitate the
reader’s understanding of the original and expand the potential of the receptor language.

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In dealing with Leskov’s *Соборяне* the translator must bridge two gaps, in
different dimensions: the distance of time which separates the language and culture of the
1860s and 1870s from that of Russian speakers today, and the distance of language and
culture that separates English speakers from Russian speakers. In theory, one could
dispose of the gap in time simply by translating Leskov into the English of the 1870s,
forcing the reader to exercise the same interpretative understanding he does when reading
English or American literature of that period. But such a procedure is neither possible in
practice nor desirable if it were. The English language of the 1870s cannot be the native
language of any living person; any attempt to reconstruct it would result in, at best, an
imperfect approximation. Practicality aside, such a procedure would not fulfill the goal
of translation, which is to reconstitute an alien literary work in a form accessible to the
reader of today. The translator has no choice but to cope simultaneously with both gaps.

While the translator need not, indeed should not, attempt to imitate English of a
mid-Victorian vintage (or American of the Reconstruction Period), she must be acutely
conscious of the time dimension. In the first place, she must avoid the use of current
neologisms and turns of phrase that have a contemporary ring. The language must *seem*
consistent with the work’s nineteenth-century setting. In the second place, the translator
must distinguish between Russian which is obsolete today but was not in Leskov’s time,
and words and expressions that were already antiquated when Leskov used them. In the
first instance, the locutions would be stylistically neutral (at least in respect to
obsolescence), while in the second, one should attempt to reproduce the stylistic effect of
deliberate archaism.

Ultimately, of course, the historical dimension and the synchronic linguistic and
cultural dimension cannot be unraveled into separate and discrete strands. The translator
must move diagonally, as it were, from nineteenth-century Russia to the English-
speaking world of the twenty first century. In so doing, the temptation to resort to
explanatory notes to help bridge the gap becomes intense. Sometimes notes are indeed
essential and often they can be used to amplify obscure details in the text. Annotation,
however, should not be confused with translation. The aim of translation should be a
work which, in and of itself, conveys to the English-speaking reader what the original
would if the reader knew Russian.

Impossible? Of course. The translator’s goal is like a lodestone always located
somewhere over the horizon. It cannot be reached, but it provides a sense of direction to
keep the translator on course.
CHAPTER TWO

STRUCTURE, STYLE AND LANGUAGE

Even Leskov’s admirers have often charged him with indifference to structure and to stylistic unity. V. S. Pritchett, for example, wrote that Leskov “shambles into his tales without embarrassment, indifferent to technique.” Leonid Grossman expressed a more sweeping negative judgment when he wrote:

Despite his great talent for insightful portrayal, the author of Соборяне did not manage to achieve stylistic unity or a consistent literary tone. The varied and uneven material, presented in an unsystematic and unruly manner, detracts from the magnificence of the pictures, images, and landscapes he describes, scenes that remind the contemporary reader of the best Nesterov canvases.

Even Leskov’s language, considered by most to be his strongest gift, has not pleased all: Lev Tolstoy, for example, wrote that Leskov was intoxicated and carried away by “an exuberance of images, colors and characteristic expressions.”

The translator need not play the critic, but the “investment of faith” which comprises the first phase of Steiner’s hermeneutic motion implies an overall critical judgment that the work in question will repay the attention required to understand it and to reconstitute it in another language. The second phase, the leap of understanding or élanement toward the text, requires a close and thoughtful examination of the work in an effort to discern the author’s purposes as well as to assess his achievement. Though a detailed critical analysis of Соборяне lies outside the scope of this study, a summary glance at its most salient features will facilitate our subsequent discussion.

28 Леонид Гроссман, Н.С. Лесков. (Москва, ОГИЗ, 1945), стр. 159.
**STRUCTURE**

I shall not truncate some events and inflate the significance of others. The novel’s artificial and unnatural form, which demands a well rounded central theme, will not force me to do this. Life is not like that. A person’s life proceeds like parchment being formed on a roller, and I shall develop it just as simply, like a ribbon, in my jottings.

N.S. Leskov

In this way Leskov expressed his attitude toward the novel as a genre in his “Years of Childhood.” And these words are as applicable to Соборяне as they are to many of Leskov’s other works. In particular, they explain why he so carefully avoided labeling Соборяне a novel but called it a “chronicle”—or, at times, a “novelistic chronicle.” He needed the freedom to recount events as they occur in life, to go off on tangents when it suited him, at the very least to apply a test of relevance broader than the line of plot.

Соборяне has a simple plot, though it combines and interlaces two stories. The first traces Archpriest Tuberozov’s efforts to exert a moral influence on his community, his conflict with the church and secular authorities which his activities engender, his “martyrdom” at the hands of the church, and his ultimate reconciliation with his God and peaceful death. The second follows the comical escapades of the elemental giant, Deacon Achilla Desnitsyn, whose naïve and unquestioning faith is shaken by his contact with nihilists, then restored by Tuberozov’s influence—and who also dies with his once

30 Н.С. Лесков, Собрание сочинений, т. 5, стр. 279.
turbulent spirit finally at peace. The third member of the Stargorod clergy, Father Zaharia Benefactov, is little more than a foil, an incarnation of meekness that accentuates the vigor of the other two.

The plot, however, is only a small element in Leskov’s design of the work. His aim was to create a few remarkable characters in the milieu of Russian provincial society, and in this context any incident that casts light on the personality of his characters or on the nature of the society in which they lived is germane, whether or not it has a direct bearing on the plot.

Leskov divided his chronicle into five parts of varying length (from 28 to 121 pages in the 1957 Collected Works), which in turn were subdivided into chapters, usually of three to five pages. Chapter V of Part One, however, which contains extensive excerpts from Tuberozov’s diary, runs to 55 pages, but is itself subdivided into individual entries listed by date. Leskov seems to have established these divisions with great care, and indeed they play an important structural role in providing guideposts through what might otherwise seem a jumble of irrelevant anecdotes.31

Thomas Lee Aman pointed out that each of the five parts portrays a certain stage in the creation and resolution of the central conflict.32

Part One introduces the characters, provides information on Tuberozov’s past relations with the church authorities and other characters in the narrative, and presents the

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32 Thomas Lee Aman, “Structural Features of Leskov’s Soboryane and His Stories of the 1860’s” (Diss., Toronto, 1968), pp. 53-54.
conflict between Achilla and Barnaby, thus setting the premises from which the problem ensues.

**Part Two** covers Termosesov’s arrival, the gathering of hostile forces, and Danilka’s forced denunciation, which sparks the conflict.

**Part Three** opens with Tuberozov’s disturbing conversation with his friend Tuganov when the latter portentously labels him a “maniac,” follows further machinations of the hostile forces, contains the storm scene that crystallizes Tuberozov’s resolve, resulting in his daring sermon, and ends with Tuberozov’s arrest, thus bringing the conflict to its climax.

**Part Four** heightens tension by describing the ineffectual efforts of Tuberozov’s friends to assist him, diverts the reader with the ludicrous name-day party for the postmaster’s wife, and initiates the process of resolution with the death of Tuberozov’s devoted wife.

**Part Five** completes the resolution, describing Tuberozov’s truce with the church authorities, Achilla’s crisis of faith resulting from his contact with “intellectuals” in Saint Petersburg, Tuberozov’s death, and finally Achilla’s triumph over his “devil” and his death following his exertions.

Leskov structured each of the first four parts to lead logically into the next, sometimes by comments from the omniscient narrator (Parts I and II) and sometimes by the implicit logic of the action (Parts III and IV). Care is also evident in the segmentation into chapters since each contains a passage with an internal unity: an event or a segment of an event, an anecdote, a scene-setting picture, or—in the case of the diary—an elaborate flash-back.
To point out that Соборяне was divided into logical segments does not refute the charge by Grossman and others that the work lacks unity and consistency or that Leskov yielded too often to the temptation to insert anecdotes as curiosities rather than as integral parts of the narrative. While these judgments have some foundation, they are overdrawn. Indeed, if we examine the passages most often cited as irrelevant digressions, we find more often than not that they do serve a purpose in the narrative. For example:

- The dispute over the walking sticks and the “lampopo” party not only illustrate the point that trivial disagreements often take on an importance far from trivial for the participants, but more importantly elucidate Deacon Achilla’s psychological dependence on Father Savely and also suggest Achilla’s vulnerability to blasphemy when under mental stress. Without these passages, Achilla’s subsequent brief flirtation with apostasy following his trip to Petersburg would seem wholly out of character.

- The “bathing scene” in Part One, Chapter VI serves as a transition from the flashback represented by the excerpts from Tuberozov’s diary to the period of the narrative. It also provides one of the few scenes in the book of the normal tranquility of provincial life, on the background of which the other events took place, and to which they are placed in contrast.

- The “dwarf’s tale” in Part Two, Chapters III and IV, adds depth to the characterization of the dwarf Nikolai Afanasiyevich, who was to play a significant role in negotiating Tuberozov’s release from detention by the church authorities. While Leskov’s primary motivation may have been simply that he (and his

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33 For example, see Anan, op. cit., p. 67.
readers) liked the story, its place in the overall narrative is not negligible. With this passage, the dwarf’s subsequent actions become more understandable and believable; without it, Nikolai’s interventions on Tuberozov’s behalf would have partaken of a *deus ex machina.*

- The name-day party for the postmaster’s wife (Part Four, Chapters IV to XI), while serving to maintain tension over Tuberozov’s fate and demonstrating the incapacity or unwillingness of most of his friends to assist him, is much too long and does contain wholly irrelevant elements, such as Poverdovnya’s poem to Mme Mordokonaki.

In short, if we apply a broader standard of relevance than the plot line itself, as Leskov clearly intended, we find that many of the passages that seem digressions from the framework of the well-made novel are indeed important to Leskov’s overall concept. Though one cannot seriously argue that no anecdotes could be removed without irreparable damage to the whole, it is important to bear in mind that one feature of Leskov’s technique was to pile on incident and anecdote in apparently haphazard fashion to give the illusion of the flow of life, with all its irrelevancies intruding upon and impinging upon the main concerns of its characters. It is equally characteristic of him to

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34 Some have cited a statement Leskov made in 1870 in a letter to the publisher A.S. Suvorin to the effect that the anecdote had no connection with the novel and even could be removed in the interest of the main theme (*Собрание сочинений*, т. 10, стр. 276). However, Leskov made this statement while defending himself in a lawsuit filed by the publisher Kashpirev, which accused him *inter alia* of selling an integral part of “Dwellers in God’s House” to another publisher. It was thus in Leskov’s material interest to argue before the court that the passage was not essential. The argument should not be accepted as Leskov’s considered literary judgment. His action in including the passage in *Соборяне* years later speaks louder.

35 The name-day party in *Соборяне* resembles so closely Yulia Mikhailovna von Lembke’s fête in Dostoevsky’s *The Devils* that some scholars have assumed that Leskov wrote the passage in imitation of Dostoevsky’s powerful *scandale* (e.g., Vsevolod Setschkareff, *N.S. Leskov: Sein Leben und Sein Werk* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1959), p. 77).
juxtapose the farcical with the serious, the trivial with matters of great importance, the
sacred with the profane. To reproach Leskov for these characteristics is to reproach him
for being himself.

Leskov might well have chosen the following passage from Sterne’s Tristam
Shandy (one of his favorite books) as his own motto:

Digressions, incontestably, are the sunshine;--they are the life, the soul of
reading!—take them out of this book, for instance,—you might as well take the
book along with them;--one cold eternal winter would reign in every page of it;
restore them to the writer;--he steps forth like a bridegroom,--bids All-hail;
brings in variety and forbids the appetite to fail.\textsuperscript{36}

\textsuperscript{36} Laurence Sterne, \textit{The Life and Opinions of Tristam Shandy, Gent.}, Book I, Chapter 22.
STYLE AND LANGUAGE

A writer’s characters must speak each in his own language, one natural in his position. For if these characters speak in a language not natural to their position, no one can recognize them, who they are and what their social position is. To establish a “voice,” a writer must master the voice and language of his character and not flip from alto to bass. I have tried to develop this ability and believe that I have succeeded in making my priests talk like priests, my nihilists like nihilists, and my peasants like peasants. … As for myself, I mix the language of ancient folktales and that of religious people with the standard literary speech. For this reason, one can now recognize every article of mine, even if I do not sign it. … That lower-class, vulgar and mannered language in which many pages of my work are written was not composed by me but overheard from the peasant, the semi-educated, glib babblers, holy fools and hypocrites.37

That is how, according to Anatoly Faresov, Leskov described his approach to language. In so doing, he implicitly defines the most serious problem for the translator, since the idiolects he has created (or, as he would have it, adopted) for his characters belong that that realm of language least susceptible to imitation in another language. It is a language more easily analyzed than reproduced. Still, careful analysis is an essential step in understanding the use of language in the text. The German scholar Wolfgang Girke produced the most systematic study of Leskov’s language, which is relevant to Leskov’s technique in Соборяне even though it draws only on the language in Leskov’s shorter works.38

Girke employs the concept of stylistic “layers” in language, proceeding from a base point of a “neutral” layer, which he defines as the form of the language in which the

37 А.И. Фаресов, Против течение (С.Пб.: М. Меркушев, 1904), стр. 273-274.
written and spoken are identical.\textsuperscript{39} Tschiżewski suggested that these layers can be indicated numerically by designating the neutral layer as zero and using positive integers for the more bookish and elevated forms (\textit{e.g.}, +1, +2, +3) and negative numbers for the lower forms.\textsuperscript{40} Girke adopts a more nuanced scheme which makes it possible to distinguish different types of language which are approximately equidistant from the “neutral” layer. To present this concept schematically, he adapted to Russian the table offered in the 1959 edition of the \textit{Shorter Oxford English Dictionary}. These two diagrams are presented for comparison:

\begin{center}
\textbf{Diagram of English from \textit{SOED}\textsuperscript{41}}
\end{center}

\begin{center}
\begin{tikzpicture}
\draw[->] (0,0) -- (0,3);\node at (0,0) {COMMON};\node at (0,3) {Archaic};\node at (0,1) {Literary};\node at (0,2) {Foreign};\node at (-1,0) {Scientific};\node at (1,0) {Technical};\node at (-0.75,0.75) {Colloquial};\node at (0.75,0.75) {Dialectical};\node at (-0.75,-0.75) {Slang};\node at (0.75,-0.75) {Vulgar};\end{tikzpicture}
\end{center}

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{40} Dmitrij Tschiżewski, \textit{Über die Eigenart der russischen Sprache} (Halle, 1948), p. 41.
\textsuperscript{41} \textit{Shorter Oxford English Dictionary} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959) p. viii. This diagram is a slight adaptation (“vulgar” and “archaic” were added) of the one originally published in the \textit{Oxford English Dictionary}, Vol. I, p. x).
\end{footnotes}
The diagrams help us to visualize some of the distinctions which the translator must bear constantly in mind. They are far from definitive, however, and their shortcomings must be recognized from the outset if they are to be of value. First the stylistic categories in one language are no more identical to those in another language than are the meanings of words or the function of the various formal elements of language. Second, even within a given language, the diagrams imply a sharper distinction among various types of language than is actually the case: many of the categories in fact overlap—and not with just the “neighboring” categories but also with “distant” ones, in such fashion as to make precise delimitation a hopeless exercise. Finally, by its concentration on “stylistic layers,” Girke’s diagram fails to take account of other features critical for a translation. He excluded, for example, stylistic designations that relate primarily to the emotive force of a word or expression rather than its sphere of

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42 Girke, op. cit., p. 11.
usage (Verwendungsbereich). The important distinction between language that is understandable to the entire speech community and that which is understood fully only by subgroups is relegated to a separate, though simpler, diagram. Some of Girke’s categories must be subdivided in various ways if they are to be of real assistance (e.g., “Buchsprache” includes both literary diction and bureaucratese, two very different types of language).

As Girke is careful to point out, the conception of “Umgangsprache” in German is broader than that of “разговорный язык” in Russian, and embraces much of what Russians would call просторечие or вульгарный язык. The same is generally true of English, and we have no handy terms that convey, without substantial potential for misunderstanding, the various layers of spoken Russian. Russian scholars usually restrict the designation “colloquial” (разговорный) to the language spoken by educated persons to other educated persons. Просторечие is preeminently the language of the peasantry and what used to be called the “lower classes” in the towns and cities, but Soviet scholars, perhaps fettered by ideological bias, were less than forthright in describing it that way. ССРЛЯ, for example, gives two definitions for просторечие: (1) conversational words and expressions used to make deprecating or coarse references to the object of discourse, and (2) “simple conversational, unaffected speech,” with characteristics cited in the first definition, or “the speech of simple (i.e., uncultivated) people” (речь простого народа).

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43 Girke, op. cit., p. 7.
45 ССРЛЯ will refer throughout the study to: Академия наук СССР, Словарь современного русского литературного языка (М-Л: Издательство Академии наук СССР, 1950-65).
The line that distinguishes просторечие from разговорный язык is in many instances fuzzy, and that dividing просторечие from вульгарный язык is even more indistinct. Essentially, “vulgar” is a subcategory of просторечие, the vocabulary of which is considered coarse, insulting or off-color by typical Russian standards; the adjectives normally applied to “vulgar” words and phrases are пошлый and грубый. It, therefore, must be distinguished from the meaning of “vulgar” in “vulgar Latin,” as used in both English and Russian.

In Russian, народный язык is sometimes used as a synonym for просторечие. It also has a more specific meaning, however, which is not covered by Girke’s diagram. That is, the language of traditional folktales and folklore. It crops up in both the top (poetic and archaic language) and bottom (просторечие) halves of Girke’s chart.

In his chart, Girke seems to lump “archaic” and “obsolete,” and equates both with Church Slavic. One must distinguish, however, between words and expressions that are merely obsolete (and may or may not be of Church Slavic origin) from those archaisms (usually Church Slavic) that have a special coloration, such as overtones of scripture, liturgy, or the high poetic style of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. An author may use the first to convey an old-fashioned atmosphere, or to suggest pedantry. Use of the second type of archaism, however, conveys in addition the specific historical coloration of the word.

Girke classifies slang as the “lowest layer” of spoken language, but does not list it separately on his chart since he considers slang a subcategory of “special language” (Sondersprache), the language of in-groups, not generally intelligible to the population at
Since Girke’s “layers” of language are preeminently based on perceived social status, it would seem that slang can derive from any of them. For example, much of the slang of bureaucrats will stem from acronyms; that of clerics from ecclesiastical or biblical prose. Also, though much slang may originate as a linguistic code within a particular group, it frequently passes into wider usage and becomes part of the common medium of communication.

Finally, Girke’s chart omits—though his study does not—one very important characteristic of Leskov’s prose, his use of invented words, words in distorted form, and malapropisms. These words are usually part of the idiolects of persons for whom просторечие is the natural idiom, but they are distinct from the latter.

In sum, Girke’s chart is helpful in portraying graphically some of the stylistic distinctions that they translator must note. Leskov’s use of language is, however, much too complex to be reduced to a single two-dimensional chart, or even a series of them. The interplay of linguistic material is both multidimensional and dynamic.

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Leskov stands in contrast to the other great Russian writers of the nineteenth century in his willingness, indeed compulsion, to draw heavily on all the resources of the Russian language as it was spoken in his day. To put it in terms of Girke’s chart, a statistical count, by stylistic category, of the language employed by Turgenev or Tolstoy, or even Dostoevsky, is likely to show a heavy concentration along the middle axis (literary and educated colloquial) with only occasional use of other forms. Dostoevsky’s

46 Girke, op. cit., p. 9 and 203f.
language might well demonstrate somewhat greater frequency in the просторечие range, and Saltykov’s and Ostrovsky’s even more so, while Gogol’s would doubtless have a salient into the dialectical. But Leskov’s language would cover the chart to all corners, and its frequency along the center line would be much more sparse than that of any of his great contemporaries.

As we saw earlier, Leskov himself spoke of the language of his characters as “mannered” or affected (манерный). Yet this is an adjective that can be applied not only to the language Leskov used to reproduce the speech of a narrator other than himself, but—in a somewhat different sense—to his style when writing in his own name. As Academician Alexander Orlov observed:

When speaking in his own name, Leskov did not use the literary language most common with the intelligentsia—a language which was straightforward, devoid of rhetoric, concise, without superfluous complications, sometimes even a little careless and hurried, omitting what could be inferred. The language Leskov paraded before his readers was composed in the opposite spirit. It is rhetorical, leisurely, circumspect, and exhaustively specific, reminiscent of the bookish diction characteristic of graduates of ecclesiastical schools in the Filaret tradition, even with an old-fashioned, slightly Latinate syntax. 47

Orlov’s description implies that Leskov, when himself the narrator, would use language drawn predominantly from the upper half of Girke’s chart. But this is not the complete picture, since one characteristic of Leskov was his love of specificity, which led him to employ many terms drawn from the special environments of his subjects. These words and expressions are usually просторечие, “specialized language,” or dialectical, but they convey to the Russian reader in a most direct sense the atmosphere, feel—even smell—of Leskov’s characters and their surroundings. Any reader of Leskov can supply abundant examples; Orlov cites terminology from provincial everyday life, from artisans,

from Old Believer communities, from industry, from bast-shoe weaving, from lower-
class city life, and from the past.  Entirely aside from their function in providing concrete images, these words and expressions drawn from “lower” social strata and inserted into prose which was otherwise bookish and a shade antiquated create a tension of mixed stylistic levels.

The tension increases and becomes more complex if we shift attention from Leskov’s style when writing on his own behalf to the language he places in the mouths of his characters. The frame story or *skaz* was of course a favorite Leskovian device. By composing idiolects for his fictional narrators, Leskov not only characterizes the latter, but also suggests his own attitude toward his narrator, the narrator’s toward the subject of narration, and finally, Leskov’s toward the subject. As Academician Orlov observed:

Leskov’s extraordinary ability to understand the structure, essence and importance of every locution from the inside permitted him to create them with a tonal saturation in any direction and in any manner, yet each fruit of that creative act, no matter how unusual, seems not only acceptable but striking in its accuracy. The accuracy depended upon Leskov’s precise knowledge of a large number of everyday phenomena and situations, his familiarity with the multiplicity of attitudes toward life and his mastery of a truly inexhaustible font of verbal expressions which were current in the everyday life of those he depicted.

Leskov’s attention to and keen observation of the oral style of entire social worlds in their varied conditions was such that every reader is struck by the precision of the speech, as appropriate to its environment and period, even though the reader himself would not have realized this without Leskov’s help.

To achieve this, Leskov drew on the idiom of a vast array of sources: merchants, petty traders, peasants, clerics, schismatics, religious pilgrims, artisans, soldiers, the provincial nobility—in short, virtually every significant group in the Russia of his day.

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48 *Ibid.*, pp. 149-152. These citations, published from materials Orlov collected for an article still unfinished at his death, are in no sense comprehensive.

The great bulk of the language, of course, would fall in the lower half of Girke’s diagram, much of it near the bottom and along the sides.

However, Leskov did not merely copy the language of various groups, despite his claim to Faresov quoted earlier. He also made up words himself. Or he used words in a meaning not cited in standard Russian dictionaries. (Of course, he may possibly have heard some of these uttered by actual persons, but it seems likely that most were coined by Leskov himself, by analogy with observed tendencies of individuals to create and distort words or misuse the standard language.) As Orlov pointed out,\(^{50}\) we can distinguish the following types of invented or misused words:

1. New forms of words, used without comic effect (e.g., *изголовный*, *органить*, *фелдшерить*, *вздорить*);
2. Deformation of words by speakers who have not mastered them, often as the result of a faulty folk etymology; most of the words deformed in such fashion being foreign loans or Slavic words from the traditional high literary style;
3. Misuse of words from the literary language (*i.e.*, malapropisms); and
4. Alteration of archaic words whose origin is not understood (e.g., *заковычный друг*, *глазурные очи*, *толпуча*).

These types (particularly the latter three) of aberrant language are used primarily to characterize the speaker. While the first type may only suggest verbal ingenuity, the others are marks of the poorly educated and usually stem from their attempts to ape their social “betters.” The translator must reproduce their effects or else stand guilty of a

\(^{50}\) *Ibid*, pp. 165-171.
betrayal of the original. (One need only compare David Magarshak’s translation of “The Steel Flea” with William Edgerton’s to see the difference.)

In particular, the translator must be sensitive to Leskov’s creative “play” with the Russian language. In the words of the Russian scholar A.V. Chicherin, “As a writer, Leskov—more definitely than any of his contemporaries—constantly pursued the goal of enriching and enlivening not only the literary language but through it the conversational speech of the people as well.” Leskov’s translator can hardly hope to enrich his own literary language, much less popular speech, but he must convey to his reader a clear impression of Leskov’s linguistic inventiveness. This can be done only if the translator approaches his own language in a spirit of controlled playfulness, a willingness to distort words, misuse words, and indeed invent words when the text so requires.

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51 Magarshak’s is contained in Nikolai Leskov, Selected Tales (New York: Noonday Press, 1973) and Edgerton’s is in Satirical Stories of Nikolai Leskov (New York: Pegasus, 1969).

52 А.В. Чичерин, Очерки по истории русского литературного стиля (Москва: Художественная литература, 1977), стр. 288.
CHAPTER THREE

PREVIOUS TRANSLATIONS OF СОБОРЯНЕ

When this study was completed in 2009, only one translation of Соборяне had been published in English. It was by Isabel P. Hapgood, and was published in the United States in 1924 under the title The Cathedral Folk, a title which has been most commonly used by English-speaking scholars and critics.\(^{53}\) Although reprinted subsequently,\(^{54}\) this translation was not readily or widely available for decades. Margaret Winchell’s much improved English translation, entitled The Cathedral Clergy: A Chronicle, appeared only in 2010.

German readers have fared better both in terms of the number of published translations and the availability of the work. Anders G. Jarcho published a translation entitled Die Domherren in 1926\(^{55}\) and R. von Walter published another in 1956 under the title Die Priester von Stargorod.\(^{56}\) A German translation by Günther Dalitz entitled Die Klerisei was published in Berlin in 1975 and has been reprinted since.\(^{57}\) But the most widely accessible German translation is that by Arthur Luther, also called Die Klerisei. It

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55 Nikolaj Ljeskow, Die Domherren, (Leipzig, 1926).
was included in the mass paperback series issued by the Fischer Bücherei and also in the various editions of Leskov’s selected works edited by Johannes von Günther.\(^{58}\)

The only French translation in print—and apparently the only complete French translation of the text—is by Henri Mongault. Included in the prestigious Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, it has been generally and widely available in French-speaking countries.\(^{59}\)

This study will utilize the translations by Hapgood, Luther and Mongault in its analysis of translation problems presented by Leskov’s text. Luther and Mongault were selected not only because their languages are accessible to the writer and most scholars, but also because they exemplify approaches to translation different from Hapgood’s. In other words, the three translations offer us, in many respects, examples of three philosophies of translation.

Margaret Winchell’s translation appeared after this study was complete and thus has not been subjected to the systematic examination accorded the other three translations. Nevertheless, I will point out some of those instances when her translation differs both from Hapgood’s and the suggestion I would make.

Differences in the approaches employed by Leskov’s translators will become apparent in the analytical chapters of this study which follow. Even at this point, however, it may be useful to convey a general impression of these differences. Let us, therefore, take a brief passage from Соборяне and see how these three translators handled it.

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\(^{58}\) The volume in the Fischer Bücherei was published in Frankfurt am Main in 1960 as N.S. Leskov, Die Klerisei. The translation then was included in the first volume of Nikolai Lesskow, Gesammelte Werke, herausgegeben von Johannes von Günther. (Munich: Biederstein Verlag, 1969).

The following, from Part I, Chapter II, is an excerpt from Deacon Achilla’s complaint that the walking sticks presented to Archpriest Tuberozov and Father Zaharia are identical, despite the difference in rank of the recipients, and that this disturbs Tuberozov. The passage is distinctly colloquial, but does not contain words or expressions unusually difficult to translate.

Isabel Hapgood renders the passage as follows:

“He’s disturbed, in the first place, because from that absolute identity arises confusion. How do you suppose they are going to distinguish which stick is whose? Please to sort them out now—which is the father archpriest’s and which is Father Zakhariya’s? But let us assume that for the purpose of telling them apart some little mark may be applied—either sealing wax might be dropped beneath the knob, or, a little cut might be made in the wood with a knife. But what would you do with them in regard to policy? How can you take away now the value or dignity of one of them, compared with the other, when they are of equal value?”

From this passage alone we can begin to understand why observers such as Hugh McLean judged Hapgood “one of the most tone-deaf of the late-Victorian amateur translators.” The language is stilted, in places literal even at the expense of conveying the meaning. For example, “with regard to policy” in the next-to-last sentence does not convey what Achilla was suggesting.

Now, let us compare Mongault’s version:

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-- Ce qui peut le dérouter? Eh mais, bien de choses … à commencer par la ressemblance parfaite entre les deux cannes: allez donc les distinguer l’une de l’autre! … Après tout, on pourrait remédier à cet inconvénient au moyen d’un marque quelconque: un cachet de cire au-dessous du pommeau, une encoche dans le bois, tout ce qu’on voudra … Seulement, ça ne les empêchera toujours pas d’avoir la même valeur, et voilà justement le hic! Voyons, a-t-on idée de mettre un Zacharie sur le même rang que le Père Sabel?...  

This translation reads much more smoothly than Hapgood’s. It is colloquial, its meaning is clear, and it bears no traces of translatorese. But … a close reading reveals substantial rewriting of the original. Achilla does not begin by repeating the question of his interlocutor, makes no mention of “bien des choses,” and in the final sentence speaks of the walking sticks rather than of Zaharia and Savely directly.

If we now turn to Luther’s German version, we find the following:

“Es verwirrt ihn, daß erstens diese völlige Gleichheit Verwechslungen herfromt. Was meint ihr, wie soll man erkennen, wem dieser Stab gehört? Versucht es doch herauszukriegen, welcher Stab dem Probst und welcher dem Zacharia zukommt, wenn sie beide ganz gleich aussehen! Nun freilich, zur Unterscheidung ließe sich ja irgendein Zeichen anbringen—ein Tröpfchen Siegellack auf den Knopf oder ein kleiner Einschnitt in das Holz; wie steht es aber mit der politischen Seite dieser Sache? Wie soll man den Preis oder die Würde des einen gegenüber dem andern herabsetzen, wo sie doch beide ganz gleichwertig sind?”

Like Mongault and unlike Hapgood, Luther produces a colloquial passage that reads naturally. In contrast to Mongault, however, he follows the text much more literally; no passages are omitted and none added.

These passages are characteristic of the three translations. Hapgood’s suffers throughout from a failure to find the proper stylistic level, from a lack of imagination in conveying alien concepts in English, and indeed from an inability to write English that

62 Oeuvres de Nicolas Leskov et de M.E. Saltykov-Chtchedrine, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, p. 166. Hereafter cited simply as “Mongault, [page number].”

63 Lesskow, Gesammelte Werke, I, p. 296. Hereafter, cited as Luther [page].
flows naturally. Both Luther and Mongault succeed in these respects, but whereas
Mongault’s version is interpretative to the point, at times, of paraphrase, Luther’s adheres
closely to the text.
GENERAL PROBLEMS

Before proceeding to an analysis of specific passages, let us consider some of the general problems facing the translator of Leskov—and, in most cases, of literary Russian in general.

The Title: Соборяне has been translated variously as Cathedral Folk (Hapgood and most critics); The Cathedral Clergy (Reeve and Winchell); and Minster Folk (Mirsky). Соборяне is not a common word in Russian, but its meaning is clear: people connected with a собор. Russian-English dictionaries give “cathedral” as the equivalent to собор in its modern sense. (In earlier times, it could apply also to an assembly, such as the земский собор in Muscovite Russia.) In English, however, a cathedral is a church that is the seat of a bishop, whereas the Stargorod church was of more modest status: its senior cleric is an archpriest, not a bishop. Calling it a “cathedral” in English, or the equivalent in French or German, creates an image in the reader’s mind of a larger and grander establishment than the church in the small, provincial Stargorod. It was probably for this reason that both Mongault (Gens d’Église) and Luther (Die Klerisei) avoided the term. I believe they were wise to do so, and in this case I prefer Mongault’s solution to Luther’s. Although the main characters are members of the local clergy, соборяне is a vaguer term and could apply to others in the church community. My suggestion would be Church Folks—“folks” instead of “folk,” to imply that specific people are meant, not the community at large.

Transliteration: In scholarly works, transliteration presents no significant problem since it is merely a question of selecting an unambiguous system familiar to the scholarly audience. It matters little that the general reader normally associates quite different sounds with letters such as “x,” “j,” or “c” than those implied in transliteration
from Cyrillic. But translations of literature are by their nature intended for a general audience, and for it a rough approximation of the original pronunciation seems a more suitable goal than absolute precision and conformity to the original orthography. Some Russian sounds, of course, have no close counterpart in English, but one can at least strive for a spelling that is likely to result in the nearest acoustic equivalent. Consistency is no virtue if it results in unnecessary confusion for the reader without Russian.

I have, therefore, attempted to apply a commonsense approach without adhering slavishly to any particular system. Basically, I have proceeded from the system employed by the Current Digest of the [Post-]Soviet Press, which coincides in most respects with that used by serious journalists and thus is familiar to the broad public. I have routinely made some alterations to this system, however: (1) The Cyrillic “х” is usually rendered as “h” rather than “kh” since English-speaking readers tend to pronounce the latter as “k”; (2) the Cyrillic “ы” is sometimes represented by “i” when it occurs in the same word with й’s carrying the yod value (e.g., боярыня = boyarinya rather than boyarynya), and (3) “кс” is usually rendered as “x,” not “ks” and a final consonant + “r” in a name as “er” (Alexander, not Aleksandr).

I have also deviated from standard transliteration in spelling the names of two of the characters. The Deacon’s name would be spelled Akhilla in transliteration, but since his name is derived from the Homeric Achilles, I have opted to spell it Achilla. Also, Father Zaharia’s surname would normally be transliterated Benefaktov, but since it is a Latin root, I believe that spelling it Benefactov makes its derivation more obvious to the English-speaking reader.
**Russian Names:** The multiplicity of forms that Russian names can take presents one of the most vexing problems for the translator. From the use of the first name and patronymic, to that of the surname or the surname and title, to that of the patronymic alone, to that of the first name alone, either in its formal guise or in one of its many diminutives, the chosen form is of key importance in signaling the relationship of the speaker to the person mentioned or addressed. Yet, in English, the variations available to the translator are severely limited and many of the Russian distinctions are simply not felt by the English speaker.

Broadly speaking, the translator has at least three choices. The simplest is to reproduce the Russian names in the form used. Yet this can lead to confusion, since the same person may be referred to by many different forms of his or her name. Their interconnection and the logic of the selection of the specific form is often incomprehensible to one who does not know Russian. The reader, for example, is not likely to grasp that Sasha—much less Sashenka—is the Alexander Dmitrych Kolokovsky met a few pages back, and if he should be called Dmitrych, the confusion becomes total. The easy way out, then, while applicable when the variant forms are close enough to avoid confusion, is not always the best approach.

The second approach is to use the Russian names, but only in their basic form and in accord with English usage. Thus, if a student addresses a teacher as “Vera Nikolayevna,” it would be rendered “Mrs. Petrova.” This approach helps the reader keep up with the characters but loses the subtlety carried by the various Russian forms, which can be of critical importance in a work of art.
Finally, the names can be translated into standard English variants. Pyotr becomes Peter and Petya, Pete. But this has the disadvantage of wrenching the characters from their cultural environment. Furthermore, it doesn’t always work: if Vera becomes Faith, what do you do with Verochka?

Rigorous adherence to any of these approaches is likely to be unsatisfactory. What seems required is an eclectic compromise, drawing elements from each so that, in each specific context, as much of the meaning and style are conveyed as possible. The reader can certainly tolerate some use of Russian forms—indeed, is enriched thereby. But at times other devices must be employed to convey a nuance if confusion is to be minimized.

The rendering of Russian names, therefore, like the translation as a whole, becomes contingent, to employ George Steiner’s terminology. We shall search for whatever seems appropriate to the context.

**Diminutives:** Russian diminutives are a problem for the translator even when proper names are not involved. Almost every concrete noun in Russian has one or more diminutive forms, and these are particularly common in colloquial speech. Since English makes only sparing use of diminutives—and indeed some nouns lack them as normal forms—pedantic translation of every diminutive with an invented English word or qualifying adjective would obviously distort the text. In many cases, therefore, the use of a diminutive must be ignored, since to call attention to it in any manner available in English would place more stress on the distinction between the diminutive and the standard than is implied in the Russian. This is particularly true when the diminutive is a
normal colloquial alternative to the non-diminutive used in formal discourse (e.g., картошка and картофель).

Nevertheless, diminutives cannot be ignored. Sometimes the diminutive force is sufficient to require indication in the translation. Sometimes the overtone of endearment is sufficiently strong to require some English equivalent. And if a character makes frequent use of diminutives, this is a relevant personality trait that must be suggested in some appropriate fashion in the translation.

**Culture-bound References:** One of the most difficult problems for the translator is dealing with words, expressions, phenomena, and concepts for which no adequate or easily grasped counterpart can be found in the other language. Words like богатырь, предводитель дворянства, and многолетие have no equivalents in English sufficiently exact to carry the meaning without some explanation. As words of this nature appear in the excerpts analyzed below, the specific alternatives available to the translator will be examined. In general, however, the choices are limited to explanatory annotation, adding some clarification to the text itself, leaving the term in the original in the hope that the context will permit the reader to understand, or using an inexact counterpart term in English. We shall not reject in principle any of these approaches, but allow the context and function of the term or phrase lead us to the least inadequate solution, for rarely are any of the solutions ideal.

**Sentence and Paragraph Structure:** As a general rule, I believe that sentences and paragraphs should be formed according to the prevailing custom in English, so long as the original does not deviate from the norm in its language. Very long sentences in Russian that utilize inflectional concords to achieve clarity must often be
broken up in English to make antecedents clear. Contemporary English has an aversion to paragraphs that run to a page or more. Often, therefore, Russian sentences and paragraphs need to be divided in the English translation.

The translator must, however, proceed cautiously in making such changes. When long, intricately qualified sentences and long paragraphs are an essential part of a writer’s style (as they are, for example in Marcel Proust’s *À la recherche du temps perdu*) they must be retained, even if the effect contrasts with normal English usage. The translator must take care not to leave the impression of simplicity if the author sought one of complexity, nor to convert a leisurely stroll into a series of short dashes. In sum, even this seemingly superficial aspect of translation must be done with sensitivity to the author’s original intent.
CHAPTER FOUR

DESCRIPTIVE PROSE

Two passages have been selected to exemplify Leskov’s expository prose: the first chapter and the first part of the second chapter, where the main characters are introduced, and Chapters 17, 18, and 19 of Book III, which describe Archpriest Tuberozov’s experience with the thunderstorm.

Within the work, these passages are relatively neutral stylistically, since they contrast with the lengthy colloquial sections, Tuberozov’s diary, and the many stories and anecdotes told in the words of one of the characters. “Relatively” is a significant qualifier to “neutral,” however, since—as Orlov pointed out in the quotation cited earlier—Leskov’s own prose was hardly in the mainstream of Russian literary prose style. It is, indeed, leisurely, circuitous, highly specific, and couched in a distinctly old-fashioned diction. Furthermore, it is studded with unusual, obsolete, colloquial or dialectical words and turns of phrase, and at times unusual syntactic constructions—all features usually shunned or minimized by his illustrious contemporaries.

In overall tone, the two passages differ sharply. The first is relaxed and discursive, filling out mental pictures of the three main characters and their environment brush stroke by brush stroke. The second, by contrast, is tense and emotion-charged, as befits the scene marking the turning point in Tuberozov’s life.

Let us now examine the first.65

64 Page 33, above.

65 Texts are reproduced from Н.С. Лесков, Собрание сочинений. (Москва: Государственное издательство художественной литературы, 1957), т. 4, and all pagination refers to that edition. Page numbers at the bottom of reproduced pages refer to the pages in that edition. Line numbers have been provided in the left margin to facilitate references to specific words and passages.
INTRODUCING THE CHARACTERS

THE RUSSIAN TEXT

ЧАСТЬ ПЕРВАЯ

ГЛАВА ПЕРВАЯ

Люди, житей-бытие которых составит предмет этого рассказа, суть жители старогородской соборной половки. Это — протоиерей Савелий Туберозов, священник Захария Бенефактов и дьякон Ахилла Десницць. Годы ранней молодости этих людей, так же как и пода их детства, нас не касаются. А чтобы видеть перед собою эти лица в той поре, в которой читателю приходится представлять их своему воображению, он должен рисовать себе главу старогородского духовенства, протоиерея Савелия Туберозова, мужчину уже пережившего за шестой десяток жизни. Отец Туберозов высок ростом и тучен, но еще очень бодр и подвижен. В таком же состоянии и душевные его силы: при первом на него взгляде видно, что он сохранил весь пыл сердца и всю энергию молодости. Голова его отлично красива: ее даже позволялось считать образцом мужественной красоты. Волосы Туберозова густые, как гривы матерого льва, и белые, как кудри Фиднеса Зевса. Они художественно подвешиваются могучим чубом над его высоким лбом и тремя крупными волнами падают назад, не достигая плеч. В длинной раздвоенной бороде отца протопопа в его небольших усах, соединяющихся с бородой у углов рта, мелькает еще несколько черных волос, придающих ей вид серебра, отделанного чернью. Брови же отца протопопа совсем черны и круго заломанными
латинским S-ами сдвигаются у основания его довольно большого и довольно толстого носа. Глаза у него коричневые, большие, смелые и ясные. Они всю жизнь свою не теряли способности освещаться присутствием разума; в них же близкие люди видели и блеск радостного восторга, и туманы скорби, и слезы уединения; в них же сверкал по- рою и огонь негодования, и они бросали ясные гнева — гнева не суетного, не сварливого, не злого, а гнева большого человека. В эти глаза глядела прямая и честная душа протоиерея Савелия, которую он, в своем христианском уповании, верил быть бессмертной.

Захария Бенефактов, второй иерей Старгородского собора, совсем в другом роде. Вся его личность есть во- площенная кротость и смирение. Соответственно тому, сколь мало желает заявлять себя крохотный дух его, столь же мало занимает места и его крошенное тело и как бы старается не стопотеть собою землю. Он мал, худ, тщедушен и дышен. Две маленькие бусычки серо-желтеньких волосинок у него ревзаются только над ушами. Косы у него нет никаких. Последние остатки ее исчезли уже давно, да и то была хosa столь мизерная, что дыжон Ахилла узна- че ее не называл, как мышьный хлебник. Вместо бороды у отца Захарии точно приклеен кусочек губочки. Ручки у него детские, и он их постоянно скрывает и прячет в карманы своего подсвечника. Ножки у него слабые, тоненькие, что называется сломленные, и сам он весь точно склеен на соломке. Добрейшие серенькие глазки его смотрят быстро, но поднимаются вверх очень редко и сейчас же низнут места, куда бы их спрятаться от несстранныго взора.

По летам отец Захария немного старше отца Тубер- розова и значительно немощнее его, но в сн, так же как и протоиерея, привык держаться бодро и при всех посещающих его вехах и исходах сохраняли и живую душу и летнюю подвижность.

Третий и последний представитель старгородского соборного духовенства, дьячок Ахилла, имел несколько определений, которые будут величинам здесь принести все, дабы при помощи их могучий Ахилла сколько-нибудь удобнее пересказал читателю.

Инспектор духовного училища, некогдашний Ахиллу Деспицага из семиственного класса за «великолюбес- тие и малозаплешение», говорил ему:
— Эта ты дубина какая, протяженно сложенна!
Ректор, по особом ходатайствам вновь принявший
Ахиллу в класс риторики, удивився, глядя, на этого сла-гавшегося богатыря и, взумляясь его величие, сидя в
бестолковости, говорил:
— Недостаточно, думаю, будет тебя и дубиной назы-вать, поелику в моих глазах ты по малости целый воз
дро.
Регент же архипелагского хора, в который Ахилла
Десятая попала по изгнанию его из риторики и зачис-ленная на причетническую должность, звал его «непомер-
ным».
— Бас у тебя, — говорил регент, — хороший, точно
пушка стреляет, но непомерек ты до страсти, так что чрез
эту непомерность я даже не знаю, как с тобой по достоян-
ству обходиться.
Четвертое же и самое веское из характерных опреде-
лений дьякону Ахилле было сделано самим архиераем, и
притом в весьма памятный для Ахиллы день, именно в
день изгнания его. Ахилла, из архипелагского хора и по-
следник на дьяконство в Старый Город. По этому опреде-
лению дьякон Ахилла назывался «увлекаемым». Здесь
будет уместно рассказать, по какому случаю стало
ему причислятьсь сие последнее называние — «увлека-
емого».
Дьякон Ахилла от самых лет юности своей был чело-
век весьма веселый, смешливый и притом безмерно
увлекаемый. И мало того, что он не знал меры своих
увлечений в юности, мы увидим, знал ли он их меру и в
gодах своей прибывающей старости.
Несмотря на всю «непомерность» дьяка Ахиллы, мы
всегда очень дорожили в архипелагском хоре, где он хва-
tал и самого знатного верха и забирал под самую низ-
kую октаву. Однако, чем страшен был регенту непомерный
Ахилла, это — «увлекательностью». Так он, например,
во всем этом никак не мог удержаться, чтобы только
трите попеть «Свят господь бог наш», а нередко вы-
rывался в увлечении и под это один-единственный чет-
режды, и особенно никогда не мог во время окончить пения
кноголетий. Но во всех этих случаях, которые даже были
известны и которые потому можно было предвидеть, про-
тив «увлекательности» Ахиллы благоразумно приня-


лись меры предосторожности, избавляющие от всяких на-
настей и самого двояко и его важное начальство: по-
ручились кому-нибудь из взрослых певцов держать Ахиллу
за полы или осаживать его в благоположную минуту вниз
за плечи. Но недаром сложена пословица, что на всякий
час не обрежешься. Как ни тщательно и любовно берегли
Ахиллу от его увлечений, все-таки его не могли совсем
уберечь от них, и он самым развитым образом оправ-
дал на себе то теоретическое положение, что «тому нет
спасения, кто в самом себе носит врага». В один большой
из двунадцати праздников Ахилла, исполняя принять-
ный концерт, должен был делать весьма хитро базововое
сolo на словах: «я скорбен уязвлен». Значение, кото-
рое этому solo придавал рётен и весь хор, вышло на
Ахилле много забот: он был несказано, и тщательно обду-
минал, как бы ему не ударять себя лицом в грязь и отли-
читься перед любившим пение пресвященным и перед
всем губернской аристократиею, которая соберется в цер-
ковь. И зато справедливость требует сказать, что Ахилла
изучил это solo великолепно. Дни и ночи он рассаживал
то по своему комнате, то по коридору и по двору, то по
архерейскому саду или по загородному выгону, и все рас-
pевал на разные гоны: «уязвлен, уязвлен, уязвлен», и в
таких беспрестанных упражнениях дождался наконец, что
настал и самый день его славы, когда он должен был про-
pеть свое «уязвлен» пред всем собором. Начался концерт.
Боже, как велик и светло сияющий стоит с нотами в руках
огромный Ахилла! Его надо было описывать — хером
нельзя его описать... Вот уже прошли знакомые форт-
шлаги, и подходит место базового solo. Ахилла отодвига-
ет локтём соседа, выбивает себе в молчании такт своего
solo «уязвлен» и, дождавшись своего темпа, видит подня-
токуюшуюся с камертона регентскую рукуну... Ахилла поза-
бывший весь мир и себя самого и удивительным образом,
как труба архангельская, то быстро, то протяжно возвла-
шает: «И скорбен уязвлен, уязвлен, у-й-я-й-я-я-й-я-я-я-
р-р-р-р-р-р-р-р, уязвлен». Силой останавливают Ахиллу от
непредусмотренных излишних повторений, и концерт кон-
чен. Но не кончен он был в «увлекательной» голове
Ахилла, и среди тихих приветствий, приносящих владыке
подходящую к его благословению аристократиею, словно
— Что тебе такое,— спрашивают его с участием сердобыльные люди.
— Уж я знал,— восклицает, глядя всем им в глаза, Ахилла и так к остается у двери приговора, пока струя его вседура не отрезала его энзальпацию.
В сравнении с прототипом Туберозовым и своим Бе- нефактом, Ахилла Демисицкий может назваться челове- ком молодым, но и ему уже далеко за сорок, и по смоленским черным кудрям его пробежала сильная преседь. Роста Ахилла огромного, силы страшной, в манерах уложе- нет и резок, но при всем этом весьма привлек; тип лица — имеет южный и говорят, что происходит из малороссий- ских казаков, от коих он и в самом деле как будто унасле- довал бесценность и храбрость и многие другие казачьи добродетели.

ГЛАВА ВТОРАЯ

Жили все эти герои старомодного поколения стар- городской провинции, над тихой-будничною рекой Турин- цей. У каждого из них, как у Туберозова, так и у Заха- рии и даже у дьякона Ахиллы, были свои домики на самом берегу, как раз из-за низшего высшего за рекой старинного пятиглавого собора с высокими куполами. Но как разнохарактерны были сами эти обычаи, так раз- лица были и их жилища. У отца Савеллия домик был очень красивый, выкрашенный светло-голубою масляно- крыской, с разноцветными звездочками, квадратиками и репейками, прибитыми над каждым из трех его окон. Окна этиображались еще резными, ярко же раскрашен- ными наличниками и зелеными ставнями, которые, ни- когда не закрывались, потому что зимой крепкий домик не боялся холодов, и отец протопоп любил свет, любил звезды, заглядывавшую ночью с неба; в той комнатке,
любил лучный луч, полосой глаза ложившийся на его разделянный под парком пол.

В домике у отца протоиерея всякая чистота и всякий порядок, потому что ни сорить, ни пачкать, ни нарушать порядок у него некому. Он бездетен, и это составляет одну из непреходящих скорбей его и его протоиерея.

У отца Захарии Бенефактова домик гораздо больше, чем у отца Тыберозова; но в Бенефактовском домике нет того щеголства и кокетства, каким блестит жилище протоиерея. Пятноконный, немного покосившийся серый дом отца Захарии похож скорее на большой птичник, и к довершению сходства его с этим заведением во все маленькие переплеты его зеленых окон постоянно толкуются различные носы и хохлы, дружь другую открывшие и друг друга прислушивающие. Это все потомство отца Захарии, которого бог благословил яко Иакова, а жену его упомянул яко Рахиль. У отца Захарии далеко не было ни зеркальной чистоты протоиерского дома, ни его строгого порядка: на всем здесь лежали следы детских зашпаклеванных лапок; изо всякого угла торчала детская головенка; и все это шевелилось детьми, все здесь и пищало и пело к детям, начиная с занятых сверчков и окаменевшей матерью, убаюкивающе свое потомство песенкой:

Дети мои, дети!
Куда мне вас держать?
Где вас положить?

Дьякон Ахилла был взрослый бездетен и не разделял ни о стяжаниях, ни о домостроительстве. У него на самом краю заросли была мазаная малороссийская хата, но при этой хате не было ни службы, ни заборов, словом, ничего, кроме небольшой жердяковой кареты, в которой по колено в соломе бродили те легкие жеребцы, то булевый, то гулявый червонец. Убранство в доме Ахиллы тоже было чисто казачьим: в лучшей половине этого помещения, назначавшемся для самого хозяина, стоял деревянный диван с решетчатой спиной; этот диван по заменял Ахилле кровать, и потому он был ясным белой казачьей копильей, а в изголовье лежал чеканенный азиатский седловинный орел, к которому была приклонена маленькая блюдообразная подушка в прославленной китайской завозине. Пред этим казачьим ложем стоял белый людовый
стол, а на стене висела беструнная гитара, пышковый укрощенный аркан, нагайка и две вздрагивающие рукопольми уздечки. В углу на небольшой полочке стоял крошеный образок успения богородицы с вдруженное за ним засохшее вербочкой и маленький киевский молитвословник. Более решительно ничего не было в жилище дьякона Ахилла. Рядом же, в небольшой примыкалой, жила у него бестяная старушка горничная помещичьего дома, Надежда Степановна, называвшаяся Эсперансою.

Это была особа старенькая, маленькая, желтоватая, востороженная, с характером самым неожиданным и до того несносным, что, несмотря на свои золотые руки, она не находила себе места нигде и попала в службу бездомного Ахилла, которому она могла сколько угодно трещать и скакать, ибо он не замечал ни этого треска, ни скакота и самое крайнее раздражение своей старой служанки в решительных минуты прекращал только промовьет «Эсперанса, позволь!» После таких слов Эсперанса обыкновенно исчезала, ибо знал, что изве Ахилл схватит её на руки, посадит на крышу своей хаты и оставит там, не снимая, от зари до зари. В виду этого странныго наказания Эсперанса боялась противоречить своему казаку-господину.

Все эти люди жили такою жизнью и в то же время все более или менее несли тяготы друг друга и друг другу восполнили не богатую разнообразием жизнь. Отец Савелей, главенствовал над всем положением; его маленькая протопоповца чуть его и не слыхала в нем душу. Отец Захария также был счастлив в своем птичнике. Не ждался ни на что и дьякон Ахилл, проводящий все дни своих в беседах и в гуляньях по городу, или в зале и в мене своих коней, или, наконец, порой в дразнении и в укрощении своих «служащей Эсперансю».
ANALYSIS AND COMMENT

In introducing the three main characters of his chronicle, Leskov has clearly tailored his style and presentation to the characters themselves. His description of Tuberozov is stately and bookish, and even contains faint hints of the Biblical archaisms so noticeable in Tuberozov’s diary (e.g., page 6, line 11). With Benefactov, the style lightens—as does the character—and becomes at times flippant and joking, for example when the author refers to Benefactov’s “mouse’s tail” and “straw legs.” When Leskov reaches Deacon Achilla, the style becomes almost boisterous, with amusing quotes in highly colloquial language and our first full-blown anecdote.

The description of the homes of the three in Chapter Two follows the same pattern; the respective lodgings are described so that they complement and deepen the description of the characters in Chapter One. Here, also, we get a good dose of Leskov’s penchant for specific detail, and some of the words he employs are sufficiently obscure to the contemporary Russian reader as to require annotation.

This passage presents fewer problems for the translator than does much of Leskov’s prose. The main task is to introduce the unfamiliar aspects of the Russian environment in a manner both comprehensible and vivid, to preserve as much of the lexical and stylistic color as possible, while rendering the passage in English that flows naturally. But in doing so, the translator must be attentive to Leskov’s own stylistic shifts and avoid reducing the style to a uniform neutrality. To do this would truly be a betrayal of Leskov.
The following words and expressions require special attention or raise questions of general applicability.\textsuperscript{66}

\textbf{5 (1) житье-бытье: } Besides carrying echoes of the traditional “жилибыли” opening of folk tales, these words have a colloquial ring that contrasts with the formal literary diction in the rest of the paragraph. Luther translates it “Leben und Treiben,” and Mongault, “train d’existence.” Luther’s expression is very close to the original, while Mongault’s fails to capture the folksy overtone. Hapgood’s stuffy “manner of life” is even worse. “Life style” would fit the meaning well, but its faddish contemporaneity would jar. “Way of life” is more neutral, but misses the colloquialism. Is there a happy solution? Perhaps not, for here we run into a problem endemic to colloquialisms of a bygone age: much colloquial language still felt as colloquial is in fact too contemporary to fit an older text without conveying a sense of anachronism. At the price of a slight semantic shift, I would opt for “comings and goings” in this instance, since it has a folksy ring to match the original while being reasonably close in meaning.

\textbf{5(2) суть: } Obsolete today as the third person plural, present tense, of the very “to be,” (the word есть being used for both singular and plural on those infrequent occasions when this verb is used in the present indicative), it was more common in nineteenth-century prose. \textit{ССРЛЯ} provides citations of its use, without special stylistic coloration, by Belinsky and Chekhov. Since these citations bracket Leskov’s \textit{Church Folks} in time of composition, there seems to be no reason to assume

that Leskov used the word to convey an archaic effect. It is, rather, consistent with his somewhat old-fashioned diction.

5 (2) жители старогородской соборной поповки: There are at least three choices for rendering the name of the town: Stary Gorod (used by Hapgood), Stargorod (used by Luther and Mongault), and Old Town (used by Winchell). Translating the place name into the English equivalent deprives the reader of one “signpost” conveying a sense of the geographic location (*i.e.*, in Russia, not in England or America). Using two foreign words is clumsy, especially in attributive position. Therefore, it seems preferable to adopt “Stargorod” for the translation, with a note informing the reader of its meaning.

“Поповка” is designated “obsolete” by ССРЛЯ, which defines it as “поселение около церкви, где жило сельское духовенство.” It presumably was not obsolete in Leskov’s day, and “clerical quarter” seems more appropriate than Hapgood’s “ecclesiastical quarter.” (Luther has “Dompfarrei,” while Mongault expands and pads with “la cure, ou, comme on dit chez nous, la ‘poperie’,” a good illustration of the difference in technique employed by these two translators.)

5 (3) протопрей: Archpriest is the standard term in English for this rank in the Russian Orthodox Church. It was the highest rank open to the “white clergy” (those permitted to marry) and usually involved supervisory duties over all the churches in a district (*приход*). Accordingly, there were many fewer archpriests than priests (*священники*). In 1914, the Russian Orthodox church had nearly 48,000 priests, but only 3,250 archpriests.67 The proportion was probably comparable in Leskov’s time.

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Since most English-speaking readers are not familiar with the structure of the Russian Orthodox Church, an explanatory note or discussion in an introduction might be helpful.

**5 (6-8) А чтобы видеть ... он должен рисовать себе:** This sentence is rather clumsy in Russian and contains an illogical element: in order to visualize these persons, the reader must sketch in his mind Father Savely (just one person!). Hapgood renders the sentence almost literally: “But if the reader would see these people before him in clear-cut outlines [an addition], at the epoch when he is called upon to present them to his imagination, he must picture to himself …” Luther writes a smoother sentence, as follows: “Will der Leser sie so vor sich sehen, wie unsere Geschichte sie faßt, so muß er sich das Haupt der Stargoroder Geistlichkeit, … als Mann denken…” Mongault paraphrases the sentence and “corrects” in the process the illogical element noted: “… il a besoin, pour l’intelligence du recit, de se les bien figurer à l’époque de leur vie que nous comptions decrier. Traçons donc tout d’abord leur portrait et commençons par le chef du clergé …”

This raises the fundamental question of how much liberty a translator should take with the meaning of the text. In principle, we have not ruled out paraphrase or even imitation when it is necessary to make the meaning clear to the reader or to reproduce the total effect. Mongault’s rewriting, however, serves neither end. By breaking up Leskov’s complex sentence and “correcting” the illogical element, Mongault misrepresents Leskov’s style. What was leisurely, circuitous and diffuse in the original comes through crisp and logical, more Gallic than Leskovian.

Two possible solutions come to mind. The first would simplify the sentence to place it more in the spirit of contemporary English with something like: “But in order to
visualize these persons at the time the narrative takes place, the reader must sketch in his mind the head of the Stargorod clergy …” The other would be to include more of the detail present in the original, at some cost to smooth reading: “But if he is to visualize these persons during the period when he must present them to his imagination, the reader must sketch in his mind the head of the Stargorod clergy …” Since the second is more faithful to Leskov’s words and also more consistent with his style in the passage, it seems preferable.

5 (10) мужем уже пережившим за шестой десяток жизни: The most common meaning of муж in contemporary Russian is “husband,” though it is still encountered occasionally in elevated speech in the meaning here, “a mature man.” The word was used in the latter meaning more frequently in the nineteenth century than today (Dal’ lists it first), and there seems no reason to infer a strong archaic overtone. “Man” would seem the preferable translation, since the phrase that follows makes it clear that he was mature. The clause, “who has already lived past the sixth decade of his life” seems precious in English, however. Hapgood says simply, “a man already past sixty years of age,” which is accurate, but ignores the formality and stateliness of the Russian diction. Luther preserves the image of crossing over the sixty-year mark with “der die Sechsig schon überschritten hat,” but avoids counting in decades. Something like “as a man who has entered the seventh decade of his life” would preserve the imagery and diction of the original without seeming excessively awkward.

5 (12) душевные его силы: Душевный, often translated mental, psychic, or spiritual, relates to the non-physical qualities of a person, therefore has a broader
meaning than any of the English words alone. In this context, Hapgood’s “spiritual powers” was not a wise choice since it stimulates visions of palmists and mediums—certainly not what is intended here. In “Geist” German has a more exact equivalent than English, and Luther uses it; Mongault chooses “son moral,” which is a looser fit. In this instance, I believe that some expansion is required to convey the exact meaning in English and I would suggest “mental and moral vigor.”

5 (24) **круто заломанными латинскими S-ами:** Заломанный is an unusual form. Сломать is the normal perfective of ломать, while заломить is the usual perfective form with the “за” prefix. The most common meaning of all these forms it to break off by bending. However, one of the meanings cited by Dal’ is to bend sharply without breaking (“сгибать угол, изломом, круть”), and this is clearly the meaning here. Hapgood translates “sharply curved Ss”; Luther, “steil gebogenen S-Linien”; Mongault simply ignores the attributive phrase: (“en forme d’S). I believe “two slanted S’s” would fit.

6 (9) **большого человека:** “A big man,” of course will not do. Nor does “a great man” (Hapgood) really fit, though Winchell follows Hapgood’s lead and uses it. Father Savely was not a “great man” in the usual sense and Leskov would presumably have used великий had he wished to suggest that meaning. Luther’s “eines bedeutenden Mannes” captures part of the meaning and Mongault’s “de grand homme” is acceptable since the omission of the article in French carries similar overtones to the Russian word in this context. We do not have this alternative in English, and I would suggest “a man with a big heart.”
В эти глаза глядела прямая и честная душа протопопа Савелия, которую он, в своем христианском уповании, верил быти бесмертное. The use of the archaic noun упование and the Old Russian (and Church Slavic) быти gives the sentence an antiquated, “churchy” cast. There is no handy archaic equivalent in English for either word, and none of the translations under our consideration capture the scriptural overtones. We can, however, seek phraseology reminiscent of the King James Bible to convey some the atmosphere. With this in mind, I would suggest the following: “Through these eyes shone Archpriest Savely’s forthright and honest soul, which he, abiding in his Christian faith, believed to be immortal.” Since “abiding in faith” suggests Biblical language in English, it carries some of the overtones conveyed by words like упование and быти in Russian.

букольки: A diminutive of букли, a loan-word from French (boucle: curl), it is now obsolete but was used occasionally by Leskov’s contemporaries (e.g., by Lev Tolstoy in Anna Karenina). “Ringlets” seems appropriate here since it preserves the diminutive.

имел несколько определений: Определение is normally translated “definition” (or “decision” in legal contexts and “attribute” in grammatical terminology). Hapgood translates it “definition.” But it is clear from the passage that what is meant are characterizations, or epithets. (Luther used “Attribute” and Mongault “qualificatifs.”)

Инспектор духовного училища: The “inspector” in the nineteenth-century Russian school system was a supervisory official assigned to a school by the central administration, not a traveling inspector. Therefore, “supervisor” seems a more accurate translation than “inspector.” The духовное училище was a school operated by
the Orthodox Church for the children of clergy, who were normally expected to enter the clergy themselves. Hapgood renders it “Theological School,” which is misleading since it implies a much higher level of education than that in the духовное училище, with its four-year curriculum following primary schooling in “parish schools” or—more commonly—in the family. “Church school” unfortunately suggests to the English-speaking reader the Sunday Schools operated for parishioners, so it should probably be avoided. I would suggest “secondary school” as an appropriate translation since the духовное училище prepared students for the seminary, normally the final training for ordained priests.

6 (41) из синтаксического класса: The “syntax class” was the fourth level in the Russian духовное училище, the final year of instruction before the seminary. It seems preferable to translate the phrase “from secondary school” since “class in syntax”—used by Hapgood—gives no hint of the level of instruction.

6 (41-42) за великовозрастие и малоуспешие: Великовозрастие is a technical term meaning above school age while малоуспешие is coined by analogy with великовозрастие. (The normal word is малоуспешность.) Hapgood mistranslates “great size and small success.” (Achilla was of great size, but великовозрастие refers to age, not size.) Mongault employs fourteen words (not counting an elided “le”) to render the four Russian words: “en égard à son âge trop mûr et à l’insuffisance de ses progrès.” This conveys the sense accurately but loses the punch. Luther does better with “wegen Überreife und mangelhafter Fortschritte.” In English, “overage and underachievement” seems close to perfect. Here, for once, we can reproduce both the meaning and the
7 (1) Эка ты дубина какая, протяженно сложенная!: Here we have no such easy out. The play on the double meaning of дубина (wooden club and blockhead) with the modifying phrase (literally, “constructed long and drawn-out”) is impossibly clumsy in English. Hapgood does better than usual with “Ekh, you blockhead, how long you’re built!” Luther does very well with “Ach, du langgereckter Holzknüppel, du!” Mongault, as usual, pads the sentence, but even so manages to preserve only part of the image: “Eh bien, mon lascar, tu peux te vanter d’être une fameuse bûche!” This is one instance when Winchell failed to improve on Hapgood. Her “My goodness, what a woodenhead you are and what a long drink of water!” is, in my view, hardly an improvement.

Finding an appropriate phrase is further complicated by the succeeding passage where the seminary rector picks up the дубина image and adds that of a cartload of wood: “Недостаточно, думаю, будет тебя и дубиною называть, поелику в моих глазах ты по малости целый воз дров” [7 (6-8)]. Besides the continuation of the image of wood, this passage contains two words that indicate that the rector is parodying peasant speech: поелику (standard Russian uses поскольку, так как, ог потому что) and по малости (standard Russian; понемногу).

For the first phrase, I would suggest: “You’re a perfect blockhead on stilts!” The rector’s comment could then be rendered: “Seems to me they sell you short calling you a blockhead; to my eyes you come to a cord of wood no less.”
7 (2) ректор: In contemporary Russian, the rector is the head of a higher education institution. In nineteenth-century Russia, it was also used to denote the head of a seminary, which prepared candidates for the priesthood. Although the Russian Orthodox seminaries in the nineteenth century were not on the intellectual level of universities today, it is probably best to keep the term in translation since there is no exact American or English equivalent.

7 (3) класс риторики: Strictly speaking, the second year of training in Russian seminaries. More loosely, however, it was often applied to cover the first two years of study in seminaries. Therefore, Achilla was expelled from secondary school and readmitted on appeal to the seminary, presumably to train for the priesthood.

7 (4) богатырь: A word so specifically Russian as to defy exact translation. The translator is faced with several unsatisfactory choices: (1) Use the Russian word, explaining it the first time. This recourse might be preferable if богатырь is a key word, used repeatedly (e.g., in a folk tale or bylina) but that is not the case in this instance. (2) Translate it as “epic hero” (Hapgood’s and Winchell’s choice) or some such. (3) Use a comparable word from the tradition of the translator’s language (e.g., “knight” in English). Luther follows this course with “Recke,” and, indeed, the fit is very close. However, English provides us with no equivalents without undesirable overtones. “Knight,” for example, does not suggest size so much as courtly behavior and valor, while богатырь is used by Leskov to suggest size and strength. (4) Render it with a neutral word such as “giant” or “warrior,” depending on context. This is Mongault’s solution (“ce géant in spe”).
Reluctantly, I must suggest using “giant” in this instance. This loses the Russian specificity, but does conform to the picture of Achilla being drawn in this passage.

7 (11) причетническую должность: In the Russian Orthodox Church a причетник is a junior member of the clergy not ordained to perform the sacraments: a psalm reader, chorister, or sexton. The implication is that the church authorities gave up the effort to train Achilla for the priesthood, consigning him to a permanent status below that of a priest. Although a deacon was considered a member of the ordained clergy, Achilla’s initial assignment was as a chorister.

Hapgood’s “an ecclesiastical post” is much too high-flown for причетническая должность, and implies a position of responsibility in the church hierarchy. Luther uses “Klerus” without modifier, which seems unnecessarily vague. Mongault dodges the problem by simply omitting the two words in question. Though it is a bit clumsy, “the non-ordained clergy” might convey the idea accurately in this context.

7 (13-16) Бас у тебя ... по достоинству обходиться: The choir director’s remark, like the preceding one by the seminary rector, has a colloquial ring: the syntax is conversational, as is the use of the phrase до страсти (“awfully”). Hapgood make some effort to pick this up by using colloquial contractions (it’s and you’re), but comes up with a passage so clumsy that it could hardly have been uttered by anyone:

“Your bass is good,” said the choir-master; “it’s like the discharge of a cannon; but you’re dreadfully excessive and because of that excessiveness I really don’t know properly how to treat you.”

Mongault’s version, while not as clumsy as Hapgood’s, also seems more formal than colloquial:

“Tu as une belle voix de baisse-taille, on dirait un cannon qui gronde, lui fit-il observer un jour; seulement tu es par trop démesuré, et ce manque de mesure m’empêche de te traiter suivant ton mérite.”

Of the three translations at hand, Luther’s is the most successful with:

“Dein Baß ist gut,” sagte der Dirigent, “er donnert wie eine Kanone; aber unermeßlich bist du bis zum äußersten, so daß ich angesichts dieser Unermeßlichkeit gar nicht weiß, wie ich dich würdig behandeln soll.”

I would suggest the following:

“You’ve got a good bass that roars like a canon, but you’re awfully excessive and that makes it hard to figure out how to deal with you right and proper.”

7 (22) уязвленным: This key word means “wounded” or “hurt” particularly in the sense of hurt feelings. Ideally, one should find a four-syllable word appropriate for liturgical use since the anecdote that follows places it in a church anthem which Achilla sings at varying speeds. It is easier to “stretch” a word of four syllables than one of fewer, but both Mongault and Luther make do with three-syllable words, “ulcéré” and “gepeinigt.” I am unable to find an appropriate four-syllable word in English, so would settle for the three-syllable “tormented.” There is a slight semantic shift, but I believe “tormented” fits the passage better than “wounded,” used by both Hapgood and Winchell.

7 (24) сие: This demonstrative pronoun is obsolete today except in certain fixed adverbial phrases (such as сию минуту and до сих пор) and occasional ironic use. It was used regularly, however, up to the middle of the nineteenth century in literary texts
and bureaucratic documents.\(^6^9\) Therefore, at the time *Church Folks* was written, it probably seemed only slightly old-fashioned, rather in keeping with the subject matter.

**7 (35) увлекательность:** Literally, “attractiveness,” but here the meaning is clearly the capacity to be attracted—enthusiasm—rather than the capacity to attract, that is, увлекаемость. This is an example of Leskov’s occasional practice of reversing the meaning of an adjective for comic effect. For example, as William Edgerton pointed out, Leskov had his narrator in Левша (“The Steel Flea”) refer to Tsar Nicholas I as: “ужасно какой замечательный и памятный—ничего не забывал.” Instead of замечательный (worthy of being noticed), the narrator means соблюда́тельный (observant), and instead of памятный (worthy of being remembered), he means памятли́вый (having an attentive memory), so Edgerton translated the phrase: “It was awful how noticeable and memorable Tsar Nicholas was—he never forgot anything.”\(^7^0\)

Hapgood translates увлекательность “impulsiveness,” which does not quite fit the intended meaning and fails to suggest the intentional distortion. Luther’s “Begeisterungsfähigkeit” and Mongault’s “entraînement” express the meaning, but without the comic effect of the irony. “Enthusiasm” would fit, but the contrived word “attractionability,” would mimic Leskov’s frequent word distortions.

**7 (38) один-одинешенек:** A colloquialism with overtones of folklore, missed by previous translators. Hapgood reproduces the redundancy of the original with “all alone by himself;” but this seems merely redundant in English. Luther and Mongault

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employ the neutral terms “ganz allein” and “en solo.” We could reproduce the colloquialism, though not the folk overtone, with a phrase like “all by his lonesome.”

7 (40) многолетий: Here we face problems similar to those discussed above in regard to богатырь. The “many years” occurs at the end of a chanted prayer beseeching long life for the tsar, high ecclesiastical personages, and other special individuals. The word calls up for the Russian reader, certainly one of the nineteenth century, a mental image of performances of the well-known chant as well as the haunting melody. This effect obviously cannot be reproduced for English-speaking readers who are not Orthodox Christians, and some explanation is required even to grasp the full meaning of the passage.

Hapgood solved the problem by simply translating the word “Many Years,” and appending a footnote of explanation. Luther provides a brief and very general explanation in the text: “den Lobgesang am Schluß des Gottesdienstes.” Mongault offers a more detailed explanation with “quant à la prière pour ‘le tsar, le synode et le peuple chretien’.” To these three types of solutions, one can add a fourth: preserve the Russian word and footnote it.

Each of these are defensible solutions, but in the interest of minimizing distracting footnotes and maintaining full intelligibility in the text itself, I would be inclined to produce a variant of Mongault’s translation as follows: “in chanting the prayer wishing long life for the Tsar and other exalted personages, he could never manage to stop repeating the final words, ‘many years,’ at the proper time.”

8 (1-2) напастей: In the meaning used here (disasters or misfortunes), the word is colloquial. Hapgood, apparently misled by the meaning of the verb напасть,
distorts the meaning of the Russian sentence by translating it “measures of precaution were prudently taken against Achilla’s ‘impulsiveness,’ which protected even the deacon, and his vocal commanders from his attacks.” Luther translated the word more accurately as “Unannehmlichkeiten,” and Mongault similarly, as “désagrément.” But напасти usually refers to something more than mere unpleasantness, and a stronger word should be sought. Since “disaster” is often used in colloquial English to refer to a situation much less serious than the word means literally (“my hair was an utter disaster”), it would seem to be a fitting equivalent.

8 (4) благопотребную минуту: The first word is an unusual one (though the meaning is reasonably clear), and it is not listed in ССРЛЯ. Dal’, however, does list it and defines it as “весьма нужный, необходимый, полезный для доброго дела.” Two of our translators convey it accurately but colorlessly: Hapgood has “the proper moment,” and Luther, “im geeigneten Moment.” Mongault shifts the meaning somewhat and employs a less hackneyed phrase: “au moment psychologique.” I would suggest following the definition in the Dal’ dictionary and calling it “the necessary moment.”

8 (5-6) На всякий час не обережешься: More a saying than a proverb, it means “you can’t provide for every contingency”—in other words, what we would now call Murphy’s Law. Of the three translations, Luther comes off best with “Aber nicht unsonst sagt das Sprichwort, daß man sich nicht für jeden Augenblick vorsehen könne.” Mongault uses a different image, but also is successful with “Mais on ne saurait toujours ‘se garder à carreau’ prétend avec raison la sagesse populaire.” Hapgood not only alters the image, but introduces her usual clumsiness: “But not without good reason was the proverb invented, that accidents will happen even in the best-regulated families.” If this
were a contemporary text, one would be tempted to refer to Murphy’s Law, but since it is not, we need to find a popular saying, or at least something that sounds like one. “If anything can go wrong, it will” might do.

8 (11) Двунадесятых праздников: The twelve “great holidays” of the Russian Orthodox Church are: Крещение Господне (Epiphany—January 6); Сретение Господне (Candlemas—February 2); Благовещение Святой Богородицы (Annunciation—March 25); Вербное Воскресение (Palm Sunday—Sunday before Easter); Вознесение Господне (Ascension—fortieth day after Easter); Троица (Pentecost—ten days after Ascension); Преображение (Transfiguration—August 6); Успение (Assumption—August 15); Рождество Пресвятой Богородицы (Birthday of Our Lady—September 8); Воздвижение Креста Господня (Exaltation of the Cross—September 14); Введение во храм (Presentation of the Virgin Mary—November 21); and Рождество (Christmas). Mass on these occasions was more important than on other days (except for Easter, which of course is in a class by itself), and this is the only point that must be conveyed to the reader. Hapgood translates “twelve Great Feasts,” but I would suggest “twelve great religious holidays.”

8 (16) ударить себя лицом в грязь: Hapgood translates “disgracing himself,” but since English has a comparable idiom—to fall on one’s face—it would be preferable to use it.

8 (17) перед любившим пение преосвященным: A very “literary” construction, perhaps introduced to stress the formality of the occasion. Преосвященный is an appellation normally applied to archbishops and bishops; владыка (e.g., 8 (40)) can also be used, but is less formal. Hapgood translates the passage “before the Archbishop,
who was fond of church singing.” Luther has “vor der Eminenz, die ein großer Liebhaber guten Kirchengesanges war,” and Mongault translates it, “devant Monseigneur, fort entendu en la matièr.” I would suggest: “before His Grace the Archbishop, a connoisseur of church music.”

8 (29-30) **форшлаги:** A loan-word from German that normally means grace notes. However, the context indicates that more than grace notes are involved. Otherwise, there would not have been a pause for Achilla to push his neighbors aside and strike the tempo. Since the word means “introductory passages” here, I would translate it “prelude.”

9 (26-28) **насупротив ... обыватель:** Both these words have strong stylistic coloration in contemporary Russian but occur in a passage that is otherwise stylistically neutral. We need, therefore, to determine whether they had the same stylistic overtones in Leskov’s time. Насупротив is designated “просторечие” in ССРЛЯ, but the citations from Gogol, Sergei Aksakov, Zagoskin and Korolenko do not appear to have this connotation; these authors seem to have used it simply as an alternate for напротив. Обыватель now usually means philistine, but in the nineteenth century it was used commonly as a synonym for житель. Leskov may well have chosen it to avoid the alliteration with жилища, which occurs a few words later. In sum, there seems to be no sound reason to deviate from standard literary English in translating this passage.

10 (24-26) **Дети мои, дети! ... Где вас положи?** Here, the object is clearly not to translate the words literally, but to produce a rhyming ditty with the same general sense. Of the three existing translations, Luther and Mongault—as usual—succeed better than Hapgood. Compare:
Children, my children!
Where shall I put you?
What shall I do with you?⁷¹

Ihr meine Kindelein
Wo find ich Bettelein,
Euch all zu legen hinein?

Mignons, beaux mignons,
De vous que ferai-je?
Mignons, beaux mignons,
Où donc vous metrai-je?

I would suggest the following:

O my children, children mine!
Where’s a place that I can find
Big enough for all your kind?

10 (27-28) не радел ни о стяжаниях, ни о домостройстве: The three key words are all obsolete today. Радеть, designated both “устар.” and “простореч.” in ССРЛЯ, means to take care of something diligently. Стяжания means property or worldly possessions, and домостройство household management, i.e., what is more normally termed домохозяйство. Hapgood translates it: “bothered himself not in the slightest about acquiring household goods or about household management.” Luther translates more concisely: “kümmerte sich wenig um irdische Güter und Hauswirtschaft.” Mongault deviates a bit from the original with: “n’accordait aux biens de ce monde en général et en confort domestique en particulier qu’une importance très relative.”

Although the words are obsolete today, they seem to have been no more than old fashioned in Leskov’s time. Therefore, the translator need not strain for an archaizing effect so long as terms that seem overly contemporary are avoided. Luther seems to have

⁷¹ Winchell has: “Children, children, children! / Where can I put you, children? / What shall I do with you?” In my opinion, this does not improve on Hapgood’s translation.
struck a proper balance and I would suggest following his lead and translating the clause “paid scant heed to worldly possessions or housekeeping.”

10 (28) to 11 (5) The passage describing Achilla’s house and its contents contains several dialectical or otherwise unusual words sufficiently obscure for the present-day Russian reader as to require explanatory annotation. For example, карда [10 (31)] is a dialectical term for a simple enclosure made of sticks pushed into the ground.\(^72\) It could contain a garden, enclose domestic animals, or provide a place for storing straw. It is certainly not a “picket fence,” as Hapgood translates it, which stimulates visions of neat white fences in suburbia, but rather is similar to the wattle fences familiar to travelers in Africa and the Australian Outback. An орчак [10 (39)] is a leather saddlebow—the arch on the front of a saddle. An укрючный аркан [11 (2)] is simply a lasso. The засохшая вербочка [11 (5)] is a dried pussy willow branch, traditionally carried on Palm Sunday, palm branches being hard to find at that latitude.

11 (14) бездомового: An obsolete synonym for бездомный, it can mean either without a home or without a spouse or family. In Achilla’s case it is the latter meaning that applies, of course. Hapgood translates it “wifeless,” but “widowed” would read more naturally.

11 (28) протопопица: The wife of an archpriest, протопоп being a colloquial synonym for протоиерей. (The words did not have the derogatory connotation in the nineteenth century that поп and its derivatives acquired during the Soviet period; indeed, in most of Leskov’s contexts they are affectionate.) Hapgood translates it “archpriestess,” but this seems unwise, since “priestess” in English usually means woman

\(^{72}\) Академия чак СССР, Словарь русских народных говоров (Ленинград: Издательство “Наука”, 1965--). Hereafter, references to this dictionary will be noted with the initials СРНГ.
priest, not the wife of a priest. For want of a more exact term, we must use “archpriest’s wife,” or if the context permits (as it does here), simply “wife.”

11 (28) не слыхала в нем души: An obsolete idiom meaning “to love with all one’s soul,” “to think the world of.” A similar idiom (души не чаять в ком) is still in use.

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Having examined some of the particular problems this passage presents to the translator, let us now attempt a translation of the entire section.
SUGGESTED TRANSLATION

CHURCH FOLKS

PART ONE

Chapter I

The people whose comings and goings make up the subject of this narrative are residents of the Stargorod clerical quarter: Archpriest Savely Tuberozov, Priest Zaharia Benefactov and Deacon Achilla Desnitsyn. The years of their early youth, and their childhood as well, do not concern us. But if he is to visualize these persons during the period when he must present them to his imagination, the reader must sketch in his mind the head of the Stargorod clergy, Archpriest Savely Tuberozov, as a man who has already entered the seventh decade of his life.

Father Tuberozov is tall and stout, but still sprightly and agile. One could say the same of his mental and moral vigor: from the first glance it is apparent that he has preserved a young man’s ardor and commitment. His head is exceptionally handsome. It might even be considered a model of masculine beauty. His hair is as thick as a full-grown lion’s mane and white as the locks of the Zeus by Phideas. It rises over his high brow in a large, well-arranged forelock, and his tresses fall back in three broad waves, not quite reaching his shoulders. Several black hairs still glitter in the archpriest’s long, divided beard and in his modest mustache, which joins his beard at the corners of his mouth, giving them the look of silver inlaid with black. His brows are still black and proceed from the bridge of his rather large and thick nose to form two slanted S’s. His eyes are large, brown, bold and clear. Throughout his life they have never lost their glow
of intelligence. Persons near him have seen in them the luster of delight, the gloom of sorrow, and the tears of compassion. At times the fire of indignation also burns in them and they cast forth sparks of anger—not vain, or cantankerous, or petty anger, but the anger of a man with a big heart. Through these eyes gazed Archpriest Savely’s forthright and honest soul, which he, abiding in his Christian faith, believed to be immortal.

Zaharia Benefactov, the second priest at the Stargorod church, is of a completely different strain. His entire personality is the incarnation of humility and meekness. Consonant with this, his humble spirit is as loath to assert itself as his frail body is to occupy space—as if it were trying not to burden the earth. He is small, thin, frail and bald. Two sparse ringlets of yellowish gray hair flutter above his ears. He has no hair at all on the back of his head. The last remnants disappeared long ago, and even when he had some it was so miserable that Deacon Achilla always called it a mouse’s tail. Instead of a beard, Father Zaharia has what looks like a bit of glued-on sponge. His hands are those of a child, and he habitually conceals them in the pockets of his cassock. His legs are thin and weak—the sort they call straw legs—and overall he is as light as if he were made of straw. His kindly gray eyes dart with energy but are seldom raised, and when they meet another’s eyes they immediately turn aside to avoid any impression of impertinence.

Father Zaharia is a little older and much frailer than Father Tuberozov, but he, like the archpriest, is habitually cheerful, and despite all his subsequent ailments and infirmities preserved a lively personality and physical agility.
The third and last representative of the Stargorod clergy, Deacon Achilla, had garnered some epithets, and all should be cited to help the reader picture the “mighty Achilla.”

The supervisor who expelled Achilla from secondary school on grounds of “overage and underachievement” told him, “Achilla, you’re a perfect blockhead on stilts!”

The rector who yielded to a special appeal and admitted him to the seminary was amazed when he saw the still growing giant and, astounded by his size, strength, and stupidity, said, “Seems to me they sell you short calling you a blockhead. To my eyes you come to a cord of wood no less.”

The director of the Cathedral choir to which Achilla Desnitsyn was assigned when he was transferred from the seminary to the lower, non-ordained clergy, called him “excessive.” “You’ve got a good bass that roars like a canon, but you’re awfully excessive and that makes it hard to figure out how to deal with you right and proper.”

The fourth and most weighty of the epithets applied to Deacon Achilla came from the Archbishop himself on an extremely memorable day for Achilla. This was the day that Achilla was expelled from the Cathedral choir and exiled to Stargorod as deacon. In that epithet, Achilla was dubbed “the tormented.” It behooves us here to recount the event which caused him to be numbered among the “tormented.”

From his early youth Deacon Achilla was a merry, joking lad given to unbounded enthusiasm. It matters little that his emotions got the better of him when he was young. We shall see whether he learned to bring them under control even as he approached old age.
Despite the “excessiveness” of Achilla’s bass, he was a most valued member of the choir, where he not only seized the most transitory highs, but plunged below the lowest octave. The one thing that disturbed the director about the excessive Achilla was his “attractionability.” For example, during vespers he was quite unable to restrain himself and sing “Holy the Lord our God” just three times, but in his enthusiasm burst out and sang it a fourth time all by his lonesome. And especially when chanting the prayer wishing long life to the Tsar and other exalted personages, he could never manage to stop repeating “many years” at the proper time. But on all these occasions, which were well known and which therefore could be foreseen, preventive measures were prudently taken against Achilla’s “attractionability.” These steps saved both the deacon and his choral superiors from disasters. One of the adult singers was assigned to grab Achilla’s robe or to shove down on his shoulders and force him into his seat at the necessary moment.

But it is not for nothing that we have a saying that if anything can go wrong, it will. However diligently and affectionately they tried to protect Achilla from his enthusiasm, they nevertheless could not ward it off totally, and he justified most emphatically the theoretical proposition that there is no way to save him who bears the enemy in his own breast.

On one of the twelve great religious holidays, Achilla was supposed to sing an extremely intricate bass solo for Holy Communion with the words “and with grief tormented.” The importance attached to this solo by the director and the entire choir bore heavily on Achilla. He was uneasy and thought carefully through the problem of how to avoid falling on his face and how to distinguish himself before His Grace the Archbishop,
a connoisseur of church music, and the aristocracy of the whole province, which would assemble in the cathedral.

Justice requires one to acknowledge that Achilla learned that solo magnificently. Day and night he prowled his room, the corridor, the yard, the cathedral garden and the pasture beyond the town, always singing in various keys, “tormented, tormented, tormented.” With this unceasing practice he awaited the day of his glory when he was to sing his “tormented” before the whole cathedral.

The anthem began. Lord, how tall and beaming stood the huge Achilla, sheet music in hand. A picture should have been drawn of him—it is impossible to describe him in words. … The familiar prelude was over and the time for the bass solo approached. Achilla pushed his neighbor aside with his elbow, silently struck the tempo of his “tormented” solo, and waiting for his cue, saw the baton in the director’s hand rising. … Achilla forgot the whole world and himself, and in the most astonishing manner sang out, like the Archangel’s trumpet, at times rapidly, at times slowly, “And with grief tormented, tormented, tor-ment-ed, tor—or—ment—ed, tormented.” They restrained Achilla by force from further superfluous repetitions and the anthem ended.

But it was not over in Achilla’s enthusiastic head. While the gentry were filing up in silence to greet the Archbishop and receive his blessing, there suddenly blared out of the choir loft, like a trumpet call from heaven, “tormented, tor-men-t-ed, t-o-r-m-e-n-t-e-d.” It was Achilla who, in his delirium, had no idea what he was doing. They pulled at him and he sang. They pushed him down and tried to hide him behind other singers, but he sang “tormented.” They finally took him out of the church as he continued singing “tormented.”
“What’s the matter with you?” gently pled his solicitous companions.

“Tormented,” Achilla continued to sing out as he looked them straight in the eye. He kept on singing in front of the cathedral until a fresh breeze sobered him up.

In comparison with Archpriest Tuberozov and Father Benefactov, Achilla Desnitsyn could be called a young man, but even he is well beyond forty, and streaks of gray run through his pitch-black locks. Achilla is enormously tall, is frightfully strong, and is clumsy and unpolished in manner, but nevertheless is extremely friendly. His face bears southern features and he says he descends from Little Russian Cossacks. It seems indeed that he has inherited carefree habits, bravery, and many other Cossack virtues.

Chapter II

All these heroes of the old-fashioned cut lived in the Stargorod clerical quarter above the quiet Turitsa River, which was deep enough for shipping. Each of them, Tuberozov, Zahary, and Deacon Achilla alike, had his own cottage right on the river bank, facing the ancient church which rose with its five domes across the river. But their living quarters were as different as were their personalities.

Father Savely’s cottage was very pretty, painted light blue with varicolored stars, squares and designs done in relief over each of its three windows. The windows were also framed with carved and brightly painted platbands and green shutters that were never closed. The solid cottage had no fear of cold in winter and the father loved daylight, loved the stars that at night peered into his room, and loved the beam of moonlight that
lay like a stripe of silk brocade across his parquet floor. Everything in the archpriest’s house was spotless and orderly because there was nobody to soil or dirty it or to disturb the peace. He was childless, and this caused him and his wife unremitting grief.

Father Zahary Benefactov’s cottage was much larger than Father Tuberozov’s, but the Benefactov house had none of the showy elegance with which the archpriest’s lodgings glistened. Father Zahary’s slightly leaning gray house with five windows was more like a large chicken coop, and to complete the analogy, through every small lattice opening of its green windows assorted noses and tufts of hair always protruded, pulling and chasing one another. These were the offspring of Father Zahary, whom God blessed as He did Jacob, and his wife was a fruitful as Rachel. Father Zahary’s house had none of the looking-glass shine of the archpriest’s, nor the latter’s strict order. Traces of children’s dirty paws were everywhere; a child’s head bobbed out of every corner; the sound of children infused the premises; everything squealed and sang of children, beginning with the hearth crickets and ending with the mother, who lulled her offspring with a ditty:

O, my children, children mine!
Where’s a place that I can find
Big enough for all your kind?

Deacon Achilla was a widower and childless and paid scant heed to worldly possessions or housekeeping. He had a Ukrainian-type peasant hut with clay-daubed walls right on the river bank. But his hut had neither outbuildings nor fences—nothing, that is, but a small enclosure of rough sticks stuck in the ground, in which at times a piebald colt, or a dun gelding, or a crow-black mare stalked around up to the knees in straw. The furnishings in Achilla’s house were also purely Cossack: in the best part of
the premises, reserved for the owner himself, stood a wooden couch with a wicker back. Achilla also used the couch as a bed, and therefore a white Cossack felt cover was spread over it and at the head lay an Asiatic saddle frame of tooled leather against which leaned a small, pancake-shaped pillow in a greasy nankeen pillowcase. In front of this Cossack couch stood a white limewood table; a guitar without strings hung on the wall, along with a hemp lasso, a whip and two bridles. On the small shelf in the corner stood a tiny icon of the Assumption of the Virgin with a dried pussy willow branch protruding behind it and a small Kievan prayer book. There was absolutely nothing else in Deacon Achilla’s quarters.

In the small adjacent kitchen lived Nadezhda Stepanovna, better known as Esperanza, an old woman who used to work as a maid in a manor house. She was an elderly, small, yellowish, sharp-snouted, wrinkled person with the most quarrelsome character, and so unbearable that, despite her housekeeping skills, she was unable to find a place anywhere and came into the service of the widowed Achilla, at whom she could chatter and nag to her heart’s content since he usually ignored her chattering and nagging. When she aroused his anger, he thundered, “Esperanza, clear out!” When he uttered those words, Esperanza usually disappeared since she knew that otherwise Achilla would seize her by the arms and put her on the roof of the cottage, leaving her there from sunup to sundown. Because of this terrible punishment, Esperanza was afraid to contradict her Cossack master.

All these people lived the kind of life described and at the same time more or less shared each other’s burdens and contributed variety to each other’s rather monotonous life. By virtue of his position, Father Savely was their leader. His small wife held him in
awe and was devoted to him with all her soul. Father Zahary was also happy in his chicken coop. Deacon Achilla, too, had no complaints. He passed his days in chats and walks around town, in riding and swapping his horses, and at times teasing and taming his “servant,” Esperanza.
NATURE DESCRIPTION

The second excerpt to illustrate Leskov’s expository prose comprises Chapters 17, 18, and 19 of Part III. This scene marks the psychological turning point in the chronicle’s slender plot. Hitherto, Archpriest Tuberozov, while periodically at odds with the church authorities, had confined his opposition to internal memoranda and reports or wry entries in his personal diary. A religious experience during the thunderstorm depicted here, however, sends him forth resolved to do battle in public. Hence, his daring sermon which brought on his arrest and subsequent “martyrdom.”

Many critics have cited this passage as a masterpiece of nature description in the Russian language. It is indeed a remarkable example of a passage that combines precise visual images with powerful emotions.
Шумные известия о напастях на дьякона Ахиллу и о приятивении самого протопопа к этому нежелательному делу захватили отца Савеля в далеком приходе, от которого до города было по меньшей мере двое суток езды.

Дни стояли невыносимо жаркие. От последнего села, где Туберзов ночевал, до города оставалось ехать около пятидесяти верст. Протопоп, не рано выехав, успел сделать едва половину этого пути, как наступил жар необычайный: бедные бурье, кошмарно его мылились, потели и были жалки. Туберзов решил остановиться на локорих и последних отдых: он не хотел заезжать никуда на постоянный диск, а, вспомнив очень хорошее место у опушки леса, в так называемом «Корольковом верху», решил там и остановиться в холодке.

Отсюда открывается обширная плоская локориха, по которой можно дойти до лиственчя верст мелькают золотые главы городских церквей, а сзади вековой лес, которому нет перерыва до сплошного полесья. Здесь глубокая тишина и прохлада.

Утомленный зноем, Туберзов лишь только вышел из кибитки, так сию же минуту почувствовал себя как нельзя лучше. Несмотря на полсеменный жар и локориху, в густом темно-синем молодом дубовом поле вдали стояла жизненная свежесть. На упрятках и как будто обложенных в зеленый воск листьях молодых дубцов и соринки. По всей зеленой, мягкой, успокаивающей материи; из-под лестерий, трафаретной листвы напоротников глядит ярко-красная вольная ягода; выше, вся озелененная светом, блестит сухая орешника, а вдали, на темно-коричневой торфянистой почве, раскинуты целые семьи грибов, и между ними корыто костянки.

Пока Павlushка в одном белое и жилете отправил и провожал пожильных коней и устанавливая их к веревье у растущего на опушке хвостя, протопоп поехал немножко по лесу, а потом, взяв из похода коверечик, сел его на зеленую лошадку, из которой буравливым ключом били гремучий ручей, умылся тут свежею водой и здесь же лег отдохнуть на этом коверечик.

Мгновенный рокот ручья и прохлада повели звонким «русским духом» на опаленную зноем голову Туберзова,
и он не заметил сам, как заснул, и заснул нехотя: совсем не хотел спать, — хотел встать, а он свалил и дергать, — хотел что-то Павлюкана молвить, да дрема мягкою рукой рот захвала.

Дремотные мечтания протопопа были так крепки, что Павлюкана направо тряс его за плечи, приседая встать и откушать кашу, сваренную из круп и молодых грибов. Туберозов едва проснулся, проговорил: «Кушай, мой друг, мне сладость спится», снова заснул еще глубже.

Павлюкана отобедал один. Он собрал ложки и хлеб в пластени из лька дорожный кошель, опрокинув на свежую траву котел и, залив водой котелник, забрался под телегу и немедленно последовал примеру протопопа. Лошади отца Савеля тоже недолго стучали своими челюстями; и они одна за другой скоро утихли, уронили головы и задремали.

Кругом стало сонное царство. Тише до того нерушимо, что из чашки леса сюда на опушку выскочил подпиливший заяц, сел на задние лапы, пошевелив усиками, но сейчас же и скопфузился: кицнул за спину длинные уши и исчез.

Туберозов отрывался от сна на том, что уста его с недопременным трудом выговаривали кому-то в ответ слово «здравствуй».

«С ком я это здравствую? Чего было здесь со мной?» — старается он понять, пресмыкаясь. И мчится ему, что сейчас всюду его стоят кто-то прокладной и тихой в длинной одежде цвета зреющей сливы... Это казалось так явственное, что Савелий быстро поднялся на лошади, но увидел только, что вон снят Павлюкана, вон его бурье лошади, вон кибитка. Все это просто и ясно. Вон даже пристяжная лошадь, насущин покоем, скапливает с головы оброть... Сбросила, отошла, позавидела, встала и нюхает ветер. Туберозов продолжает дремать, лошадь идет дальше и дальше; вот она упала густой муравьи на опушке; вот скисла верхушку молодого дубочка; вот, наконец, ступила на корыто ельников квасером рубеж и опять нюхает теплый ветер. Савелий все смотрит и никак не поймет своего состояния. Это не сон и не бденье; власа, в которой он спал, отнулия его, и в голове точно пар стоит. Он протер глаза и глянул вверх: высоко в небе над его головой плывет ворон. Ворон ли это или коршун? Нет.
Нет, соображает старик, это непременно ворон: он держится стойко, и круги его шире... А вот дольше оттуда, как брошеньную горстку гороху, ку-у-раю. Это воронье ку-у-раю, это ворон. Что он назирает оттуда? Что ему нужно? Он устал парить в поднебесье и, может быть, хочет этой воды. И Туберозову приходит на память легенда, прямо касающаяся этого источника, который, по преданию, имеет особенное, чудесное происхождение. Чистый прозрачный водой ключ похож на приткую в землю хрустальную чашу. Образование этой котловины приписываются громовой стреле. Она идла с небес и проникла здесь в недра земли, и тоже опять по совершенно особенному случаю. Тут будто бы никогда, разумеется очень давно, пал измогший в бою русский витязь, а его одного отвсюду облегла несметная сила неверных. Погибель была неизбежна; и витязь взмолился Христу, чтобы спаситель избавил его от позорного плача, и предание гласит, что в то же мгновение из-под чистого неба вниз стрелнула стрела и взялась опять кверху, и грянул удар, и копьи татарские пали на колени и сбросили своих всадников, а когда та поднялась и встали, то витязь уже не было, и на месте, где он стоял, гремя и сверкая алмазно пеною, был вверх высокой струей ключ студеной воды, серпант рвал червя ворвага и серебристым ручьем разбегался вдади по зеленому лугу.

Родник почитает все чудесным, и поверье гласит, что в воде его кроется чудотворная сила, которую будети даде и звери и птицы. Это всем ведомо, про это все знают, потому что тут всеобщее таинственное присутствие Ратая веры. Здесь вера творит чудеса, и оттого все здесь так сильно и крепко, от вершьем столетнего дуба до гриба, который угится при его корне. Даже по видимому совершенно умершее здесь живет: вон точная сухая срещина; ее опалила молния, но на ее кожуре выше корня, как зеленым восток, выведен «Петров крест», и отсюда опять появляется новая жизнь. А в грозу здесь, говорит, бывает не шутка.

«Что же; есть ведь, как известно, такие неэлектризованные места», — подумал Туберозов и почувствовал, что у него как будто шевелится седа волосы. Только что встал он на ноги, как в нескольких шагах пред собой увидел небольшое бланжевое облако, которое, меняя слетка очертания, тихо ползло над рубежом, по которому
брóдил свободная лошадь. Облачко точно прямо шло на коня и, настигнув его, вдруг засстонало, вскинуло и
разнеслось, как дым пущенного жерла. Конь дико вскрикивал и в испуге понесся, не чуя под собой земли.
Это была дурная весть. Туберозов торопливо вскочил,
разбудил Павлукана, помог ему вскарабкаться на другого коня и послал его в погоню за испуганной лошадью,
которой между тем уже не было и следа.
— Спеши, дорогий,— сказал Савелий дьячуку и, вынув
свои серебряные часы, поглядел на них: был в начале
четвертый час дня.
Старик сел в тени с непокрытою головой, зевнул и не
ожиданно вздрогнул; ему вдалеке послышался тяжелый
громот.
«Что бы это такое: неужгто гром?»
С этим он снова встал и, отойдя от опушки, увидел,
что с востока действительно шла темная туча. Гроза за
стонала Савелия одиним-одинешенька среди леса и полей,
приготовлявшихся встретить ее неприятное дыхание.
Опять удар, нина заколебалась сильней, и по ней
полоснуло свежим холодом.
К черной туче, которую закован весь восток, снизу
взмыкали клубами меньше тучки. Их будто что-то под
тягивало и подбирало, как кулем, и по всему этому не
неет и прорезает гром. Точно маг, готовый дать страшное
представление, в последний раз осматривает с фонарем
в руке темную сцену, прежде чем зажжет все огони и под
нимет завесу. Черная туча полет, и чем она ближе, тем ка
жется непроглядней. Не проснет ли ее бог? Не разразится
ли она где подальше? Но нет: вон по ее верхнему краю тихо
сверкнула огнестра кить, и холми замигали и заряяли
разом по всей темной массе. Солнца уже нет: тучи по
крыли его диски, и его длинные, как шпаги, лучи, посветив
мгновение, тоже сверкнули и скрылись: Вихор засипал
и защелкал. Облака заволочались, точно замена. По
бурому полу грозовой ржав запестрели широкие белые
пятна и поплы в холестом; в одном месте вдруг будто
с неба одно, в другом— сдает широко другие и разом
пойдет навстречу друг другу, сольются и оба исчезнут.
У меня при дороге ветер треплет колос так странны, что
это как будто из ветр, а кто-то живой прятался у корня
и здится. По лесу шум. Вот и над лесом зигзаг, и еще
вот чернуло совсем по верхушкам, а вдруг тихо... все тихо... ни молний, ни ветра: все стихло. Это тишина пред бурей: все запоздавшее спрятало себя от незыблемости поль- 
зуется этой последней минутой затишья; несколько пчел пронеслось мимо Туберозов, как будто они не летели, а 
насели их напором ветра. Из темной чаши кустов, которые 
казались теперь совсем черными, выскочило несколько 
перепуганных зайцев и залегли в меже вровень с землею. 
По траве, которая при теперешнем освещении тоже черна 
как асфальт, прокатился серебристый клубок и юркнул 
под землю. Это еж. Все убралось, что куда может. Вот и 
последний, недавно роящийся, ворон плотно сжал у плец 
крылья и, ринувшись вниз, тяжело закопошился в вер- 
шине высокого дуба.

ГЛАВА ВОСЕМНАДЦАТАЯ

Туберозов не был трусом, но он был человек неравный, 
а такими людьми явно большинства электрических разряд- 
жений вкладывает целое новое и неоднократное беспрекословие. 
Такое беспрекословно чувствовал теперь и он, озирая 
вокруг и соображая, где бы, на каком бы месте ему безо 
паснее встретить и переждать готовую грядут грозу.

Перым его движением было броситься к своей по- 
возке, сесть в нее и закрыться, но чуть только он уле 
стился здесь, лес заскрипел, и кипь отражался, как лу 
бочная люлька. Ясно было, что это прилет ненасыщенный, 
кипь могла очень легко окачаться и придать его.

Туберозов выскоочил из-под своего экипажа и бросился 
бего в ржаное поле; крутоплупый встреч и с боков ветер 
оставлял его, раздал его назад за поля, и свистел, и 
трубил, и визжал, и гайгайкал ему в уши.

Туберозов бросился в ложбину к самому ровнику; а 
в хрустальном резервуаре ключа еще беспрекословно: вода 
день бурлить и кипела, и из-под расходящихся по ней 
кругов точно выбивался наружу кто-то замкнутый в недрах земли. И вдруг, в темно-синицовском массе воды, 
вне 
западно сверкнуло и раскрылось кривавое пламя. Это удар 
молнии, но что это за странный удар! Стрелой в два зиг 
зата он упал сверху вниз и, отраженный в воде, в то же 
mгновение, таким же зигзагом свершилась под небо. Точно
небо с землею переслоалось огнями; грянул трескучий
удар, как от массы брошенных с крыши железных полос, и
из роздира вверх целым фонтаном взялось облако брызг.
Туберозов закрыл лицо руками, пал на одно колено и
поручил душу и жизнь свою богу, а на полях и в лесу по-
шля одна из тех грозовых перепалок, которые всего крас-
норечивее напоминают человеку его беззащитное ничто-
жение пред силой природы. Реяли молнии; с громом несся
удар за ударом, и вдруг Туберозов видит пред собо-
ю темный ствол дуба, и к нему вливает светящийся, как
тусячла лампа, шар; чудная искорка подсвечивала вершина
дуба освещенным светом, выросла в нём и разорвалась.
В воздухе грянуло страшное бьёбах! У старика сердце вы-
халило, и на всех перстах его на руках и ногах замерзли
горячие кольца, тело болезненно вытянулось, подпачдало
и пало... Сознание было одно, — это сознание, что все ру-
шлося. «Конец!» — промелькнуло в голове протопопа, и
дальше ни слова. Протопоп не замечал, сколько времени
прошло с тех пор, как его оглушило, и долго ли он был
без сознания. Приходя в себя, он услышал, как по небу
вдалеке тяжело и неспешно прокатилась и стихло! Гроза
проходила. Савелий поднял голову, сглаживая вокруг и
увидел в двух шагах от себя на земле нечто огромное и
безобразное. Это была целая-куча ветвей, целая вершина
громадного дуба. Дерево было как ножом срезано у сва-
мого корня и лежало на земле, а из-под ветвей его, смеш
шавшихся с колоссом ржи, раздавался протяжный, реку-
щий крик: это драл глуху дневной ворон. Он упал
вместе с деревом, придавлен тяжелою ветвью к земле и,
разнуя широко пурпуровую пасть, судорожно бился и
отчаивало кричал.
Туберозов быстро отрыгнул от этого зрелища таким
бедным прыжком, как бы ему было не седьмдесят лет, а
семнадцать.

ГЛАВА ДЕВЯТНАДЦАТАЯ
Гроза, как быстро подошла, так быстро же и пронес-
лась: на месте черной тучи вырезывалась на голубом про-
свете розовая полоса, а на мокром мешке с осом, кото-
рый лежал на козлах хищник, уже весело чирикали во-
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робы и смело таскали мокрые зерна сквозь дырки мокрой редьки. Лес весь ожидал: послышался тихий, ласкающий шепот, и из-за кустов выбежала пара степных глухарей. Глухарь разостлал по земле крылышко, черкнул по нему красненько лапкой и, поставив его парусом вверх, закрылась от дувши. Глухарь надува зоб, поклонился ей в землю и заговорил ей: пеленно «уху». Эти поклоны заключаются поцелуями, и крылышки трепещут в густой бахроме мелкой пылины. Жизнь началась. Недалеко послышался гопот: это Павлюк. Он ехал верхом на одной лошади, а другую вел в поводу.

— Ну, стар, живы вы! — весело кричал он, подъезжая и спешиваясь у кибикки. — А я было, знаете, шлёпо спешил, чтобы вас одних не застало, да как этот гром пал на треснуло, я так, знаете, с лошади всею хохом хоркой землю и охнул... А это дуб, что срезал?

— Срезал, друг, срезал. Давай запряжем и поедем.

— Боже мой, знаете, силища!

— Да, друг, поедем.

— Теперь, знаете, легкое позорное, ехать чудесно.

— Чудесно, запряжай скорей; чудесно.

И Туберозов истерзанно взялся помогать Павлюк. Выскошенные дождем копны в минуту были взврежены, и кибитка протопала покатилась, плеска колесами по лужам колесного проселка.

Воздух был благородственно-ясный; освещение теплое, в полях пьяя легкий парок; в воздухе пахло оренишей. Туберозов, сидя в своей кибитке, чувствовал себя так хорошо, как не чувствовал давно, давно. Он все глубоко вздыхал и радовался, что может так глубоко вздыхать. Славно орлу обновились крылья!

У городской заставы его встретил маленький звон колоколов; это был благовест ко всенощной.
ANALYSIS AND COMMENT

Leskov’s style in this passage shifts repeatedly to convey the changing mood and action. Initially, it is almost laconic: Tuberozov hears the news of Achilla’s problems and sets off post haste to return to Stargorod. We pick up his journey only halfway through the second day, when he is forced to stop to feed and rest the horses. Then the spot in the oak copse on Goldcrest Ridge chosen for rest is described in loving and minute detail, and as Tuberozov drops off to sleep, the prose become languid, until the Archpriest’s vision half wakes him. The image of the soaring raven and the legend connected with the spring are portrayed in quasi-dreamlike fashion, but then when the horse’s flight and peal of thunder warn of the approaching storm, the style quickens. Sentences become shorter, at times almost choppy, conveying an impression of breathlessness and foreboding.

The storm itself, in Chapter 18, is pictured largely through Tuberozov’s perceptions and the momentum of action is maintained. With the end of the storm and Chapter 19, the prose relaxes again and we get the description of the courting doves. Little time is lost on the drive into town: a laconic exchange with Pavlyukan, his driver, and a brief lyrical description of Tuberozov’s mood, ending with the portentous simile of an eagle with new flight feathers after a molt. Leskov obviously intends to suggest by this image that Tuberozov returned to town not only with restored physical strength, but also with a renewed spiritual capacity—which he subsequently demonstrates in his sermon.

In rendering this passage, the translator confronts two broad problems: (1) retaining as much of the specific imagery as possible for readers who will not be familiar with some of the plants or religious references; and (2) taking care to preserve the shifts of cadence and diction that contribute to the effectiveness of the passage.
The following words and phrases deserve special attention:

223 (3) **захватили:** This verb, which usually means “seize,” “capture,” or in a figurative sense, “thrill,” is translated rather passively and neutrally in previous translations. Hapgood has “The noisy reports … reached Father Savely”; Luther, “trafen den Vater,” and Mongault, “avaient atteint l’archiprêtre.” The text, however, calls for a more active and vivid verb, and I would suggest “caught.”

223 (7) **пятидесяти верст:** Although some translators of Russian literature render this measure of length as “verst,” (Hapgood, for example, does so), the contemporary English-speaking reader has little concept of how long a “verst” is. It seems preferable to convert the distance into miles. In this case, fifty versts are roughly equivalent to thirty miles.

223 (13) **Корольковом верху:** The name of the locality is derived from королёк, “goldcrest” (*Regulus regulus*), a small European bird with a bright yellow crown. Hapgood missed this association when she translated the name “Korolkoff’s Hill,” as if it were named for a person. (Luther and Mongault got it right; Winchell called it “Korolyok Heights.”) I would suggest “Goldcrest Ridge.”

223 (21) **кибитки:** *А кибитка* is a simple cart or wagon with a top on it. In this passage it is also referred to as a повозка (a generic term for horse-drawn vehicles) and экипаж (a carriage). At the risk of implying a standard of comfort this vehicle rarely provided, I am inclined to translate it carriage since most English-speaking readers could not visualize a “kibitka” (used by Hapgood) without a footnote.
Подсед: Подсед is an obsolete variant of подсад and refers to a stand of young trees in a forest (ССРЛЯ). Hapgood translates it “young oak coppice,” which is about as close as one can get in English without explanation. Luther renders it “Eichengehölz,” and Mongault, “la jeune chênaise.”

из-под пестрой, трафаретной листвы ... волчья ягода ...

сухая орешина ... коралл костянки: This passage, with its accumulation of names of plants presumably familiar to the Russian reader, produces a mental picture almost as precise as a painting. The problem facing the translator is that some of the plants are unfamiliar to American readers. Волчья ягода, for example, is Paris quadrifolia, a plant growing a foot high or slightly less, with yellowish-green flowers which yield scarlet berries. It occurs in Europe and Northern Asia and is usually called “truelove” or “herb Paris” in English. The English names, besides being unfamiliar to most American readers, carry semantic overtones quite different from the Russian “wolfberry.” Hapgood translated it “true-love,” and Mongault “parisette”—the word in French for the same plant. Luther, on the other hand, used “Wolfsbeere,” to convey the semantic overtones, even though this name seems to be used for quite a different plant in Germany.

In this instance, I would suggest following Luther’s lead, less dangerous in English than in German since “wolfberry” is not a common plant name, and preserve the semantic overtone. The text provides enough descriptive detail to create the picture intended: bright red berries “peeping” through ferns.

73 The term Wolfsbeere is not listed in most German dictionaries, but Heyne’s Deutsches Wörterbuch (Leipzig, 1895) indicates that it refers to the plant Atropa belladonna, not Paris quadrifolia.
The орешина is *Corylus avellana*, a small tree related to the American hazel nut (the most common species of the latter being *Corylus americana* and *Corylus cornuta*). The European species grows somewhat taller than the American (*i.e.*, to five meters high, and occasionally as much as seven, compared with three meters for both *C. americana* and *C. cornuta*). The European species of *Corylus* are sometimes called “filbert” in English, but making this distinction is more likely to puzzle than enlighten readers who are not familiar with European trees.

The text tells us, furthermore, that the tree was “dry”—that is, dead—and it glistened like gold when illuminated by sunlight. We learn in a subsequent chapter that it had been struck by lightning.

Hapgood translates сухая орешина as “dry hazel-bushes” and Luther, “trochener Haselstrauch.” Mongault picks up the subsequent reference to its having been struck by lightning and calls it a “coudier foudroyé.”

None of these solutions match the precision and stylistic requirements of the original text. In the first place, the *Corylus avellana* grows tall enough to be considered a tree and not a bush or Strauch. Second, it seems odd in English to refer to a dead tree as “dry”—lumber, firewood, and pressed flowers may be dry; trees are normally described as dead when in this condition. But Leskov was careful not to use the adjective “dead,” since it would conflict with the overall picture of a spot suffused with a “life-giving” (живительный) spirit. His description is designed to stress the variety of pattern and color: shades of green, the black soil, the blueness of the shade, and bright spots of red berries and golden branches. The problem with Mongault’s “foudroyé” is that the image
of lightning is introduced later in the text, during Tuberozov’s reflections just before the storm, and it is premature at this point to mention lightning.

My solution would be to call the сухая орешина a “leafless hazel-nut tree.”

According to Dal’, костяника is the Rubus saxatilis, a creeping plant in the bramble family that sends up shoots four to six inches high, which in turn produce dull white or greenish blossoms and red berries. It is the latter, of course, that Leskov compares to coral. Hapgood translates коралл костянки as “coral of the brambles,” while Luther writes, “rote Steinbeeren wie Korallen glänzten.” Mongault calls the костянки “mûres sauvages” and rewrites the passage with an active verb, as follows: “les mûres sauvages entrelaçaient leurs coraux parmi des tribus entières de champignons.” This verbal shift, however, is not inconsistent with the rest of the sentence, which elsewhere employs active verbs in the present tense (e.g., глядит ... блещет).

While members of the Rubus genus are indeed brambles, it is a large genus of some 400 species, and Leskov selected a particular one for his description. Therefore, it seems best to pick a berry that will convey the proper image to the North American reader. My choice for this would be “dewberry,” since it is a name applied to several species of trailing brambles. The color could be made explicit by calling it “coral-red.”

My suggestion for an English translation of the entire passage under discussion is as follows: “Scarlet wolfberries peeped through the varied pattern of ferns; above, a leafless hazel-nut tree, gilded by the sun, glistened; and in the distance, on the dark-brown peaty soil, whole families of mushrooms were scattered among coral-red dewberries.”
Both молвить and дрема are archaic, the latter being also characteristic of elevated, poetic diction. We have no ready counterparts in English. Hapgood translated the words with “say” and “sleep,” and Luther similarly with “sagen” and “Schlaf.” Mongault evaded the problem of translating дрема by rewriting the clause to read: “ses jambes refusèrent de bouger et sa bouche de s’ouvrir,” losing thereby the image of sleep pressing its hand against Tuberozov’s mouth.

It seems preferable to preserve the image, but not to strain unduly for an archaic effect, since English does not provide words with comparable overtones to Leskov’s. We could, however, use “slumber” rather than the more common “sleep” to render дрема.

отобедал: Now obsolete in the meaning “to have dinner” (though it is still used to mean “to have finished dinner”), the usage was more normal in Leskov’s day. Luther and Mongault translate it “verzehrte” and “déjeuna” respectively, but Hapgood’s “dined” seems entirely too elevated for a bowl of gruel and mushrooms eaten by the side of the road. I would prefer “ate a snack,” or “snacked.”

кошель: A dialectical word which, in this instance, means a bag or basket used for traveling (СРНГ). (In standard Russian it is an obsolete word for purse.) Both Luther (Reisekörbchen) and Mongault (corbeille de tille) use common words to convey the idea, while Hapgood translates it “traveling-sack of linden-bast.” I would suggest “traveling pouch woven from bast,” since “pouch” is suggestive of the shape and flexibility of the article and is a somewhat unusual term to employ in this context.

подлинный: This adjective is applied to animals who are shedding hair or fur. Both Luther and Mongault omit it in their translations but it is
desirable to preserve it to retain the specificity of Leskov’s description. Hapgood renders
the phrase “a hare that was shedding its fur.” I would prefer to make the picture
somewhat more vivid with, “a hare, fur splotched by shedding.”

224 (24) “здравствуй”: Although not directly relevant to the
translation, it may be of interest to note that in early drafts Leskov pictured Tuberozov as
seeing a vision of Avvakum. This, and the other references to Avvakum in Божедомы
and the manuscripts, were edited out of the final version.74

224 (33) оброть: This is a dialectical term for a bridle without the
bit—that is, a headstall or halter. The usual Russian term for this part of a harness is
недоуздок. Hapgood and Winchell translate it “bridle,” but “halter” seems preferable,
both because it is more accurate and also because, being less frequently used than bridle,
it helps suggest the use of an unusual term.

224 (35) муравы: This term is associated both with the elevated poetic
style and folklore. Therefore, I would choose “greensward” in preference to Hapgood’s
“grass’ to render it.

225 (3) ку-у-рлю: Every language has it own approach to representing
bird calls in writing, none very accurate. English-language field manuals—e.g., Roger
Tory Peterson’s A Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe (London, 1966)—
record the raven’s call as prruk, which I prefer to the transliteration of the Russian
employed by Hapgood and

Winchell……………………………………………………………………………………………………….74

И.З. Серман, “Протопоп Аввакум в творчестве Н.С. Лескова,” Труды Отдела древнерусской
литературы Института русской литературы, т. XIV, стр. 404-407.
In Russian folklore, *pamaï* was sometimes used to denote a peasant ploughman. Here, it is clearly used in the sense of “Defender of the Faith,” as both Luther and Mongault recognized. Hapgood got it backwards when she wrote “the perpetual presence of the Mussulman faith.”

According to Dal’, this is the plant *Lathraea squammaria*, a parasitic vine that grows from the rhizomes of broad-leafed trees in thick forests. This plant is called “bindweed” in English, and Hapgood translates it that way. I have two objections to this apparently straightforward solution, however. In the first place, it eliminates the religious overtones inherent in the term “Peter’s cross.” Second, it seems to me from the context that Leskov used the term to denote a fresh sprout from the living roots of the lightning-charred hazelnut tree, not the leafless, parasitic vine of the definition in the Dal’ dictionary. Accordingly, I have retained the term “Peter’s cross,” and translated in conformity with my supposition that the image desired is a new growth from the original roots.

This does not seem to be a common term in Russian for any particular species of dove. Three species could occur in the habitat described: the stock dove (*Columba oenas*), the ring dove (*Columba palumbus*), and the turtle dove (*Streptopelia turtur*). From the habits and call described, the latter is the most likely species, but it seems preferable for the translator to retain the original “steppe dove,” which is as descriptive and also as inexact in English as it is in Russian. (Hapgood uses “steppe-doves,” while Luther and Mongault omit the adjective – “Taubenpärchen” and “couple de ramiers.”)

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“умру”  It obviously will not do to translate this literally (as
Hapgood does), “I shall die,” since the words must sound something like a dove’s cooing.
Mongault avoids representing the call by translating the passage “se mit à saluer très
bas.” Luther, more successfully, translates the call “Nur du!” I would propose something
similar: “Love you!”
SUGGESTED TRANSLATION

CHURCH FOLKS

PART THREE

Chapter XVII

Sensational accounts of the misfortune that had befallen Deacon Achilla and the fact that the archpriest himself had been implicated in that trifling incident caught Father Savely when he was visiting an outlying parish in his district, no less than two full days’ travel from Stargorod.

The days were unbearably hot. Nearly thirty miles separated the town from the last village where Tuberozov had passed the night. The archpriest, who set off a bit late, managed to cover barely half of the way when the heat became intolerable: his poor little bay horses were pitiful, covered in sweat and foam. Tuberozov decided to stop for a final rest and feeding. He was loath to pull into a coach house, but recalled an excellent location at the edge of the forest, known as “Goldcrest Ridge,” and made up his mind to halt there in the shade.

At the ridge, a wide, flat slope began its gentle descent to the town, some fifteen miles off, and the golden domes of churches twinkled in the distance. Behind the ridge an ancient forest extended without a break until it reached a wooded glen. It was a cool spot of utter quiet.

Fatigued by the heat, Tuberozov felt rejuvenated the instant he stepped from his carriage. Despite the omnipresent heat and lassitude, a bracing freshness met him in the dense, blue shade of a copse of young oaks. Not a mote marred the supple oak leaves,
which seemed to be doused with a green wax. A soft, living, soothing light suffused the spot. Scarlet wolfberries peeped through the varied pattern of ferns; above, a leafless hazelnut tree, gilded by the sun, glistened; in the distance, on the dark brown peaty soil, whole families of mushrooms were scattered among coral-red dewberries.

While Pavlyukan, stripped to his underwear, unharnessed the sweaty horses, led them out of their traces and let them feed from a bag opened on the carriage shaft, the archpriest strolled a bit among the trees, then took a lap rug from the carriage, carried it to a green hollow where a turbulent spring gave rise to a roaring stream, washed himself with the fresh water, and stretched out to rest right there on the lap rug.

The rhythmical murmur of the stream and the coolness breathed a healthy “Russian spirit” into Tuberozov’s scorched head and he failed to notice that he was dozing off, dozing off against his will. He had no desire to sleep. He wanted to get up, but drowsiness overpowered him and held him fast. He wanted to tell Pavlyukan something, but slumber pressed its soft hand against his lips.

The archpriest drifted so far into sleep that it did no good for Pavlyukan to shake him by the shoulders and propose a snack of buckwheat cereal with fresh mushrooms. Tuberozov barely managed to open his eyes and mutter, “Eat it yourself, my friend. I’d like to take a nap,” then sank even deeper into his dreams.

The kingdom of dreams settled all around. The silence was so complete that a hare, fur splotched by shedding, hopped out of the forest thicket into the clearing, gave a jump, sat on its hind legs switching its ears, then suddenly took fright, threw its long ears against its back and disappeared.
Tuberozov was torn from his sleep when his lips laboriously said something in reply to the word “Greetings!”

“Who’s that I’m talking to? Who was here with me?” he struggled to grasp as he opened his eyes. And it seemed to him that someone cool and silent was standing beside him in a long robe the color of ripe plums … That seemed so clear that Savely quickly raised himself to his elbows, but saw only Pavlyukan sleeping in one place, his bay horses resting in another, and his carriage not far away. All was simple and clear. He even saw the trace horse, bored with resting, shake the halter from its head … It threw the halter off, ambled away, rolled around a bit, stood up and sniffed the air.

Tuberozov continued to doze and the horse went farther and farther; it nibbled at the thick greensward at the edge of the forest; it tasted the leaves in the crown of a young oak; finally, it stepped onto a ridge overgrown with wild clover and sniffed the warm air again. Savely kept watching, but did not comprehend what was happening. He was neither asleep nor awake. The dampness where he had slept clouded his mind and suffused it like steam. He wiped his eyes and looked up. A raven was soaring in the sky above his head. A raven or a hawk? No, not a hawk. No, the old man thought, it must be a raven. It was soaring more smoothly and in a wider circle. … And then as it flew toward him, he heard a coarse *prruk*, like a handful of peas thrown against the floor. That’s a raven’s call; it’s a raven. What is he watching from up there? What is he looking for? He is tired of soaring in the heavens and maybe is thirsty for this water.

And Tuberozov recalled a legend directly connected with this spring which, according to tradition, had a special, miraculous origin. The spring’s pure, transparent pool was like a crystal chalice scooped out of the earth. The formation of this basin was
attributed to a bolt of lightning. The lightning came from the heavens and penetrated the depths of the earth here, and on a very special occasion at that. It was said that once, very long ago, naturally, a Russian knight fell wounded in battle, and an innumerable host of infidels beset him from all sides. His defeat was inevitable and the knight raised a prayer to Christ to save him from shameful imprisonment. And the tradition has it that a bolt of lightning struck that instant from the clear sky and rose heavenwards again.

Simultaneously, a thunderclap crashed and the Tatar mounts fell to their knees, throwing their riders, and when the Tatars picked themselves up, the knight was no longer there but on the spot where he had stood a spring of cold water had burst forth in a high arc, roaring and throwing up a glittering mist, then tore furiously through the side of the ravine and ran in a silver stream down through the green meadow.

Everyone revered the spring as miraculous, and it was believed that its waters concealed a wonderworking power, familiar even to wild bests and birds. This was general knowledge—everyone knew about it—because here one sensed the eternal presence of a Defender of the Faith. Here, faith works wonders, and for that reason everything here is so strong and powerful, from the crown of the ancient oak to the mushroom sheltered by its root. It would even seem that dead things come to life again here. Take the thin hazelnut tree over there. Lightning charred it, but just above its roots a “Peter’s cross” came out, like green wax, on its bark, and from that place a new life began. But they say that thunderstorms here are no joke at all.

“Oh, well, we know there are indeed charged places like that,” Tuberozov thought, and felt as if his gray hair were moving on his scalp. As soon as he got to his feet, he spied a small flesh-colored cloud several paces in front of him. Changing its
contours slightly, it quietly moved over the ridge where the untied horse was stalking. It looked as if the small cloud was headed right for the horse and as it reached it, suddenly it began to swirl, rose up, and then dispersed, like smoke from the muzzle of a cannon. The horse neighed wildly and plunged forward in terror, not feeling the ground beneath her.

That was a bad sign. Tuberozov jumped up in haste, waked Pavlyukan, helped him scramble onto the other horse and sent him in pursuit of the frightened one, which in the meantime had disappeared without a trace.

“Hurry, catch it,” Savely said to the sexton, then reached for his silver pocket watch and examined it: it was just past three o’clock.

The old man sat down in the shade, head bare, yawned and shuddered involuntarily. He could hear a heavy rumbling in the distance.

“What could that be—thunder, maybe?”

Thereupon he stood up again and, stepping away from the trees, saw that there really was a dark cloud coming from the east. The thunderstorm caught Savely all alone in the midst of the forest and fields, which had been making ready for the storm’s unbearable wind.

Again a thunderclap. The fields shook with greater force and a cool breeze streaked across them.

Puffs of small clouds began to massage the bottom of the black cloud, which now obscured the entire eastern sky. It was as if something were picking them out and pulling them upward like links of a chain, and from time to time a flame sliced through it all. It was like a magician, who just before staging a horror show, inspects the darkened stage
for the last time, lantern in hand, before lighting the lamps and raising the curtain. The black cloud crawled along and the nearer it came, the blacker it seemed. Would God not carry it past? Would it not break out somewhere farther on? But no, there on its upper edge a fiery thread flashed silently, and instantly lightning began to twinkle and flutter over the whole dark mass. There was no sun. The clouds covered its disc, and its long rays, like swords, shone for an instant then also flickered and disappeared. The wind shook the heads of grain planted along the road in such a strange way that it seemed not to be wind, but some living thing that was crouching among the roots and raging with anger. Noise filled the forest. And there above the forest a zig-zag, and again it made a line right along the treetops, and then a sudden silence… All was quiet! No lightning, no wind; everything fell silent.

It was the calm before the storm. Everything that was late hiding itself from the danger made use of this last moment of calm. Several bees moved past Tuberozov and they seemed not so much to be flying as to be carried along by the force of the wind. Several terror-stricken hares hopped out of the dark grove of bushes, which now seemed quite black, and lay flat on the ground in a hedgerow. A silvery puff rushed through the grass, which under the existing illumination was black as asphalt, and plunged into the ground. That was a hedgehog. Everything fled wherever it could manage. And finally, the raven that had been soaring pressed its wings against its shoulders and plummeted, landing with a heavy splash in the crown of the tall oak.
Chapter XVIII

Tuberozov was not a coward, but he was a high-strung man, and an irresistible anxiety takes hold of people like that at times of major electrical disturbances. He, too, felt this anxiety as he scanned his surroundings and tried to decide where he could most safely meet and wait out the impending storm.

His first move was to rush for his carriage, climb into it and close the door, but he had just settled down when the forest shuddered and the vehicle shook like a cradle of birch bark. Obviously, his refuge was not safe; the carriage could easily overturn and crush him.

Tuberozov jumped out of his vehicle and dashed into the field of rye; the wind, whirling in his face and against his sides, held him back, tugged at him by the hem of his garment, and whistled, blared, screeched and screamed in his ears.

Tuberozov threw himself in a gully right beside the spring. It was even more agitated in the spring’s crystal-clear basin: the water there seethed and boiled, and it seemed as if someone locked in the bowels of the earth were trying to force his way out through the circles that spiraled out along the surface. And suddenly, in the lead-dark body of water, a bloody flame flashed and covered the surface. It was a bolt of lightning, and what a strange one! It fell from above like an arrow in two zig-zags and, reflected in the water, shot back the same instant to the heavens in the same zig-zag. It was as if the sky and earth were exchanging fire; a shattering clap of thunder crashed, like a bunch of iron bars thrown from a roof, and a cloud of spray erupted from the spring like a fountain.

Tuberozov covered his face with his arms, fell on one knee and entrusted his body and soul to God. Sound like a cannon volley, which reminds a human being in the most
eloquent fashion of his helpless insignificance before the force of nature, swept the fields and forest. Lightning flashes fluttered and brought clap after clap of heavy thunder, and suddenly Tuberozov saw loom before him the dark trunk of the oak and a sphere gleaming like a dim lamp was floating toward him. A miraculous spark inside the tree flared out with blinding light, grew into a ball and exploded. A terrifying crash sundered the air! The old man’s breath left him and hot rings twirled round his fingers and toes; his body stretched painfully rigid, crumpled and fell… He had only one impression, the impression that *everything had collapsed*. “The end!” flashed through the archpriest’s head, and not a word more.

The archpriest did not notice how much time passed after he was stunned or whether he was unconscious for long. When he came to, he heard they way the rumble rolled in dull thuds across the distant sky and died down. The storm had passed.

Savely raised his head, looked around, and saw something huge and formless two paces away. It was a whole pile of branches, the entire top of the immense oak. The tree had been sliced through at the root as if by a knife and lay on the ground. From under its branches, entangled with heads of rye, a revolting, rasping cry resounded. It was the squawk of the raven of late. It had fallen along with the tree, had been crushed against the ground by a heavy bough and, purple maw agape, was thrashing convulsively and screaming in desperation.

Tuberozov jumped away from that scene in such a lively bound that one would have thought him to be not seventy, but seventeen.
Chapter XIX

The storm was carried away as quickly as it had come. Where the dark cloud had been, a pink stripe was cutting across the azure sky, and sparrows chirped merrily around the soaked bag of oats on the carriage platform, boldly pulling wet grain through the loose fibers of the damp burlap. The forest came to life: a soft cooing was heard, and a pair of steppe doves flew down, wings humming in the air. The hen spread her wing on the ground, scratched it with her reddish foot, then lifted it up like a sail, hiding herself from her mate. The cock puffed out his crop, bowed low to her, and addressed her with a passionate “Love you!” The bows led to kisses, and the wings fluttered into the thick fringe of wormwood brush. Life had begun. Horses’ hooves sounded close by. It was Pavlyukan. He was riding on one horse and leading the other by the bridle.

“Well, Father, you’re safe and sound!” he called out gaily as he rode up and dismounted by the carriage. “You know, I was sure rushing so it wouldn’t catch you by yourself, but when that big thunder struck, I was pitched right off the horse and hit my face smack dab against the ground … So it struck that oak there?”

“It sure did, my friend, it certainly did. Let’s hitch up and go.”

“My God, that was a big one for sure!”

“Yes, my friend, but let’s get moving.”

“There’s a light breeze now, you know. Great for traveling.”

“Yes, it’s wonderful. Hitch up the horses fast. It’s wonderful.” Impatient, Tuberozov began to help Pavlyukan.

The horses, bathed in the rain, were soon in harness and the archpriest’s carriage began rolling, its wheels splashing water from the ruts of the country road.
The air was most salubrious: the sun was warm; a light steam rose from the fields; the air smelled of hazelnut. Tuberozov, sitting in his carriage, felt better than he had for a long, long time. He kept breathing deeply and it gave him pleasure that he could breathe so deeply. Like an eagle on new flight feathers!

The mellow chime of bells greeted him at the town gate; it was the call to vespers.
CHAPTER FIVE

ARCHAIC LANGUAGE: TUBEROZOV’S DIARY

The longest chapter in the book, Chapter V of Part One, runs for some 55 pages in the Russian edition and comprises excerpts from Archpriest Tuberozov’s diary. It is, in effect, an elaborate flash-back, providing background not only on Tuberozov’s opinions and his disagreements with the church authorities, but also on a number of characters who will play important roles in the subsequent chronicle.

Some of the themes in this section, particularly those relating to the Russian clergy’s poverty, seem based on a book by Father A. I. Belliustin, a priest in a rural district of the Tver Diocese. Entitled Description of the Rural Clergy, it was published abroad in Russian in 1858, created a sensation in Russian church circles, and ultimately resulted in Belliustin’s being sentenced by the Holy Synod to exile in the Solovki Monastery in the White Sea—a sentence subsequently reversed by the Tsar.76

Tuberozov is a well-educated clergyman of the mid-nineteenth century, but he writes in a style and with a vocabulary more common in the previous century than in his own. Indeed, we find some words and expressions that were already obsolete in secular prose in the eighteenth century. Hugh McLean, Leskov’s biographer, described Tuberozov’s prose in the diary as “a little bookish and antiquated, yet vigorous and

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strong, seasoned with priestly Church Slavonicisms, quotations from the Scripture or the liturgy, plus some less exalted specimens of ‘in-group’ ecclesiastical jargon.”

The tendency, particularly by a clergyman, to use archaisms is relatively easy to suggest in English; the language of the King James translation of the Bible serves the purpose well, along with the language of English and American divines and prose stylists of the late seventeenth and the eighteenth century. Unless the word or expression in question plays a pivotal role in the account, stylistic equivalence need not be word for word or phrase for phrase. Rather, the translator should aim to reproduce a style that draws much of its vocabulary, grammar, and even syntax from an earlier period.

Some of the other features of Tuberozov’s style, however, present greater challenges than archaisms and Biblical language, as will be noted below.

Four excerpts from Tuberozov’s diary have been chosen for comment: (1) Passages describing Tuberozov’s ordination, appointment to Stargorod, and his differences with his superiors over the treatment of Old Believers and the poverty of the Orthodox clergy; (2) a passage demonstrating Tuberozov’s desire for children and sentimental attachment to the care of orphans; (3) a passage recounting his meeting with Boyarinya Plodomasova and her serf, the dwarf Nikolai Afanasiyevich; and (4) a humorous account of the province governor’s ignorance of agriculture and his conflict with a prominent local aristocrat.

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PROBLEMS WITH THE CONSISTORY

The chapter begins with Tuberozov reading from entries he had made in the buckram-bound church “calendar” presented to him upon his ordination in 1831. He recounts his first sermon and the archbishop’s reaction, his winter travel to Stargorod during which his sleigh was attacked by wolves, and subsequent friction with his superiors in the province capital. These initial entries establish Tuberozov’s character as one of unbending integrity: he is unwilling to carry out his superiors’ instructions to inform on Old Believers in the community since he thinks this will do no good. Instead, he suggests that the clergy, who live in poverty, be given more adequate material support so that they will not be required to solicit contributions from Old Believers.

For those readers not familiar with Russian history it will be necessary to provide, in an introduction or note, a brief account of the schism that occurred in the seventeenth century and a description of the Russian Orthodox Church governance in the nineteenth century: the Patriarchate had been abolished by Peter I and replaced by the Holy Synod, controlled by an appointed official. The province Consistory, mentioned often in Tuberozov’s diary, was an office established in each diocese to assist the bishop in managing the parish clergy, but the officials were appointed by the Synod and thus were an arm of the government bureaucracy.

An introduction or notes should also explain the position of the Old Believers in Russia at the time of the narrative. Most of the time, in the nineteenth century, they were allowed to practice their religion, but were supposed to register and were required to pay higher taxes than communicants of the Russian Orthodox Church. Also, when
Tuberozov began inscribing his initial entries in his diary. Tsar Nicholas I had ordered a more vigorous suppression of the Old Believers, and thus encouraged the emphasis that the Consistory placed on reports from the parish clergy exposing clandestine observance of the Old Believer liturgy.
ные намеки на служащих, прислуживающих и о присяге своей небегущих, давая сим тонкие намеки чиновничим и властям. Говорил плавно и менее пышно, чем естественно. Владыка одобрил сию мою пробу пера. Однако же впоследствии его преосвященство призвал меня к себе и, одобряя мое слово вообще, в частности же указал, дабы в проповедях прямого отношения к жизни делать опасался, особенно же насчет чиновников, ибо от них-де чем дальше, тем и освященнее. Но за прошлое сказанное не укорял и даже как бы одобрил.

1832 года, декабря 18-го, был призван высокопреосвященным и получил назначение в Старгород, где нарочито силен раскол. Указано противодействовать оному всески.

1833 года, в восьмой день февраля, выехал с попадьей из села Благодухова в Старгород и прибыл сюда 12-го числа о заутрене. На дороге чуть нас не съела вольная свадьба. В церкви застал нестроение. Раскол силен. Осмотревшись, нахожу, что противодействие расколу по консилиарской инструкции дело не важное, и о сем писал и консисторию и получил за то выговор».

Протонерей пропустил несколько заметок и остановился опять на следующей: «Получив замечание о бездеятельности, усмотренной в недоставлении мною обильных доносов, оправдывался, что в расколе делается только то, что уже давно всем известно, про что и писать нечего, я при сем добавил в сем рапорте, что наилучнее всего, что церковное духовенство находится в крайней бедности, и того для, по человеческой слабости, не противодействуя подкупам и даже само немало потворствует расколу, как и другие прочие оберегатели православия, приемля даяния раскольников. Заключил, что на иного чего надо бы начать, к исправлению скорбей церкви, как с изъятия самого духовенства из-под тяжкой зависимости. Образцом ему показал раскольничьи сравнения синода с патриаршеством и сим надеялся и деятельность свою оправдать и отередной от себя донос отбыть, но за опыт сей вторично получил выговор и замечание и вызван к личному объяснению, при коем был назван «не

40 почтительным Хамом, открывающим наготу отца». Сие, надлежит подразумевать, удостоен быть получить за то, что сознал, как бедное, полуголодное духовенство само
ANALYSIS AND COMMENT

In this first excerpt from Tuberozov’s diary, the prose is formal, stately, and distinctly old fashioned. In describing his growing friction with the Consistory over his indulgent attitude toward the Old Believers, Tuberozov initially describes the problem in matter-of-fact terms, but then his language becomes more emotional as he employs irony and even sarcasm. The following words or phrases are illustrative of these characteristics.

29 (31) сию книгу: Tuberozov consistently uses the demonstrative pronoun сей in its various inflections instead of the more common этот. The four-
volume dictionary edited by D. N. Ushakov designates сей as “книжн., устар., ритор., офиц., теперь ирон.” There is no ironic cast to Tuberozov’s use of the term, but it was already bookish and antiquated when Leskov was writing his chronicle. Neither English, French, nor German has an easy stylistic equivalent, so all translators into those languages have to find other means to convey the antiquarian overtone.

30 (1-2) присягающих и о присяге своей небрегущих: The syntax and use of participial substantives give the passage a very formal and “literary” cast. Colloquial language, even in the nineteenth century, would have expressed the thought using pronouns (“those who have taken an oath and then ignored it”). All three of the translators we are examining translate it in that fashion. Hapgood has “those who have taken an oath, and are heedless of their oath.” Mongault simplifies with “hommes en place qui traissent leur serment.” Luther is more literal with: “Beamten … die ihren Amtseid ablegen und dann nicht einhalten.” None have managed to achieve quite the same feeling of formality and solemnity as the Russian, so that—once again—the translator must find other means appropriate to the target language to convey this quality.

30 (7-9) в частности же указал, дабы в проповедях прямого отношения к жизни делать опасался, особенно же насчет чиновников, ибо от них-де чем дальше, тем и освященнее. The meaning in Russian is clear, but Hapgood misunderstood and turned it on its head, writing, “…especially where officials are concerned, for the higher they are in station, the more sacred.” (!!!) Our other translators interpreted the advice as warning against personal association with officials,
instead of the desirability of leaving them out of sermons, which is what the bishop was suggesting. Luther: “… denn je weiter man sie [die Beamten] sich vom Leibe halte desto gottwohlgefälliger sei das.” And Mongault: “… fonctionnaires, gent avec laquelle les personnes de notre état ont avantage à n’entretenir que des rapports très distants.

I would suggest the following translation: “… the Reverend Bishop … pointed out in particular that he was chary of drawing direct connections with everyday life in sermons, especially in regard to officials, since the further the subject is from them, the more sacred it can be.”

Archaisms are peppered through the text, for example, особливо (especially) [30 (8)], нарочито (very, especially) [30 (12)], нестроение (disorder) [30 (18)], поптвровствует (encourage) [30 (30-31)], наипаче (especially) [31 (1)], and вотце (useless, in vain) [31 (15)]. He also occasionally resorts to Church Slavic forms, as when he refers to даяния (gifts, contributions) [30 (32)] and speaks ironically of сея великия вины [31 (3)] (these great offenses, or this great guilt). Previous translators have dealt with this, with greater or lesser success, by inserting old-fashioned words into the text, not always to translate the ones that emanate from Tuberozov’s pen, since often there is no appropriate equivalent available, but to suggest in a general way this feature of the archpriest’s style.

I have tried to capture some of the old-fashioned tone of the passage by using words such as whilst, unto (instead of to), chary (instead of wary), contending against (instead of combating or fighting), verily, infirmities (instead of weaknesses) of the Church, and burthen (instead of burden).
Not all the archaisms can be reflected in this fashion, however. When Tuberozov mentions senior church officials (bishops and higher), he often—but not always—puts the verb in the plural rather than in the singular when one of them is the subject of the sentence or clause. Thus, for example, he writes Владыка одобрили (my stress) [30 (4)], but subsequently uses the singular: его преосвященство призвал меня ... указал ... не укорял ... одобрил. [30 (6-10)]. Once, he even mixes the two in the same sentence: Владыка очень соболезновали, но заметили... а к сему учить не уставал. 31 (10-12).

There is no easy way in English to reproduce this particular nuance, but German has an equivalent construction. Luther uses it in his translation but, for reasons not readily apparent, his use of the plural verb does not coincide precisely with Leskov’s. In the first passage cited above he writes: “Seine Eminenz belobten” (following Leskov’s usage) but then continues to use the plural, even though Leskov had switched to the singular: “… riefen Seine Eminenz mich und bemerkten …” but then, in a subsequent sentence, adopted the form Leskov had used, writing: “… machte er mir keine Vorwürfe, sondern schien es sogar zu billigen.”

Subsequently, when we discuss the skaz in Chapter VII., we will also encounter inconsistent use of the third person plural verb when the subject of a sentence or clause is a prominent person. Sometimes this usage could carry an ironic overtone (which in English might be conveyed by intonation), but the examples cited do not seem to have an ironic intent. If we exclude the remote possibility that Leskov was simply careless in drafting these passages, we can speculate that he was indicating that his characters intend
to use the plural to show respect but sometimes simply forget and revert to the more common and logical singular.

30 (17-18) **вольча свадьба:** This is the normal term for a wolf pack, so it is most surprising to find in the normally careful Luther’s translation a veritable howler: “Unterwegs wären wir fast von Wölfen gefressen worden, die ein Hochzeitsfest zu feiern schienen.” Both Hapgood and Mongault got it right.

31 (6-7) **Вот и Патриарху на орехи!** Since there was no Patriarch when Tuberozov was writing (Peter I having abolished the office a century earlier), the phrase is purely figurative. *ССРЯ* defines the idiom *на орехи будет* as: *предстоит выговор, наказание* (facing reprimand or punishment). Hapgood translates it: “There’s a slap for the Patriarch! and Luther has: “Da hat auch der Patriarch etwas abbekommen.” Mongault ignores the idiom altogether with, “A bon entendeur salut!”

I see no reason to avoid the reference to the Patriarch and would suggest a translation stressing the irony, such as: “So, even a Patriarch might commit this offense!”

* * * * *

Some of the references to Biblical passages or to literary texts will justify notes to explain the full meaning. Thus, the Biblical text Tuberozov chose for his first sermon (“текст притчи о сыновьях вертоградаря”) is a reference to the parable in Matthew 21, verses 28-32: which reads in the King James translation:

28. But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. 29. He answered and said I will not; but afterward he repented, and went. 30. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir, and went not. 31. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, the first. Jesus saith unto them, verily I say unto you, That the publicans
and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. 32. For John
came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him
not; but the publicans and harlots believed him; and ye, when ye
had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

30 (39-40) непочтительным Хамом, открывающим наготу отца:

The reference is to the following passage in Genesis 9:

20. And Noah began to be a husbandman, and he planted a
vineyard. 21. And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he
was uncovered within his tent. 22. And Ham, the father of
Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two
brethren without. 23. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and
laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and
covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were
backward, and they saw not their father’s nakedness. 24. And
Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had
done unto him. 25. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of
servants shall he be unto his brethren.

31 (4-5) Татищев: The reference is to Vasily Nikitich Tatishchev
(1686-1750), a nobleman and state official who wrote Russia’s first “modern” history,
История Российская. The quotation is presumably from Tatishchev’s Духовная
(Testament), which was published posthumously in 1773.

31 (14) “О подражании Христу” De imitatione Christi, by Thomas à
Kempis (1380-1471), was published in Russia in several translations. One by M. M.
Speransky was published in St. Petersbourg in 1835.
Tuberozov perused his diary from the initial flyleaf, on which was written: “Upon my ordination into the priesthood on February 4, 1831, by the Right Reverend Bishop Gabriel, I received from his hand this book for successfully completing my studies at the seminary and for my conduct.”

Following the first inscription, made on Tuberozov’s first day as a priest, was a second: “Preached for the first time in the cathedral after the liturgy. Selected as text the parable of the sons of the vineyard owner. One said “I will not,” yet he went, whilst the other said, “I go, sir” and went not. I brought this to good acts and good intentions, permitting myself certain allusions to officials who, having sworn an oath of office, act without regard to their oath, by which example I offered delicate hints to office holders and authorities. Spoke smoothly, in a manner more natural than florid. His Grace commended this trial of my pen. Subsequently, however, the Reverend Bishop summoned me unto his presence, and while approving my message in general, pointed out in particular that he was chary of drawing direct connections with everyday life in sermons, especially in regard to officials, since the further the subject is from them, the
more sacred it can be. But he did not reproach me for my sermon and even seemed to approve it.”

“December 18, 1832: Was summoned to the Most Reverend Archbishop and received an appointment to Stargorod where the schism is especially strong. Directed to combat it by every means.

“On the Eighth Day of February, 1833, departed the village of Blagodukhov for Stargorod with my wife, and arrived there on the twelfth, in time for matins. A pack of wolves almost devoured us on the way. Found division in the church. The dissenters are strong. After examining the situation, I find that contesting against the schism as the Consistory ordered is not a good idea. Wrote Consistory to this effect and was reprimanded.”

The archpriest skipped a few entries, then stopped again on the following: “When I was cited for my inactivity, judged by my failure to supply copious denunciations, I justified myself by explaining that the schismatics are only doing what has long been known to all; that there is nothing to write about. I added in this report that the main thing is that the clergy has fallen into poverty and consequently, from human weakness, fails to resist bribes. The clergy itself, along with other defenders of Orthodoxy, verily indulge the schism by accepting contributions from the schismatics. I concluded that the only way to begin healing the infirmities of the Church is to extricate the clergy itself from its burthen of dependence. Cited as an example of this the schismatics’ comparison of the Synod to the Patriarchate and thereby hoped both to justify my activity and to provide the regular denunciation expected of me, but for this effort received a second reprimand with a notation in my file and was summoned for a personal explanation,
during which was called ‘a disrespectful Ham who calls attention to his father’s nakedness.’ Am constrained to infer that this was deserved because I recognized that the poor, half-starved clergy often tolerate the schism against their will, and all the more so because I mentioned the Synod… If you are offended, I beg your pardon! To induce you to forget this great guilt of mine, I remind you of the words of Mr. Tatischev, who—though a layman—was nevertheless a brilliant writer: ‘A hungry man, even though he be a Patriarch, will take a crust of bread, the more so if it is offered to him.’ So, even a Patriarch might commit this offense!”

Further along, following several entries, there appeared: “Was in the province capital on business, and, during an audience with His Grace, gave him a personal report of the poverty of church employees. The Bishop was most sympathetic. He remarked, however, that our Lord himself had no place to lay his head, and continued relentlessly on this theme. He counseled me to suggest to the clergy that they read On the Imitation of Christ. I raised no objection with His Grace, and objection indeed would have been pointless since there is no way our clerical poor can obtain this book.”
SEARCHING FOR AN ORPHAN

The Kotin Pizonsky mentioned in this excerpt was borrowed from a longer story Leskov published while he was working on Соборяне, called “Котин доилец и Платонида.” McLean translates доилец, an invented word, as “he-cow.” Leskov formed it from доилица, an obsolete colloquialism normally applied to a cow who produces abundant milk, a “good milker” or “provider.” Kotin had come to Stargorod as a poverty-stricken demobilized soldier but, despite his poverty, had given shelter and nourishment to orphans.

Only remnants of Kotin’s story were transposed to Соборяне. In this excerpt Tuberozov catches sight of Pizonsky in the congregation during church service and is inspired to give an effusive praise of those, like the unnamed parishioner, who give protection and succor to orphans. This is the prelude to the scene where his wife suggests that, if Tuberozov had fathered a child before their marriage, they seek out the orphan and adopt him. Tuberozov, who had long hoped in vain for a child, finds his wife’s attitude deeply moving—indeed saintly.

79 McLean, Nikolai Leskov, p. 176.
6-го августа, день преображения Господа. Что это за прелестная такая моя попадья Наталья Николаевна! Опять: где, кроме святой Руси, подобные жены быть могут? Я ей говорил как-то, сколько меня трогает нежность беднейшего Пизонского о детях, а она сейчас поняла или отгадала мысль мою и жажданье: обняла меня и с румянцем стыдливости, столь ей идущим, сказала: «Погоди, отец Савелий, может, господь даст нам». (Она разумела: даст детей.) Но я по обычаю, думая, что подобные ее надежды всегда суетны и обманчивы, ни о каких подробностях ее не спрашивал, и так оно и вышло, что не надо было беспокоиться. Но и из ложной сей тревоги вышла преосвященная трогательность. Сегодня я говорил слово к убеждению в необходимости вседушного себя преображения, дабы силу иметь во всех борьбах коваться, как метал некий крепкий и ковкий, а не плющиться, как нищенская глина, иссякая сохраняющая отпечаток последней ноги, которая на ней наступила. Говоря сие, увлекся некою импровизацией и указал народу на стоящего у дверей Пизонского. Хотя я по имени его и не называл, но сказал о нем как о неком посреди нас стоящем, который пришел к нам натягив висцеы глазами осмеянный за свое убожество, не только сам не погиб, но и величайшее из дел человеческих сделал, спасая и воспитывая неоплощенных птенцов. Я сказал, сколько сие сладко — согревать беззащитное тело детей и наслаждаться в души их семена добра. Выговорив это, я сам почувствовал мою...
рассы омоченными и увидел, что и многие из слушателей стали открыть глаза свои и искать очами по церкви некоего, его же разумела душа моя, искать Котина нищего, Котина, серых питателей. И видя, что его нету, ибо он, поняв намек мой, смиренно вышел, я ощутил как бы некую священную острью боль и задыханье по тому случаю, что смутлив его похвалой, и сказал: «Нет его, нет, братья, меж нами! ибо ему не нужно это слабое слово мое, потому что слово любое давно огненным пером божиим начертано в смирении его сердце. Прощу вас, — сказал я с поклоном, — все вы, здесь собрающиеся достопочтенные и именитые сограждане, простите мне, что не стратига превознесеного воспомнил я вам в нашей беседе в образ силы и в подражание, но единого от малых, и если что смутит вас от сего, то отнесите сие к моей малости, яне грешный пой ваш Савелий, назира сего малого, не раз чувствует, что сам он пред ним не нерей бога вышнего, а в ризах сих, покрывающих мое недостоинство, — гроб взаперти. Аминь».

20 Не знаю, что заключалось умного и красноречивого в простых словах сих, сказанных иконою совершенно ех промпто, но могу сказать, что богословчы мои нечто из сего вняли, и на мою руку, когда я ее подавал при отпуске, пала не одна слеза. Но это не все; важнейшее для меня только наступало.

Как бы в некую награду за искреннее слово мое об отраде пещись не токмо о своих, но и о чужих детях, вседуший и всесильносящий приняв и мое недостоинство под свою десницу. Он открыл мне дневу истинную цену сокровища, которым, по бессмертным щедротам его, я владей, и велел мне еще преобразиться в нановоеньейшего судьбою своего человека. Только что прихожу домой с пятком освященных после обедни яблок, как на пороге ожидает меня встреча с некоторою довольно старою знакомой: то сама попадья моя Наталия Николаевна, выкравшаяся тихо из церкви, во время отпуска, приготовила мне, по обычаю, чай с легким фришком и стоит стопочкой на пороге, но стоит не с пустыми руками, а с букетом из речной лилии и садового левкою. «Ну, и все ли не коварная после этого ты женщина, Наталия

1 Вдруг (лат.).
Николаевна! — сказал я, никогда прежде сего ее коварством не укорял. Но она сильна ума, что памяту этим не обиделись; она поняла, что сие шуткой сказаво, и, обняв меня, только тихо, но прегорько заплакала. Чего эти слезы? — сие ее тайна; но для меня не тайна твоя тайна, жена добрая и не знающа чем утешать мужа своего, а утехи Израилевой, Вениамина малою, дать ей лишняя. Да, токмо речью лицею и садовым левкое встретило меня в этот день ее отверстое в любви

и благоволении сердце! В тихой грусти, двое бездетные, сели мы за чай, и был то не чай, а слезы наши растрясались нами в питие, и незаметно для себя мы оба заплали, и оборучи пали мы нын пя об этом образом Спаса и много и жарко молились ему об утеше Израилевой. Наташа после открылась, что она как бы слышала некое обетование чрез ангела, и я хотя понимал, что это плод ее доброй фантазии, но оба мы стали радостны, как дети. Замечу однако, что и в сем настроении Наталия Николаевна значительно меня, грубого мужчину, превосходила как в ума сообразительности, так и в достоинстве вышенных чувств.

— Скажи мне, отец Савелий, — приступила она ко мне, добродушно ласкаюсь, — скажи, дружок: не был ли ты когда-нибудь, прежде чем нашел меня, против целомудренной заповеди грешен?

Такой вопрос, откровенно должен приняться, крайне смутил меня, ибо я вдруг стал понимать, к чему моя негодяйка жена у меня такое ей несоответственное выпытывает.

30 Но она со всею своею превосходною скромностью и со всею с ее женскою кокетерией, которую хотя и попадая, но от природы унаследовала, вдруг и взаправду коварно начала меня обольщать воспоминаниями минувшей моей юности, напоминая, что тому, о чем она намекнула, нетрудно было стать, ибо был бутыл бы я столь собою прихож, что когда приехал к ее отцу в город Фатеж на ней свататься, то все девицы не только духовные, но даже и светские по мне вздыхали! Сколько сие ни забавно, однако я старался рассеять всякое сомнение насчет своей юности, что мне и нетрудно, ибо без лжи в сем имене оправдание. Но чем я тверже ее успокоивал, тем она более приунывала, и я не постигал, отчего оправдания мои ей нимало не
радовали, а, напротив, все более как будто печалили, и, наконец, она сказала:
— Нет, ты, отец Савелий, вспомни, может быть, когда ты был легкомыслен... то нет ли где какого сиротки?
Тут уже я, что она сказать хочет, уразумел и понял, к чему она все это вела и чего она сказать стыдится; это она тщится отыскать мое незаконное дитя, которого нет у меня! Какое благодушие! Я, как ужаленный слепнем вол, сорвался с своего места, бросился к окну и вперил глаза мои в небесную даль, чтобы даль одна видела меня, столь превозмогенного моей женой в доброте и печенении. Но и она, моя лилейная и левкайная подруга, моя роза белая, непорочная, благоуханная и добрая, и она снялась вслед за мною; поступью легкою ко мне сзади подкралась и, положив на плечи мне свои малые лапки, сказала:
— Вспомни, голубь мой: может быть, где-нибудь есть тот голубенок, и если есть, пойдем и возьмем его!
Мало что она его хочет отыскивать, она его уже любит и жалеет, как неопоренного голубенка! Этого я уже не снес и, закусив зубами бороду свою, пал пред ней на колени и, поклонясь ей до земли, зарыдал тем риданием, которому нет на свете описания. Да и вправду, поведайте мне времена и народы, где, кроме святой Руси нашей, роются такие женщины, как сия добродетель? Кто ее всему этому учил? Кто ее воспитывал, кроме тебя, всехблагий боже, который дал ее недостойному из слуг твоих, дабы он мог ближе ощущать твое величие и благость».
ANALYSIS AND COMMENT

In this passage, the Archpriest’s style loosens up a bit, though his syntax is still very formal and “literary,” and his vocabulary replete with archaisms and churchy words and expressions. For example, while he still favors the somewhat antiquated demonstrative pronoun сей, at times he resorts to the more colloquial (and modern) этот. In referring lovingly to his wife, he uses colloquial and jocular terms such as попадья [37 (36)], and негодящая женка [38 (27-28)] and refers to her hands as малые лапки [39 (15)].

Nevertheless, formal, old-fashioned and poetic language predominates. As befits a learned cleric, he frequently employs archaic expressions, many derived from Church Slavic: жаждание [36 (21); нагий [36 (37)]; братия ... меж нами ... любве ... огненным перстом божим [37 (8)]; зане ... пред [37 (13)]; днесь 37 (29); оборуч пали мы ниц [38 (13)]; обетование чрез ангела [38 (16)]; ласкаючись [38 (23)]; and благость [39 (27)] are examples. Since the meaning of these expressions is clear, the only problem the translator faces is finding equivalents on a similar stylistic level. In general, Luther’s German translation does this more consistently than Mongault’s French.

A few words or phrases deserve more specific comment:

36 (18) святой Руси: Technically Русь refers to Kievan Rus’, but it is also used as a poetic and emotional equivalent of Россия. (Note Nekrasov’s “Кому на Руси жить хорошо.”) There is no way we can conveniently make a distinction in English between these two words in the current context. Therefore, “Holy Russia” will have to do.
37 (13) стратига превознесеного вспомнил: The more common стратег would refer to a strategist, while стратиг is clearly intended in its original Greek sense, a military commander or general. Luther translates the first two words “hochberühmten Feldherrn” while Mongault renders them “d’un illustre capitaine.” Hapgood’s translation is more clumsy: “highly-renowned warrior.” I would suggest “a famous general,” or perhaps, “a renowned commander.”

37 (19) гроб повапленный: “A whited sepulcher,” which in Biblical language refers to a hypocrite. Hapgood translates it “ruined sepulchre,” which misses the normal idiom. French seems to have the same expression as English, since Mongault translates it “sepulcre blanché.”

37 (27-28) вездесущий и всеполняющий: It was a Soviet orthographic rule not to capitalize references to God. In the translation I (and the other translators) have restored the capital letters present in the original edition.

37 (38) стоит стопочкой ... из речной лилеи и садового левкоя: I assume that речная лилея (note the archaic spelling of лилия) is what we would call a water lily. According to Dal’, the левкой is Cheiranthus (or Matthiola) incanus, which is called wallflower or gilly-flower in English. It grows both wild and cultivated in Europe, thus the садовый qualification. Luther calls them “Wasserlilien und Gartenlevkojen,” while Mongault has “un bouquet de giroflées et lis de marais.” Hapgood translates the names as “lilies from the river and gilly-flowers from the garden.” I would prefer a simpler rendition “water lilies and gilly-flowers.” (“Wallflower” should be avoided because of its figurative meaning in modern English.)
38 (6-8) жена добрая и не знающая чем утешать мужа своего, а утеши Израиевой, Венямина малого, дать ему лишенная: A very roundabout way of saying that his wife was childless. U'me'la is colloquial for “pleasure,” “delight,” or “consolation.” Hapgood, Luther, and Mongault all take up the latter meaning. I believe it would fit better to speak of “Israel’s delight, a little Benjamin.”

39 (8) ужаленный слепнем вол: “Stung by a gadfly” would be a literal translation—which is the way Hapgood translates it. For no apparent reason, Mongault turns the insect into a spur (as if one would ride a bull): “un taureau piqué d’un talon.”

SUGGESTED TRANSLATION

CHURCH FOLKS

PART ONE

Chapter V (continued)

“August 6, the Day of the Transfiguration of our Lord. What a charming thing my darling wife Natalya Nikolayevna is! Again, where except in Holy Russia can such wives be found? I once told her how touched I was by poor old Pizonsky’s tenderness for children, and she immediately understood or guessed my thought and yearning. She embraced me and, with an embarrassed blush so becoming to her, said, ‘Just wait, Father Savely, perhaps the Lord will grant us.’ (She meant grant us children.) I did not question her for details, since her hopes in this respect had always turned out to be groundless and
deceptive. And indeed it developed that there was no basis for expectations. But something deeply touching came out of this false alarm.

“Today, I delivered a sermon devoted to the necessity of always transforming oneself in order to have the strength to be tempered in struggles, like a strong and malleable metal, rather than being flattened like lowly clay that dries with the imprint of the last foot to tread upon it. As I was saying this, I was carried away in a sudden improvisation and made public reference to Pizonsky, who was standing by the door. I did not name him, but spoke of him as of one worshipping amongst us who had come to us naked, suffered ridicule by the foolish for his poverty, yet he not only surmounted these trials but even accomplished one of the greatest human deeds, saving and rearing downy fledglings. I said how sweet it is to warm the defenseless body of children and to plant in their souls the seeds of good. When I said this, I sensed that my eyelids were moist and noticed that many of my listeners had begun to wipe their eyes and look around the church for the person I had mentioned, for Kotin the pauper, Kotin the succor of the unfortunate. But I saw that he was no longer there, having quietly departed when he grasped my allusion, and I suddenly felt what might be called a sharp, sacred ache of regret that I had embarrassed him with praise, and I said, ‘He is not here amongst us, brethren. He does not need my paltry sermon since the fiery finger of God has long since engraved the message of love on his humble heart. I beseech you,’ I said with a bow, ‘all you esteemed and distinguished fellow citizens who have gathered here, forgive me for not selecting a famous commander for our praise, as an image of strength and example for imitation, but rather one of our lowly brethren, and if this troubles you then attribute it to my own insignificance, for your sinful priest Savely, observing this humble person, has
often felt that he is not a priest of God on High in comparison with him, but one whose priestly attire covers his unworthiness, like a gilded, whitened sepulcher. Amen.’

“I know not whether there was anything intelligent or eloquent in these simple words which I uttered quite ex promptu, but I can say that my parishioners heeded something from them. When I held out my hand to those leaving the church, more than a single tear fell on it. But that is not all; the most important event for me was still to come.

“As if to reward my sincere sermon on the joy of caring not just for one’s own, but also for others’ children, the Omnipresent and Omnipotent drew even my unworthiness under His right hand. He revealed to me this day the full value of the treasure which, by virtue of His infinite bounty, I possess, and commanded me to transform myself again into a person fully content with his fate.

“I had just reached home with five apples consecrated following the service when there awaited me on the threshold a certain rather long acquaintance: my darling wife, Natalya Nikolayevna, who had quietly slipped out of church while the others were taking their leave, and had prepared for me, as is her wont, tea and a light snack, and was standing with her little foot in the door, standing not with empty hands but with a bouquet of water lilies and gilly flowers.

“’Well, so you’re a crafty woman, after all, Natalya Nikolayevna!’ I said. (I had never accused her of craftiness before.) But she was smart enough not to take the slightest umbrage; she knew that this was said in jest, and she embraced me silently, but then burst out in sobs. It is her secret, but for me, this thy secret is no secret, good wife unable to comfort her husband, deprived of the delight of the Israelites, a little Benjamin. Yes, her
heart, bursting with love and kindness, met me on that day with only water lilies and gilly flowers!

“We sat down to tea, a childless pair, in silent sorrow, but it was not tea but our tears dissolved in a beverage, and without being conscious of what was happening, we both began to weep, and we fell, hand in hand, before the icon of the Savior and prayed to Him long and fervently for an Israelite solace. Natasha afterwards remarked that she thought she had heard a divine promise from an angel. Even though I understood this to be the fruit of her benign fantasy, we both took heart like children. I must note, however, that even in this mood, Natalya Nikolayevna greatly surpassed me, a coarse male, in her quick wit and in the virtue of her elevated feelings as well.

“‘Tell me, Father Savely,’ she turned to me, caressing me tenderly, ‘Tell me, dear, might you not have been—sometime before you found me—guilty of breaking the commandment of chastity?’

“This question, I must frankly own, troubled me greatly since it suddenly dawned upon me what my irrepressible little wife was driving at in this interrogation so uncharacteristic of her. But using all of her superb modesty and all of that feminine charm that she inherited from nature despite her clerical heritage, she suddenly and truly began slyly to flatter me with memories of my youth, and suggested that what she had hinted at could easily have taken place since I was so attractive that, when I came to Fatezh to speak to her father about the match with her, all the young women—not only from clerical, but even from lay families—were attracted to me. As entertaining as this was, I tried in every way to dispel all doubts about my youth—which was not difficult because in truth I am justified in doing so. But the more firmly I assured her, the more
dejected she became and I did not comprehend why my explanations failed to cheer her up, but on the contrary caused more and more sorrow.

“Finally, she said, ‘Father Savely, think back to when you were single. Couldn’t there be an orphan somewhere?’

“At this point I understood what she meant and knew why she had led up to this topic, and what she was ashamed to say. She was trying to seek out my illegitimate child—which I do not have! What a noble soul! I, like a bull stung by a gadfly, sprang from my place and dashed to the window, and directed my eyes to the distant heavens so that only the heavens saw me, so overcome was I by my wife’s kindness and charity. And she, too, my lily and gilly-flower companion, my white rose, chaste, fragrant, and kind, she too followed my steps; she stole up behind me in silence, placed her tiny paws on my shoulders, and said, ‘Think back, my dear. Perhaps somewhere there is a little one, and if there is, let’s go and get him!’

“Not only did she want to seek him out, she had already come to love and pity him, as a dove chick not yet in feather! I could no longer bear it and, biting my beard, fell to my knees before her, and, bowing to the ground, shuddered with sobs that cannot be described on earth. And in truth, name me times and peoples, save for our Holy Russia, where women with such virtue are born! Who taught her all of this? Who nurtured her, except for Thee, bounteous God, and Thou gavest her to this Thy undeserving servant so that he might feel closer to Thy greatness and goodness.”
BOYARINYA PLODOMASOVA

Leskov published a two-part story “Старые годы в селе Плодомасове” (Old Times in the Village of Plodomasovo) in the journal Сын отечества (Son of the Fatherland) in 1869. These sketches were fragments of a planned much longer work in which Leskov intended to trace the history of several generations of a noble family. He never finished the more extensive chronicle, but reprinted the sketches in his collected works and inserted some of the characters in Соборяне, including this excerpt.

According to these stories, Boyar Nikita Plodomasov was a dissolute hell-raiser who terrorized his neighborhood. Then, in his early fifties, he falls in love with the fifteen-year-old daughter of an impoverished landowner, Marfa Andreyevna Baitsurova. When her parents object to the marriage, Plodomasov kidnap her and subjects her to a forced marriage. The girl’s parents enlist the aid of the province governor, who besieges the Plodomasov estate with troops and eventually frees the girl, who is bound and gagged, but still a virgin since she had threatened suicide if Plodomasov touched her.

When Marfa Andreyevna is unbound and asked to testify against Plodomasov (required for the annulment of the marriage and the arrest of Plodomasov) she surprises everyone by saying that she consented to the marriage. This act inspires Nikita Plodomasov to reform his ways and live a respectable life for the few years left to him. When he dies, Marfa Andreyevna is left a young widow with a small son. She spurns

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80 No. 6, pp. 71-74; No. 7, pp. 85-88, No. 8, pp. 99-103; No. 9, pp. 113-119.

81 See McLean, Nikolai Leskov, p. 177. The stories were also included in modern editions of Leskov’s collected works: for example, in Vol. 3 of the eleven-volume Собрание сочинений published in the 1950s, and in the first volume of the 1973 six-volume Собрание сочинений.
other suitors, refuses to remarry, and spends the rest of her life managing the extensive Plodomasov estates.

In *Соборянне*, we first meet Marfa Andreyevna in the following diary entry. She will also play a key role in the excerpt treated in Chapter Seven, “A Dwarf’s Tale.”

THE RUSSIAN TEXT

28-го ноября. Однако не могу сказать, чтобы жизнь моя была уже совсем обиженна разнообразием. Напротив, все идет впрежнему, так что даже я интерес ни на минуту не ослабевает: то обольгут добрые люди, то начало потреплет, то Троадию скорбноглавому в науку меня назначат, то увлекусь ласками попадьи моей, то замечусь до самолюбия, а время в сем все идет да идет, и к смерти все ближе да ближе. Еще не все! Ещё не все последние моей долголучшей преображенной проповеди совершились. У нас, в восьмнадцати верстах от города, на берегу нашей же реки Турицы, в обширном селе Плодомасове, живет владелица сего села, боярина Марфа Андреева Плодомасова. Сия кочегра столь старого леса, что уже признаков жизни ее издавна никаких не замечается, а известно только по старым памятям, что она женщина весьма немалого духа. Она и великой императрице Екатерине знаема была, и Александр император, поговорив с нею, находил необременительною для себя эту ее беседу; а наиболее всего она известна в народе тем, как она в молодых летах своих одна с Пугачевым сражалась и нашла, как себя от этого мерзкого зверя защитить. Ещё же о чем ежели на ее счет вспоминают, то это еще повторение о ней различных оригинальных анекдотов о ее свиданиях с посещавшими ее губернаторами, чиновниками, а также, в дивнацатом году, с пленими французами; но все это относится к области ее минувшего века. Ныне же про нее забыли, и если когда речь ее особы коснется, то думают, что и она сама уже всех забыла. Лет двадцать уже никто из сторонних людей не может похвастаться, что он боярыню Плодомасову видел.

Третьего дня, часу в двенадцатом пополудни, я был исказаны изумлен, увидев подъезжающие ко мне большие господские дрожжи тройкой больших рыжих коней, а на тех дрожках нарочито небольшого человека, в картузке корсистой шляпной матери с длинным козырем и в коричневой шинели с премножеством один над другим на бранных капищоников и пелерин.

Что бы сие, думаю, за неведомая особа, да и ко мне ли она едет или только ошибкой править на меня путь свой?
Размышления эти мои, однако же, были скоро разрешены самую сию загадочною особой, вошедшей в мою защиру с превзойденною благородностью, которая всегда мне столь нравится. Прежде всего гость попросил моего благословения, а затем, шаркнув своею чрезвычайно маленькою ножкой по полу и отступив с поклоном два шага назад, проговорил:
— Госпожа моя, Марфа Андреевна Плодомасова, приказала мне, отец иерей, вам класться и просить вас немедленно со мною в ним пожаловать.
— В свою очередь, — говорю, — позвольте мне, сударь, узнать, чрез кого я имею честь все это слышать?
— А я, — отвечает онъ животка, — есть крепостной человек ее превосходительства Марфы Андреевны, Николай Афанасьев, — и, таким образом мне отремондировавшись, сия крошечная особа при сем слова напомнила мне, что госпожа его меня ожидает.
— По какому делу, — говорю, — не знаете ли?
— Ее господской воли, батюшка, я, раб ее, знать не могу, — отвечал карлик и сим скромным ответом на мой несообразный вопрос до того меня сконфузил, что я даже начал пред ним изворачиваться, будто я спрашивал его вовсе не в том смысле. Спасибо ему, что он не стал меня допрашивать: в каком бы то ни было смысле таковой вопрос мог быть сделан.
Пока я в смежной комнате одевался, сей интересный карлик вступил в собеседование с Наташей и совсем увлек и внес в них своими речами. Действительно, и в словах его и в самом говоре сего крошечного старичка есть нечто невыразимо милое и ко всему сему благородство и ласковость. Слушанье, которая подала ему стакан воды, он положил на поднос двухгравиный, и когда сия взяла эти деньги сомневалась, он сам с конфузился и заговорил: «Нет, матушка, не обидьте, это у меня такая привычка»; а когда попадая моя вышла ко мне, чтобы волосы мне на- помнать, он взял на руки случившуюся здесь за матерью замаракшу-девочку кухаркину и говорит: «Слушай, как вон уточки на бережку разговаривают. Уточка-фраяиха говорит селезень-косяру: купи коты, купи коты! а селезень отвечает: заказал, заказал!» И дита рассмеялось, да и я тоже сему сочинению словесному птичьего раз- говора невольно улыбнулся. Этого хотя бы даже господину
Лафонтену или Ивану Крылову впору. Дорогу не заметил, как и пролет в разговорах с этим пречудесным краеугольным камнем ума, чистоты и здравости нашел во всех его рассуждениях.

Но теперь самое главное: наступал час свидания моего с одинокой боярыней.

Немалое для меня удивление составлял, что при приближении сего свидания я, от природы моей не робкий, ощущал в себе нечто вроде небольшой робости. Николай Афана́сийч, проведя меня через ряд с поразительною для меня пышностью и крайней чистотой содержимых покое́в, ввел меня в круглую комнату с двумя рядами окон, изукрашенных в полукургах цветными стеклами; здесь мы нашли старушку немногою чем побольше Николая. При въезде нашем она стояла и вертела ручку большого органа, и я уже чуть было не принял ее за самую оригинальную-боярню в честь которой не раскладывался. Но она, увидев нас, неслышно вошедшем по устилающим покой пушстым коврам, немедленно при явлении нашем оставила свою музыку и бросилась с несколькими зверями, пронзившь ухватой в смежный покой, двери кого завешены боль- шою занавесью белого атласа, по которому вышиты цветными зелеными шелками разные китайские фигуры.

Эта женщина, скрывшаяся с такою поспешностью за занавесью, как я после узнал, родная сестра Николая и тоже карлица, но лишенная приятности, имеющейся в кроткой наружности ее брата.

Николай тоже скрылся вслед за сестрою под ту же самую занавеску, а мне указал дожидаться на кресле. Тутто вот, в течение времени, длившегося за сим около полу-часа, я и почувствовал некую смятость во рту, столь знакомую мне по бывшим ощущениям в детстве во время экзаменов. Но, наконец, настал и сему конец. За тою же самою занавесью я услышал такие слова: «А ну, покажи-ка мне этого умного попа, который, я слышала, прибыл правду говорить?» И с сим занавесью как бы маковением чародейским, на невидимых шнурах, распланировался, и я увидел пред собой саму боярню Плоскоголова. Голос ее, ко-торый я пред сим только что слышал, уже достаточно противоречил моему мнению о ее дряхлости, а вид ее противоречил сему и еще того более. Боярня стояла пред мной в сили, которой, казалось, как бы и конца быть не
может. Ростом она не велика и не дородна особенно, но как бы над всем будто царствует. Лицо ее хранит выражение большой строгости и правды и, судя по чертам, надо полагать, никогда было прекрасно. Костюм ее довольно странный и нынешнему времени ненесоответствующий: вся голова ее тщательно увита в несколько раз большою коричневою шалью, как у туркмен. Далее на ней, как бы сказать, какой-то суконный казакин светлого цвета; потом под этим казакиным юбка аksamитная ярко-оранжевая и желтые сапожки на высоких серебряных каблучках, а в руке палочка с аметистовым набалдашником. С одного боку ее стоял Николай Афанасьевич, с другого — Марья Афанасьевна, а сзади ее — сельский священник, отец Алексей, по ее назначению посвященный из ее на волю пущенных крепостных.

— Здравствуй! — сказала она мне, головы нимало не наклоняя, и добавила: — я тебя рада видеть.

Я в ответ на это ей поклонился, и, кажется, даже и с изрядною неловкостью поклонился.

— Поди же, благослови меня, — сказала она.
Я подошел и благословил ее, а она взяла и поцеловала мое руку, чего я всячески намерен был уклониться.

— Не дергай руки, — сказала она, сие заметив, — это не твою руку я целую, а твоего сана. Садись теперь и давай немедленно познакомимся.

Сели мы: она, я и отец Алексей, а карлики возле ее стали.

— Мне говорил отец Алексей, что ты даром проповеди и хорошим умом обладаешь. Он сам в этом ничего не смущает, а верно от людей слышал, а я уж давно умных людей не видела и вот захотела со скуки на тебя посмотреть. Ты за это на старуху не сердись.

Я мешался в ответах и, вероятно, весьма мало отвечал тому, что ей об уме моем было насказано, но она, к счастью, приступила к расспросам, на которые мне пришлось отвечать.

— Тебя, говорят, раскольников учить прислали? — так она начала.

— Да, — говорю, — между прочим имелась в виду и такая цель в моей посылке.

— Полагаю, — говорит, — бесполезное это дело: дурakov учить все равно что мертвых лечить.
Я не помню, какими точно словами отвечал, что не со- всем всех раскольников глупыми понимаю.
— Что ж, ты, умными их почитая, сколько успел их на путь наставить?
— Нимало, — говорю, — еще не могу успехом похва- статься, но тому есть причины.
Она. О каких ты говоришь причинах?
Я. Способ действия с ними несоответствующий, а зло растет через ту шатость, которую они видят в церковном обществе в самом духовенстве.
Она. Ну, зло-то, какое в них зло? Так себе, дурачки божии, тем грешны, что книг начитались.
Я. А православный алтарь все-таки страждет на этом распадении.
Она. А вы бы этому алтарю-то поверхнее служили, а не оборачивали бы его в лавочку, так от вас бы и отпадения не было. А то вы ныне все благодарью, как сукном, тор- гуете.
Я промолчал.
Она. Ты женат или вдов?
Я. Женат.
Она. Ну, если бог благословит детьми, то зови меня кумой: я к тебе пойду креститься. Сама не поеду: вон ее, карлику свою, пошли, а если сына дитя привезешь, так и сама подержу.
Я опять поблагодарил и, чтобы разговориться, спра- шивая:
— Ваше превосходительство, верно, изволите любить детей?
— Кто же, — говорит, — путной человек детей не лю- бит? Их есть царствие божие.
— А вы давно одни изволите жить?
Она. Одна, отец, одна, и давно я одна, — проговорила она, вздохнув.
Я. Одинчество это часто довольно тягостно.
Она. Что это?
Я. Одинчество.
Она. А ты разве не одинок?
Я. Каким же образом я одинок, когда у меня есть жена?
Она. Что ж, разве твоя жена все понимает, чем ты, как умный человек, можешь поскорбеть и поболеть?
Я. Я женой моей счастлив и люблю ее.
Она. Любишь? Но ты ее любишь сердцем, а помыслами души все-таки одинок стоящий. Не жалей меня, что я одинока: весь брат, кто в семье дальше братьев носа смотрит, и между своими одиноким себя увидит. У меня тоже сын есть, но уж я его третий год не видела, знать ему скучно со мною.
Я. Где же теперь ваш сын?
Она. В Польше мой сын, полком командует.
Я. Это доблестное дело врагов отчизны смирять.
Она. Не знаю я, сколько в этом доблести, что мы с этими поляками о сю пору возимся, а по-моему, вдвое больше в этом мелоды.
Я. Справимся-с, придет время.
Она. Никогда оно не придет, потому что оно уж ушло, а мы всё как кулик в болоте стояли: и нос долож и хвост долож: нос вытащим — хвост завязнет, хвост вытащим — нос завязнет. Перекачиваемся, да дураков тесним: то поляков нагайками потушаем, то у их хитрых полячек ручки целуем; это грешно и мерзко так людей портить.
— А все же, — говорю, — войска наши там по крайней мере удерживают поляков, чтоб они нам не вредили.
— Ни от чего они их, — отвечает, — не удерживают; да и нам те поляки не страшны бы, когда б мы сами друг друга есть обещанья не сделали.
— Это, — говорю, — осуждение вашего превосходительства, кажется, как бы несколько излиши сурово.
Она. Ничего нет в правде излиши сурового.
30 — Вы же, — говорю, — сами, вероятно, изволите помнить двенадцатый год: сколько тогда на Руси единодушия явлено.
Она. Как же, как мне не помнить: я сама вот из этого самого окна глядела, как наши казачьи моих мужиков колотили и мои амбары грабили.
— Что ж это, — говорю, — может быть, что такой случай и случился, я казачьей репутации нимало не защищая, но все же мы себя героически отстояли от того, пред кем вся Европа ниц простертою лежала.
Она. Да, удалось, как бог да мороз нам помогли, так мы и отстояли.
Отзыв сей, сколь пренебрегательный, столь же и несправедливый, подействовал на меня так пренебрежительно, что я, даже не скрывая сей неприятности, возразил:

— Неужто же, государыня моя, в вашем мнении все в России только случайностями едиными и происходит? Дайте, говорю, раз слушаю и два слушаю, а хоть в третье уже киньте нечто уму и народным доблестьм предводителей.

— Все, отец, случай, и во всем, что сего государства касается, скрою божьей воли, мне доселе видится только одни случайности. Прихлопнули бы твои раскольники Петрушу-воителя, так и сидели бы мы на своей хваленной земле до сих пор не государством великим, а прудов каких-нибудь толстогубых турецких болгар, да у самих бы этих поляков руки целовали. За одно нам хвала—что много нас: не скоро поедим друг друга; вот этот случай нам хорошая заручка.

— Грустно, — говорю.

— А ты не грусти: чужие земли похвалой стоят, а наша и хайдской крепка будет. Да нам с тобою и говорить довольно, а то я уж устала. Прощай; а если что худое случится, то прибеги, рожалуйся. Ты не смотри на меня, что я такой гриб лафертовский: грибы-то и в лесу живут, а и по городам про них знают. А что если на тебя нападут, то ты этому радуйся; если бы ты льстив или глуп был, так на тебя бы не нападали, а хвалили бы и другим в пример ставили.

Проговорив эти слова, она оборотилась к карлику, дерзавшей во все время нашего разговора в руках сверточек, и, передавая свой мне, сказала:

— Отдай вот это от меня своей попаде, это здесь коралки с моей шишки; два отреза на плате, да холст для домашнего обихода, а это тебе от меня альмандинов перстень.

Педрacob этот, предложенный хотя во всей простоте, все-таки меня несколько смутил, и я, глядя на нити кораллов, и на шелковые материи, и на ярко горящий альмандин, сказал:

— Государыня моя! очень благодарю вас за столь лестное ваше к нам внимание; но вещи сии столь великолепны, а жена моя женщина столь простая...
— Что ж,— перебила меня она,— тем и лучше, что у тебя простая жена; а где и на муже и на жене на обоих штаны надеты, там не бывать проку. Наилучшее дело, если баба в своей женской исподнице ходит, и ты вот за то на исподницу от меня это и отвези. Бабы любят подарки, а я дарить люблю. Бери же и поезжай с богом.

Вот этим она и весь разговор свой со мною окончила и, признаваясь, несказанно меня удивила. По некоей привычке к логичности, едучи обратно домой и пользуясь молчаливостью того же Николая Афанасьевича, взявшегося быть моим провожатым, я старался себе уяснить, что за сенс

мировой всё это, что ею говорено, в себе заключает? И не нашел я тут никакой логической связи, либо весьма мало ее отыскивал, а только все лишь какие-то обрывки мыслей встречал; но такие обрывки, что невольно их помнишь, да и забыть едва ли сумеешь. Уповая, не лугу те, кон называли сию бабу в свое время весьма мозгивитою.

А главное, что меня в удивление приводит, так это моя пред нею нежелательность, и чему сие приписывал, что я, как бы оробев сначала, примкнул язык мой к гортаны и если о чем заговаривал, то все это выходило весьма скудно, и она разговор, словно на смех мне, поворачивала с прикосновением, и когда я заботился, как бы мне репрезентоваться умнее, дабы хотя слишком грубо в себе не разочаровать, она совершенно об этом небрежна и слов своих, очевидно, не подготовляла, а н-моего ума не испытывала, и вышла меж тем таковою, что я ее позабыть не в состоянии. В чем эта сила ее заключается? Полагаю, в том образовании светском, которым небрежет наши воспитатели духовные, часто впоследствии отнимая чрез это лишение у нас самое необходимую находчивость и ловкость в обращении со светскими особами.

Но дню сему было определено этим не окончиться, а суждено, видно, ему было заключиться еще новым курьезом. Первая радость простодушной Наташи моей по случаю подарков не успела меня достаточно потешить, как начал свои подарки представлять нам этот досточтеннейший и сразу все мое уважение себе получивший карло Николай Афанасьевич. По началу он презентовал мне

1 Смысл (франц. — зенз).
белой бумаги с красными каемочками вязаные носочки, а потом жене косынку из трусиковой нежной шерсти, и не успел я странности сих новых, неожиданных подарков на-
dавиться, как он вынул из кармана шерстяные чулки и вручил их подававшейся самовар работнице нашей Аксине.
«Что это за день подарков!» — незвонко вскипнув я, не смел горчить дарителя отказом. А он на это мне ответил, что это все его собственных рук изделие. «Нужды, — говорил, — в работе, благода́ря благодарительности моей, не имея и не будучи ни чему иному обучен, я постоянно занимаюсь вязанием, чтобы в праздник время не проводить и иметь удовольствие кому-нибудь что-нибудь презентовать от трудов своих». Так мне понравилась эта простота, что я схватил сего малого человечка на грудь мою и поцелуйми освя-нал его чут не до удушения.

Да заключу ли я, однако, и сим мое сегодняшнее описа-
ние? Уехавшим служителем боярыни Плодомасовой еще все чудеса дня сего не окончились. Запирая на ночь дверь переднего покоя, Аксиня усмотрела на платочной вешалке нечто вищее, как бы на тем принадлежащее, и когда мы с Наташей на ние были сего служанкой позваны, то нашли: во-первых, темно-коричневый французского гроде-
vаплю подносяк; во-вторых, богатый гарусный пояс с вунцовым лентами для завязок, а в-третьих, драгоцен-
нейшего зеленого неразрезного бархата рас; в-четвертых же, в длинном куске коленкора полное нерейское обла-
чение.

Просто были все мы поражены сего находкой и не зна-
ли, как объяснить себе ее происхождение; но Аксиня пер-
вая усмотрела на пуговище у воротника рясы вязаную карточку, на косе круглыми, так сказать египетского штиля, буквами было написано: «Помяни, друг отец Са-
vелий, рабу Мару в своих молитвах». Ахнули мы, но не-
чего было делать, и стали разлагать по столу новое обла-
чение. Тут еще большее нас ожидало. Только начала Наташа раскатывать епитираль, смотрим: из него упал запечатанный конверт на свое имя, а в том конверте пятьсот рублей с самой маленькой записки, тюком такой рукой писанною. Пишет: «Дабы ожидающее сеньи твои при несча-
стиях не скучало у алтаря предстоящего, купи себе хибару и возрасти тыкву; тогда спокойнее можешь о строении дела божия думать».  

52
ANALYSIS AND COMMENT

This excerpt differs from the preceding two in that it contains extensive dialogue, as remembered by Tuberozov. The boyarinya comes across as direct, plain speaking, and—despite respect for Tuberozov’s clerical status—quite condescending. For example, she addresses him with the familiar ты, while he, as a social inferior, uses more respectful forms. The мы/вы contrast can easily be duplicated in French (tu/vous) and German (du/Ihr, or Sie), but not in English, since thou and ye would not seem right for conversation in the nineteenth century. Therefore, we must find other ways to indicate this distinction in our English translation.

At one point in the conversation Marfa Andreyevna switches from мы to вы, but this is not an attempt to raise Tuberozov’s relative status, but to indicate a plural, since she is accusing the clergy of commercializing the altar, not necessarily Tuberozov personally. It could be handled in English by “you all,” but since this usage is identified with the American South, it is probably best to use an expression like “you priests” to render it.

Only a few passages need specific comment:
44 (7-9) to оболгут добрые люди, то начальство потреплет, то

Troadiю скорбноглазвому в науку меня назначат ... As he begins to recount the things that have added variety to his life, Tuberozov makes reference to incidents he mentioned earlier in the diary: derogatory reports to his superiors, their reprimands, and the order to submit his sermons to the censor Troady. Hapgood translated these phrases: “now good people calumniate, then the authorities worry me, then they apprentice me to mournful-head Troadiy ...” Mongault makes all the actions explicitly personal with “De braves gens me calumnient, mes supérieurs me lavent la tête, on me met sous la férule de ce ‘rechigné’ de Troade... .” Luther is more literal with “einmal verleumden einen die guten Leute, einman zaust einen die lübliche Obrigkeit, dann werde ich zu dem geistesarmen Troadij in die Schule geschickt ... .” Although it is clear that Tuberozov is the victim of all three things, the first two are stated impersonally, as Luther translates them. I believe that keeping the first two impersonal does not distort the meaning. Therefore I would suggest something like: “… ‘good people’ spread lies, the authorities harass, then I am sent to take lessons from gloomy-face Troady ... .”

45 (19) батюшка and 45 (34) матушка: These are colloquial, respectful and affectionate terms of address for priests, priests’ wives, and for older persons in general. Hapgood translates the first as “Father,” and simply employs the transliterated matushka for the second. Mongault has, “mon Père” and “ma bonne,” respectively, while Luther omits батюшка and translates матушка as “meine Beste.” I would think that “father archpriest,” and “dear lady” would work in this context.

45 (36-37) он взял на руки случившуюся здесь за матерью замарашку-девчонку кухаркину ... Hapgood seems to have misunderstood
случившуюся, since she translated the passage, “he took charge of the slovenly wench who helps her mother the cook.” Also, “slovenly wench” is hardly appropriate for the dirty (or disheveled) little girl Tuberozov refers to. Mongault has: “il prit par la main la fille de cette brave femme, une petite souillon qui traînait dans les jupes de sa mere.” (I can’t find any reference to hanging on her mother’s skirts in Leskov’s Russian!) Luther is much more exact that either Hapgood or Mongault with his, “… nahm er das schmutzige Mädelchen der Köchin, das der Mutter nachgelaufen war, bei der Hand …” I would translate the passage: “He took the hand of the cook’s disheveled little daughter, who turned up looking for her mother … .”

45 (38-40) Уточка-франтиха говорит селезню-козырю: купи коты, купи коты! а селезень отвечает: заказал, заказал! The point of the translation is not to translate the meaning of the imitation of ducks’ quacking, of course, but to find some amusing words that could be construed to be similar to the sound made by ducks. Hapgood simply transliterates the Russian and explains the meaning in a footnote (коты being a dialectical term for warm slippers, usually of fur). Mongault and Luther do better with the sounds, but Mongault cannot resist adding to the calls: “‘Coin, coin, pas si loin, viens, viens,’ dit la cane, qui ne veut pas laisser son mâle se dandiner dans la boue. ‘Bien, bien, je reviens, coin, coin,’ lui répond le coquin.” Luther’s sounds are not quite as felicitous as Mongault’s “coin, coin” and he also does a bit of expanding the text: “Die Ente, die feine Dame, sagt zum Enterich, dem Kavalier: Kauf mir’ne Kappe, kauf mir’ne Kappe!—und der Enterich antwortete: Hab’ schon, hab’ schon, hab’ schon!” I would suggest: “The dolled-up mama duck says to the papa duck strutting around, ‘Don’t go far, don’t go far!’ and the papa duck says, ‘Be right back, be right back!’”
November 23rd. But I cannot say that up to now diversity has been only an affliction in my life. On the contrary, everything proceeds in alteration, so that my interest does not flag even for a moment: now good people are slandering someone; now the government leaders are thrashing about; now I am assigned to take Troadios of the mournful countenance for study; now I am distracted by my wife’s caresses; now I sink into reverie to the point of narcissism, and time passes in this way and death draws ever nearer.

But that is not all! Not all consequences of my ill-starred Transfiguration sermon have yet been exhausted. In our neighborhood, twelve miles from the town, on the banks of our Turitsa River, in the large village of Plodomasovo, there lives the owner of that village, Boyarinya Marfa Andrevna Plodomasova. She is a crone of such ancient vintage that for a long time no one has observed any signs of life on her part; older memories recall only that she is a woman of no little spirit. She was known to the great Empress Catherine, and when Emperor Alexander spoke with her, he found her conversation not burdensome. But people remember her best of all for the way she fought Pugachev in her early years and managed to defend herself from that vile beast. And if other things about her are remembered, they come out in the retelling of various anecdotes of her encounters with visiting governors, officials, and—in 1812—French prisoners of war. But all this
relates to a past era. You hear nothing about her these days, and if a conversation does allude to her person, it is assumed that she herself has forgotten everyone else. For twenty years, no one from outside her family can boast of having seen Boyarinya Plodomasova.

Day before yesterday, at about twelve o’clock noon, I was unspeakably surprised to see approaching my house a large estate coach with a team of three large chestnut steeds, and on the coach a remarkably small person in a felt cap with a long bill and a brown overcoat with a multitude of hoods and capes folded one upon the other. Who could this unknown person be, and was he visiting me or was he headed this way by mistake?

These thoughts of mine were quickly resolved, however, by the mysterious person himself, who entered my house with the most elegant politeness, which always pleases me. My guest first sought my blessing and then, clicking his extraordinarily small feet against the floor and retreating two paces in a bow, stated, “My owner, Marfa Andreyevna Plodomasova, has instructed me, Father Archpriest, to convey her greetings and request that you come with me forthwith to pay a call.”

“For my part,” I say, “permit me, Sir, to inquire from whom I have the honor to hear this.”

“I am the serf of Her Excellency Marfa Andreyevna, Nikolai Afanasyev,” replied the dwarf, and having introduced himself to me in this fashion, this tiny person reminded me again that his mistress awaited me.

“Do you happen to know,” I inquire, “the purpose of my visit?”
“Honored Sir, I, her slave, am not privy to her seigniorial volition,” the dwarf replied, and his humble answer to my impertinent question so embarrassed me that I even began to dissimulate before him, pretending that an incorrect inference had been drawn from my question. I am grateful that he did not press me to explain in what other sense such a question could be construed.

When I was putting on my outer clothing in the next room, the dwarf entered into a conversation with Natasha and his speech fascinated and delighted her. Actually, there is something inexpressibly attractive, in addition to nobility and affection, in this tiny old man’s words and in his manner of speaking. He placed a twenty-kopek coin on the tray for the servant who brought him a glass of water, and when she hesitated to take the money he was disconcerted and said, “Please, Madam, do not be offended at this habit of mine,” and when my wife came in to pomade my hair, he took the hand of the cook’s disheveled little girl, who had popped in looking for her mother, and said, “Listen to the ducks talking over there on the river bank. The dolled-up mama duck says to the papa duck strutting around, ‘Don’t go far, don’t go far!’ and the papa duck says, ‘Be right back, be right back!’” The child burst out laughing and even I smiled at this verbal representation of bird chatter. It is worthy of M. La Fontaine or an Ivan Krylov. The journey to the estate passed imperceptibly, so engrossed was I in conversation with this remarkable dwarf and finding such great intelligence, purity and soundness in his observations.

But now the most important thing: the time for my meeting with the hermit boyarinya had arrived.
It came as no small surprise to me, by no means naturally timid, that I felt something akin to a slight shyness as the meeting approached. Nikolai Afanasyevich led me through a series of chambers that dazzled me by their sumptuousness and sparkling cleanliness, and into a circular room with two rows of windows adorned with semi-circular panes of stained glass. Here we found an elderly lady just slightly larger than Nikolai. When we came in she was standing and cranking a large organ. I nearly took her for the boyarinya and almost bowed to her. But when she noticed our entry—which had been noiseless over the thick carpets spread in the halls—she immediately abandoned her music and plunged with almost animal haste and agility into a side room, the doors of which were covered with a large curtain of white satin on which various Chinese figures were embroidered in silk.

The woman who disappeared behind the curtain with such haste, as I learned subsequently, was Nikolai’s sister, also a dwarf, but without the appeal of her brother’s humble appearance.

Nikolai followed his sister behind the same curtain, motioning me to wait in an easy chair. At that time, during my wait, which lasted about half an hour, I felt a certain dryness in my mouth, so familiar to me from the sensations in my youth during examination periods. But, finally, the waiting came to an end. From behind the same curtain I heard words like, “Well, show me that smart priest, who I hear is taken to telling the truth.”

With that the curtain parted, as if by a magician’s wave, on invisible cords, and I saw before me Boyarinya Plodomasova herself. Her voice, which I heard immediately preceding her appearance, had already contradicted my image of her frailty, and her
appearance contrasted with it all the more. The boyarinya stood before me with a vigor, it would seem, that could have no end. She was not tall and not especially stout, yet she seemed to reign over everyone. Her face preserved a blunt and severe expression and, judging by her features, one would suppose that she had been a beauty. Her attire was rather strange and not in current fashion: her head was wrapped in several turns of a brown shawl, like a Turkish lady. Further, she wore a bright-colored knee-length man’s coat and under it a skirt of orange velour and yellow boots with high silver heels. Her hand grasped a walking stick with an amethyst handle. Nikolai Afanasyevich stood on one side and Marya Afanasyevna on the other. Behind her was the village priest, Father Alexei, who had been ordained on her direction from among the serfs she had manumitted.

“Hello,” she said to me, not tilting her head in the slightest, and added, “I am pleased to see you.”

In response, I bowed to her, and my bow seemed quite clumsy to me.

“Hold on. Give me your blessing,” she said.

I went up to her, blessed her, and she took and kissed my hand, which I tried in every way to avoid.

“Don’t pull your hand away,” she said, noticing this. “It is not your hand I kiss, but your vocation. Have a seat and let’s get acquainted.”

We sat down, Father Alexei and I, and the dwarfs stood beside her.

“Father Alexei tells me that you have the gift of preaching and a good mind. That is not his opinion, but he heard it from others, and I have not seen clever people in a long
time and from boredom wished to have a look at you. Don’t be angry at an old woman for this.”

My response was confused, and I probably had little to say about what she had been told regarding my intelligence, but fortunately she began putting questions to me which I had to answer.

“I hear they sent you to instruct the schismatics,” she began.

“Yes,” I said, “my assignment did include that goal among others.”

“I reckon that to be a useless task,” she said. “Teaching fools is like trying to cure the dead.”

I do not remember the precise words of my reply, but I do not consider all schismatics to be fools.

“So you consider the ones you manage to set on the right path to be smart?”

“Not at all,” I say. “I cannot boast of success as yet, but I have reasons for my opinion.”

She: “What reasons are you talking about?”

I: “Our treatment of them is not appropriate and evil grows as a result of the weakness they see in our ecclesiastical society and in the clergy itself.”

She: “Well, as for evil, what kind of evil is there in them? Say what you will, God’s fools sin the more when they fill themselves up with book learning.”

I: “But the altar of Orthodoxy suffers all he same from this fissure.”

She: “You would serve that altar more truly if you did not turn it to commerce, and there would be no falling away from you. These days you’ve taken to selling Grace like cloth.”
I remained silent.

She: “Are you married or widowed?”

I: “Married.”

She: “Well, if God blesses you with children, invite me to be the godmother. I’ll come for the Christening. That is, I won’t come myself, but will send her, my dwarf lady, and if you bring the child here, I’ll hold it myself.”

I thanked her again, and in order to sustain the conversation asked, “Your Excellency, is it true that you deign to love children?”

“Who but a reprobate does not love children? Of such is the Kingdom of God.”

“Have you deigned to live alone for long?”

She: “Alone, Father, alone. I’ve been alone for a long time,” she stated with a sigh.

I: “Solitude can often become somewhat onerous.”

She: “What is onerous?”

I: “Solitude.”

She: “Are you not alone?”

I: “How could I be alone when I have a wife?”

She: “Well, can your wife really understand the things that make you, an intelligent, educated man, grieve and suffer?”

I: “I am happy with my wife and love her.”

She: “Love her? You love her with your heart, but in spiritual matters you nevertheless stand alone. Do not pity me for my solitude. Every brother in a family who
can see beyond his nose will see that he is alone even among his own people. I have a son myself, but I haven’t seen him for over two years. Seems he’s bored with me.”

_I:_ “Where is your son now?”

_She:_ “My son is in Poland, in command of a regiment.”

_I:_ “It is a valorous calling to subdue the enemies of our fatherland.”

_She:_ “I don’t know how much valor there is in it when we are still fiddling around with these Polacks to this very day. Seems to me it’s far more a matter of killing time.”

_I:_ “We shall manage, I’m sure. The time will come.”

_She:_ “It’ll never come. The time has passed, and we are stuck like a sandpiper in a swamp. Nose long and tail long. Pull out the nose and the tail sticks; pull out the tail and the nose sticks. We keep vacillating and give comfort to fools. We entertain the Poles with whips, then kiss the hands of the crafty Polish ladies. It’s sinful and vile to spoil folks that way.”

“Well, in any case,” I say, “our troops there have at least restrained the Poles so that they do us no harm.”

“They’re not restraining them from anything, and these Poles would be no threat to us if we Russians weren’t determined to eat each other up.”

“Your Excellency’s condemnation seems to me of rather excessive severity.”

_She:_ “In truth, I’ve said nothing too harsh. “

“You probably remember 1812 yourself—the way all Russia arose as one.”

_She:_ “How could I not remember? I watched from that very window they way our Cossack savages thrashed my peasants and robbed my granaries.”
“Well,” I say, “perhaps such things did happen—I don’t in the slightest defend the reputation of Cossacks—but all the same, we heroically withstood the person before whom all of Europe lay prostrate.”

She: Yes, we managed. With the help of God and winter, we did hold fast.

This reaction, so disdainful, so unjust as well had such a deeply repugnant effect on me that I objected without hiding my distaste: “Can it be, dear Lady, that you consider everything that happens in Russia to be merely chance? Attribute it to chance the first time, and to chance even the second time, but the third time at least cast a crumb to the intelligence and national valor of our leaders.”

“All is chance, Father, and to this day I see nothing, save only the will of God, that touches this country as anything but accidental. If your schismatics had done in our rowdy Peter, then we would be living in our vaunted land not as a great state but like some sort of thick-lipped Bulgars under the Turks, and we would be kissing the hands of these same Poles. We are to be praised for only one thing—there are many of us and we won’t soon devour each other. This accident gives us a modicum of protection.”

“Sad,” I say.

“Don’t you be sad. Other lands are worth praising, but ours will still be strong even if people run it down. Well, we’ve talked enough, and I’m tired. Goodbye, and if any problem arises, just come to me. Don’t think of me as nothing more than an old mushroom. Mushrooms live in the forest, but people in town know about them too. And if they take you to task, be pleased with it. If you were a boot-licker or were stupid, they would not attack you, but would praise you and hold you up as an example to others.”
When she finished these words, she turned to Nikolai’s sister, who had been holding a small package throughout our conversation, and handed it to me saying, “Give this to your wife from me. This is a coral necklace from my wardrobe, two pieces of fabric for a dress, material for household use, and this almandine ring is for you.”

These gifts, although offered without pretense, nevertheless made me feel uncomfortable and, looking at the string of corals, the silk material and the brightly shining almandine, I said, “My lady, I thank you very much for such flattering attention to us, but these things are so magnificent and my wife is such a simple woman…”

“So, all the better that you have an unpretentious wife,” she interrupted. “No good ever comes of it when both husband and wife wear pants. It’s best when the woman wears her petticoat, and you take this from me to make her a petticoat. Women love gifts and I love to give them. Take them and God be with you.”
THE TALE OF THE SURROGATE

This excerpt recounts the growing animosity between a newly arrived governor and Tuganov, the local Marshal of the Nobility, a largely honorary title of the person who represented the landed gentry in the area. The new governor, like his predecessors, is suspicious of the church and contemptuous of the clergy, while Tuganov, an erstwhile free thinker, begins to defend the Church and the clergy in order to spite the governor.

It was supposedly written about twenty five years after the previous excerpt, describing the visit to Boyaninya Plodomasova. The intervening diary entries give the Archpriest’s view of some of the events recounted in the excerpts selected for the next chapter, on the translation of colloquial language.
20-го января 1863 года. Пишу замечательную и назидательную историю о суррогате. Сообщают такую курьезную повесть о первом свидании сего нового губернатора с нашим предводителем Тугановым. Сей высшей политики исполненный петербургский шпион и Вольтеру нашему отредактировал себя демократом, за что Туганов на бале в дворянском собрании в глаза при всех его и похвалил, добавив, что это направление самое прекрасное и особенно в настоящее время идущее кстати, так как у нас уездах в трех изрядных годов и для любви к народу открыта широкая деятельность. Губернатор сему весьма возводил, что есть годов, но осердчал, что ему это до сих пор было неизвестно, и, подозревая своего правитель, сильно ему выговорил, что тот его не известил о сем прежде, причем, как настоящий толокня, тотчас же велел донести о сем в Петербург. Но правитель, оправдая перед ним свою вину, молвил, что замечаемый в тех уездах годов еще не есть настоящий годов; ибо хотя там хлеб и пропал, но зато изрядно родилось просо. Отсюда и началась история. «Что такое просо?» — воскликнул губернатор. «Просо — суррогат хлеба» — отвечал ученый правитель. Вместо того чтобы просто сказать, что из проса кашу варят, что может статься, удовлетворял бы и нашего правоведа, ибо он должен быть мастер варить кашу. Но, однако, случилось так, что сказано ему «суррогат». «Стыдитесь, — возразил, услыхав это слово, вышенеполитик, — стыдитесь обманывать меня, когда стоит войти в любую фруктовую лавку, чтобы знать, на что употребляется просо: в просе виноград возят!» Туганов серьезно похвал, а через день послал из комиссии продовольства губернатору список хлебных семян в Россию. Губернатор сконфузился, увидав там просо, и, призвав своего правитель, сказал: «Извините, что я вам тогда не поверил, вы правы, просо — хлеб». Всесердечношь тебя, любезный демократ, сожалею! Немец хотя и полагал, что Николай Угодник совсем промышляет, но так не виноградничал.

6-го декабря. Постоянно приходят вести о контрах между предводителем Тугановым и губернатором, который, говорят, отыскивает, чем бы ткнуть предводителя за свое «просо», и, наконец, кажется, они столкнулись. Губер-
натор все за крестьян, а тот, Вольтер, за свои права и вольности. У одного правоведство смывло покрылось, так что ему надо бы пожелать позабыть то, что он узнал, а у другого — говору с Араватской гору и уже никакого ни к каким правам почтения. У них будет баталия.

20-го декабря. Приехали на святки семинаристы, и сын отца Захария, дающий приватные уроки в добрых домах, привез совершино невероятную и диковинную новость: какой-то отставной солдат, притаясь в уголке Покровской церкви, снял венец с чудотворной иконы Иоанна Воина и, будучи взят с тем венцом в доме своем, объяснил, что он этого венца не крад, а что, жалуясь на необесценение отставного русского воина, молил сего святого воинствовать и пособить ему в его бедности, а святое, ея вняв нему, проговорил: «Я их за это накажу в будущем веке, а тебе на жерна похудо это», и с съединеными словами снял будто бы своею рукой с головы оный драгоценный венец и промолвил: «Возьми». Стоит ли, кажется, такое объяснение какого-либо внимания? Но просу воздейст
вавшую рассуждено иначе, и от губернатора в консисторию исследовал запрос: могло ли происходить такое чудо? Разумеется, что консистория очутилась в затруднении, ибо нельзя было отвечать, что чудо невозможно; но к чему же, однако, это направляется? Предводитель Туганов по сю обстоятельству секретно запретил и написал, что видит это действие ниоткуда и предпринимаемым единственно для колебания веры и для насмешки над духовенством. Таким образом, свой старый невер становится за духовенство, а обязаннный защищать оное правоведец над ним издаваясь. Нет, кажется, и иправду уже грядет час, и ныне есть, когда здравый разум будет не в состоянии усматривать во всем совершающемся хотя малейшую странность. Самое заступление Туганова, так как оно не но ревности к вере, а по еретиче к губернатору, то хотя бы это, по-видимому, и на пользу в нем настоящем случае, но, однако, радоваться тут нечему, ибо чего-то можно ожидать хорошего, если в государстве все един над другим станут издаваться, забывая, что они одной короне присягали и одной стране служат? Плохо-с!

9-го января 1864. Сам Туганов приезжал зачем-то в Плодомасово. Я не утерпел и поехал вчера повидаться и узнать насчет его борьбы и его протеста за Иоанна Воина,
ANALYSIS AND COMMENT

Tuberozov’s prose takes on a lighter and more contemporary tone as the years pass. This excerpt was supposedly written some thirty-two years after the first entry, and though Tuberozov still employs in it occasional old-fashioned forms and expressions, he also mixes more colloquial and dialectical expressions than he did when he had just begun his diary.

78 (7) шпис A loan-word from the German (Spieß), in Russian a slang equivalent of “big shot.” Hapgood translates it “fop,” Luther, “Kavalier.” Tuberozov uses other mocking colloquialisms for the governor, such as тороныга [78 (17)] (impatient man, man in a hurry); as well as terms applied with irony, such as праковед [78 (25)] and its variant праковедец [79 (29)], both meaning lawyer or graduate of a juridical faculty. I would be tempted to coin the term “jurisprude” to translate the latter two words, this being in the spirit of Leskov’s Russian coinages.
Other colloquialisms in this excerpt include: осерчал [78 (14)] (angered) and the Latin loans о контрах [78 (39)] and баталия [79 (5)], both of which are colloquial and probably clerical slang, emanating from the Latin curriculum of the nineteenth-century Russian seminaries. I would translate them respectively “about set-tos” and “a proper row.”

78 (23-26) “Просо--суррогат хлеба”,--отвечал ученый правитель, вместо того чтобы просто сказать, что из проса кашу варят, что, может статься, удовлетворило бы и нашего правоведа, ибо он должен быть мастер варить кашу. Here, the double meaning of варить кашу (to cook kasha, or to make a mess of things) is key. Both Mongault and Luther capture it very well, the first with “à faire de la bouillie,” and the second with, “Brei kochen” and “einen Brei anzurühren.” Hapgood, however, resorts clumsily and unnecessarily to a literal translation, “cooking porridge,” and then explaining in a footnote that the phrase means “to make a horrible mess.”

I believe that the meaning of “hash” was sufficiently close to that of kasha in Leskov’s time that we can employ the idiom “to make a hash of things.” Thus, in my translation, the sentence quoted above would read: “‘Millet is a wheat surrogate,’ the erudite deputy replied, instead of simply saying that you can make a hash out of millet, which might possibly have satisfied our jurisprude, since he must be a master of making a hash of things.”

78 (37-38) Немец хотя и полагал, что Николай Угодник овсом промышляет, но так не виноградничал. Николай Угодник is Saint Nicholas, and the “German” in the sentence is a predecessor of the current governor, who, according to
an earlier passage, took umbrage at Tuberozov’s appeal to forbid the landowners to
require their peasants to work on Sundays, since they needed the time to grow their own
oats. “What do you take me for, a Saint Nicholas who trades in oats!” the German had
objected. This would be clear to the reader of the full text, so I would translate the
sentence, “His German predecessor might have thought that Saint Nicholas dealt in oats,
but at least he didn’t make him out to be a vineyard keeper.”

79 (2-5) У одного правоведство смысл покривило, так что ему надо
бы пожелать позабыть то, что он узнал, а у другого--гонору с Араратскую гору
и уже никакого ни к каким правам почтения. Hapgood outrageously
mistranslates this sentence as follows: “Jurisprudence has so warped the mind of the
former, that he must wish that he could forget what he has learned, --his descent dates
from Mount Ararat, and he cherishes no respect for any laws whatever.” The second
clause refers, of course, not to the governor but to Tuganov, the Marshal of the Nobility,
and has nothing to do with “descent from Mount Ararat.”

Both Mongault and Luther get it right, though Mongault expands the second
clause a bit. Mongault: “Chez l’un la jurisprudence a faussé le sens commun et l’on ne
peut que lui souhaiter d’oublier tout ce qu’il a appris. Pour l’autre, le sens de “l’honneur”
atteint pour le moins l’altitude du mont Ararat et lui fait perdre le respect des droits
d’autrui.” Luther: “Dem einen hat das Rechtsstudium den Verstand aus dem Geleise
gbracht, und des anderen Hochmut kommt dem Berg Ararat gleich, und er läßt keinerlei
fremdes Recht gelten.”
I would suggest: “Legal studies have so corrupted the former’s common sense that one would wish he could forget all that he has learned, while the latter has a pride as lofty as Mount Ararat and no respect for anybody else’s rights.”

80 (9) сухменность A coinage from the dialectical term сухмень, meaning dry, infertile ground (суходол).

80 10-11 Боже! помози ты хотя сему неверию, а то взаправду не доспеть бы нам до табунного скитания, пожирания корней и конского ржания.

This is in the form of a prayer, thus the Church Slavic помози instead of the Russian помоги. I would translate it “O Lord, help us, even despite this lack of faith, lest we degenerate into nomadic herds eating roots and neighing like horses.” Hapgood twisted the meaning in her “Oh God! Help Thou this unbelief …” instead of “despite this unbelief” or “notwithstanding this unbelief.”
January 20th, 1863. I shall record a remarkable and edifying Tale of the Surrogate.

They tell this piquant narrative about the first meeting of the new governor with Tuganov, our Marshal of the Nobility. The Petersburg bigwig, puffed up with his own importance, had introduced himself to our Voltaire as a democrat, and Tuganov praised him for this before all the guests assembled at a ball for local nobles. Tuganov added that such convictions are most admirable and are particularly relevant at the present time since three or more counties are now suffering from famine and this presents a great opportunity to work for the people’s benefit. The governor was extremely pleased to hear of the famine, but annoyed that he had not been informed of it earlier. He called his deputy, reprimanded him severely for not keeping him informed, and as a consummate bureaucrat, ordered that a report be sent to Petersburg forthwith.

The deputy tried to make excuses and asserted that a real famine had not occurred in those counties, even though the wheat crop had failed, because “the millet sprouted” tolerably. The story begins with this.

“What is millet?” the governor exclaimed.

“Millet is a wheat surrogate,” the erudite deputy replied, instead of simply saying that you can make a hash out of millet, which might possibly have satisfied our governor,
since he must be a master of making a hash of things. However, it happened that the word “surrogate” was used.

“You should be ashamed of yourself,” the high politician objected when he heard that word. “You should be ashamed of yourself for misleading me. You have only to go to any fruit stand to know what millet is used for. That’s what grapes are packed in for shipment!”

Tuganov studiously held his tongue and the next day sent the governor a list of grains grown in Russia, issued by the Food Commission. The governor was embarrassed when he saw millet on the list, called in his deputy, and said, “Excuse me for not believing you then; you are right, millet is a grain.”

I must sincerely pity you, dear democrat! Even his German predecessor, who thought Saint Nicholas dealt in oats, didn’t try to make him out to be a vineyard keeper!

*December 6.* We keep hearing about set-tos between Marshal Tuganov and the governor, who they say is on the lookout for something he can use to get back at the marshal for his “millet.” It seems that they have come into conflict. The governor is always for the peasants and our Voltaire for his own rights and liberties. Legal studies have so corrupted the former’s common sense that one would wish he could forget what he has learned, while the latter has a pride as lofty as Mount Ararat and no respect for anybody else’s rights. They’re going to have a proper row no doubt.

*December 20.* The seminary students have come home for the holidays and Father Zaharia’s son, who tutors in good homes, brought a quite improbable and far-fetched piece of news. Some demobilized soldier concealed himself in the corner of the Church
of the Intercession, took the halo from the wonder-working icon of John the Warrior, and when he was apprehended in his house with the halo, explained that he had not stolen the halo, but that, distraught by an ex-soldier’s lack of means, he had prayed to the holy warrior to assist him in his poverty. The saint seemed to heed him and said, “I shall punish them for that in the next world, but this is for you in the meantime,” and with these sympathetic words is supposed to have taken the valuable halo from his head and said, “take this.”

Is it really necessary to pay any attention to such an explanation? But the person smarting from the millet thought otherwise. An inquiry from the governor to the Consistory followed: Can such a miracle take place?

Naturally, the Consistory found itself in a difficult position since it could hardly rule that a miracle is impossible, but to what purpose was this directed? Marshal Tuganov secretly protested on this occasion and wrote that he considered this action irrational and undertaken solely to undermine faith and to ridicule the clergy. In this manner, that old free thinker has come out for the clergy and feels obligated to defend the latter if our governor mocks them.

It would seem that the time is verily coming—nay is here already—when a sound mind is not capable of distinguishing even the slightest oddity in all that is taking place. Even Tuganov’s intercession, though apparently beneficial in the present instance, is no source of consolation, since it stems not from zeal for the faith but from hostility to the governor. What good can one expect if the people in a country all begin to mock one another and forget that they have sworn allegiance to the same crown and serve the same country? Bad indeed!
January 9, 1864. Tuganov himself traveled for some reason to Plodomasovo.

I could not bear the suspense and went to see him yesterday to find out about his fight and his protest regarding John the Warrior. How strange! This Tuganov, erstwhile admirer of Voltaire, began speaking to me with sorrow and in the most friendly tone. He does not consider his protest strong enough as yet, since he said, “What I think about miracle working will stay a private matter with me, but I cannot share the desire of idlers to take from the people the one thing that to this day instills in them the habit of thinking that they belong at least a bit to a higher sphere of being than their striped hog and cow.”

How dry and empty these words! But I did not object … What can one do! O Lord, help us, even despite this lack of faith, lest we degenerate into nomadic herds eating roots and neighing like horses.
CHAPTER SIX

COLLOQUIAL LANGUAGE

In rendering colloquial, the translator’s task is less straightforward than when dealing with expository prose, whether contemporary or antiquated. Colloquial language provides innumerable clues to the reader regarding the speaker: his or her social group, place of origin, level of education, age—and of course more. In fact, skilful novelists often use it as the principal means of characterization. In rendering it in another language, the translator must avoid either making it too neutral and “literary,” or transposing characters into another cultural milieu. To put cockney in the mouth of a Petersburg worker is to rip him out of context and confuse the reader. Colloquial also changes more rapidly than literary language, which renders sayings and phrases perceived as contemporary hazardous to use in historical contexts. They are likely to affect the reader as if the characters were yanked across a linguistic time warp.

My goal in approaching colloquial language (as I have indicated in dealing with the occasional colloquialisms encountered earlier) is to reproduce it in language recognizable as speech, and make it as consistent with the character as possible. I shall try to avoid a pattern of speech drawn from any particular region, without totally foreswearing the occasional regional word or expression when it seems to fit and can be used without associating the character with that geographical area.

The “fit” of translated colloquial language with the original is perforce less exact than can be achieved with a bookish style, which in all languages is more standardized and therefore usually presents fewer problems in equating it in another language. In order to preserve the essential stylistic role of the colloquial in fiction, the translator must
often take liberties with the literal meaning of the text (*pace* Nabokov). This necessity, of course, puts a premium on linguistic sensitivity, taste and individual judgment. And while it is not difficult to sense that a particular rendering is wrong in some respect, it is much more difficult to demonstrate that a particular solution is “right,” since there is rarely, if ever, a precise equivalent on every plane of the original meaning and function.

To illustrate the problems presented by the spoken language of Leskov’s characters, I have chosen four extended passages. They were chosen, first, because they contain extended conversations or monologues, and thus provide more meaningful laboratory material than short snippets, and second, because they present three of the important characters in the book—Achilla, Prepotensky and Termosesov. The fourth passage containing quotations from Achilla’s personal letters was included since it presents a form of the written colloquial with some special characteristics important to the translator.
This passage, which precedes the diary entries we have just examined, presents Achilla’s perception of the events that initiate the “action” in the chronicle; simultaneously the passage deepens the characterization of Achilla. Up to now, Achilla had been presented only as a figure seen from the outside; now he is presented from the inside as he describes his special grief caused by his misunderstanding with Father Tuberozov.
и у них недоразумения. Так, например, однажды помещик и местный предводитель дворянства, Алексей Никитич Плюдомасов, возвратясь из Петербурга, приезжая оттуда лицам любимого им соборного духовенства разные более или менее ценные подарки и между прочим три трости: две с совершенно одинаковыми навальдашниками из червонного золота для священников, то есть одной для отца Туберозова, другую для отца Захария, а третью с красивым набалдашником из серебра с черью для дьякона Ахиллы. Трости эти падали между старгородским духовенством как библейские эмени, которых кищули пред фараоном египетские судейники.

— Сия подарением тростей на нас наведено сомнение, — рассказывал дьякон Ахилла.

— Да в чем же вы тут, отец дьякон, видите сомнение? — спрашивали его те, кому он жаловался.

— Ах, да ведь вот вы, светские, ничего в этом не понимаете, так и не утверждайте, что нет сомнения, — отвечал дьякон, — нет-с! тут большое сомнение!

И дьякон пускался разъяснять это специальное горе.

— Во-первых, — говорил он, — мне, как дьякону, по саму моему такого посоха носить не дозволено и неприлично, потому что я не пастырь, — это раз. Повторительно, я его теперь, этот посох, ношу, потому что он мне подащен, — это два. А в-третьих, на всем этом сомнительная одностойность: что отцу Савелю, что Захарии одно и то же, одинаковые посошки. Зачем же так сравнять их?.. Ах, помните вы же, зачем?.. Отец Савелей, вы сами знаете... отец Савеля... он умница, философ, министр юстиции, а теперь, я вижу, и он ничего не может сообразить и смущен... и даже страшно смущен.

— Да чем же он тут может быть смущен, отец дьякон? — А тем смущен, что, во-первых, от этой совершенной одностойности происходит смешанное. Как вы это располагаете, как отличить, чья эта трость? Извольте теперь их разбирать, которая отца протопопа, которая Захариина, когда они обе одинаковы? Но, положим, на этот бы счет для разборки можно какую-нибуль заметочку положить — или сургучом под головкой прикапнуть, или сделать ножом на дереве нарезочку; но что же вы поделаете с ними в рассуждении политики? Как теперь у одной из них против другой цену или достоинство её отнять,
когда они обе одностойны? Помилуйте вы меня, ведь это невозможно, чтоб я отец протопоп и отец Захария были одностойны. Это же не порядок! И отец протопоп это чувствует, и я это вижу-с и говорю: «Отец протопоп, больше ничего в этом случае нельзя сделать, как, позвольте, я на отца Захарийну трость сургучную метку положу или нарежку сделаю». А он говорит: «Не надо! Не смей, и не надо!» Как же не надо? «Ну, говорю, благословите: я по- тайенно от самого отца Захарин, его трость супротив вашей ножом слегка на вершину урежу, так что отец Захария этого сокращения и знать не будет», но он спьет: «Глуп, говорит, ты-с! Ну, глуп и глуп, не впервые мне это от него слышать, я от него этим не обижусь, потому он заслуживает, чтоб от него снести, а я все-таки вижу, что он всем этим недоволен, и мне от этого пребеспокоино... И вот скажите же вы, что я трижды глуп, — воскликнат дьякон, — да-с, позволю вам, скажите, что я глуп, если он, отец Савелий, не сполитникует. Это уж я наверно знаю, что мне он на то не позволяет, а сам сполитикует.

И дьякон Ахилла, по-видимому, не ошибся. Не прошло и месяца со времени вручения старгородскому соборному духовенству упомянутых наводящих сомнение посохов, как отец протопоп Савелий вдруг стал собираться в губернсккий город. Не было надобности придавать какое-нибудь особенное значение этой поездке отца Туберозова, потому что протоинер, в качестве благочинного, частенько езжал в консисторию. Никто и не толковал о том, зачем протопоп едет. Но вот отец Туберозов, уже усевшийся в кябитку, вдруг обратился к провожавшему его отцу Захарию и сказал:

— А послушай-ка, отче, где твоя трость? Дай-ка ты мне ее, я ее свезу в город.

Одно это обращение с этим словом, сказанным как будто невзначай, вдруг как бы озадачило умы всех провожавших со двора отвезющегого отца Савелия. Дьякон Ахилла первый сейчас же кривнул и шепнул на ухо отцу Бенефактову:

— А что-с! Я вам говорил: вот и политика!

— Для чего ж мою трость везти в город, отец протопоп? — просили смиренно моргающий своими глазами отец Захария, отстраняя дьякона.
— Для чего? А вот я там, может быть, покажу, как нас с тобой люди уважают и помнят, — отвечал Туберозов.
— Алеша, беги, принеси посошок, — послал домой сынишку отец Захария.
— Так-то, может быть, отец протопоп, и мою трость тоже свозите показать? — вопрощал, сколь умел мягче, Ахилл.
— Нет, ты свою пред собою сдержи, — отвечал Савелий.

10 — Что ж, отец протопоп, «пред собою»? И я же ведь точно так же... тоже ведь в и я предводительского внимания удостоился, — отвечал, слегка обижаясь, дьякон; но отец протопоп не обидел его претензии никаким ответом и, положив рядом с собою поданную ему в это время трость отца Захария, поехал.
Туберозов ехал, ехала с ним и обе наделавшиеся смущения трости, а дьякон Ахилл, оставаясь дома, томился разрешением себе загадки: зачем Туберозов отобрал трость у Захария?
— Отец Захария, я вам говорю, что он сполитирует.
— Ну а если он сполитирует, а тебе что до этого? Ну и пусть его сполитирует.
— Да я ненавидим любопытству предвидеть, в чем сие будет заключаться. Урезать он мне вашу трость не хотел, позволить, сказал: глупость; метки я ему советовал положить, он тоже и это отвергнул. Одно, что я предвижу...
30 — Ну, ну... ну что ты, болтун, предвидеть можешь?
— Одно, что... он непременно драгоценный камень вставил.
— Да! ну... ну куда же, куда он драгоценный камень вставил?
— В рукойт.
— Да в свою или в мою?
— В свою, разумеется, в свою. Драгоценный камень, ведь это драгоценность.
— Да ну, а мою же трость он тогда зачем взял?

40 В свою камеру вставить будет, а мою ему на что?
Дьякон ударил себя рукой по лбу и воскликнул:
— Одурчился!
— Надеюсь, надеюсь, что одурачили, — утверждал отец Захария, добавив с тихою укоризной: — а еще ведь ты, братец мой, логике обучался: стыдно! 
— Что же за стыд, когда я ей обучаюсь, да не мог понять! Это со всякий может случиться, — отвечал дьякон и, не высказывая уже более никаких догадок, продолжал тайно сгорать любопытством — что будет?

Прошла неделя, и отец протопоп возвратился. Ахилладьякон, объезжавший в это время вымененного им степенного коня, первый заметил приближение к городу протоиерейской черной кибитки и летел по всем улицам, останавливаясь пред открытыми окнами зажаком домов, крича: «Едет! Савелий едет наш поп великий!» Ахиллу вдруг осенило новое соображение.

— Теперь знаю, что такое! — говорил он окружающим, спешившим у протопоповских ворот. — Все эти размышления мол до сих пор предварительные были не больше как одной глупостью моей; а теперь я наверное вам скажу, что отец протопоп кроме ничего как просто велел вытравить литеру греческую, а не то так латинские.

Так, так, не иначе как так; это верно, что литеры вытравил, и если я теперь не отгадаю, то сто раз меня дураком после этого назовите.

— Погоди, погоди, и назовем, и назовем, — часть в ответ ему отец Захария, в виду остановившейся у ворот протопоповской кибитки.

Отец протопоп вылез из кибитки важный, солнечный; вошел в дом, помолился, повидался с женой, поцеловал ее при этом три раза в уста, потом подорвался с отцом.

Захарий, с которым они поцеловали друг друга в плачи, и, наконец, и с дьяконом Ахиллом, причем дьякон Ахилл поцеловал у отца протопопа руку, а отец протопоп приложил свои уста к его темени. После этого свидания нача осязание чувств, разговоры, рассказы губернских новостей, и вечер уступил место ночи, а отец протопоп и не заинтересовался об интересующих—всех—людохах. День, другой и третий прошел, а отец Тубернов и не заговаривал об этом деле, словно свеж он посвят в губернию да там—и оба по реке спустили, чтоб и речи о них не было.

— Вы же хоть полюбопытствуйте! спросите! — беспрестанно зудел во все дни отцу Захарию нетерпеливый дьякон Ахилла.
— Что я буду его спрашивать? — отвечал отец Захария. — Не хочу я ему не верю, что ли, что стану отчет требовать, куда дел?
— Да все-таки ради любознательности спросить нужно.
— Ну и спроси, судя, сам, если хочешь ради любознательности.
— Нет, вы, ей-богу, со страху его не спрашиваете.
— С какого это страху?
— Да просто боитесь; а я бы, ей-богу, спросил. Да и чего тут бояться-то? спросите просто: а как же, мол, отец протопоп, будет насчет наших тростей? Вот только всего и страху.
— Ну, так вот ты и спроси.
— Да мне нельзя.
— А почему нельзя?
— Он меня может оконфузить.
— А меня разве не может?
Дьякон просто сгорел от любопытства и не знал, что бы такое выдумать, чтобы завести разговор о тростях; но вот, к его радости, дело разрешилось, и само собой. На пятий или на шестой день по возвращении своем домой отец Савелий, отслужив подобную обедню, позвал к себе на чай и городничего, и смотрителя училищ, и лекаря, и отца Захария с дьяконом Ахиллом и начал опять рассказывать, что он слышал и что видел в губернском городе. Прежде всего отец протопоп довольно строго говорил о новых постройках, потом о губернаторе, которого осуждал за невоздержание ко владыке и за постройку водопроводов, или, как отец протопоп выражался: «акведуков».
— Акведуков эти,— говорил отец протопоп, — будут ни к чему, потому город малый, и притом тремя реками пересекается; но магазины, которые все вновь открываются, нечто в нынешние начали представлять. Да вот я вам сейчас покажу, что касается нынешнего там искусства...
И с этими словами отец протопоп вышел в боковую комнату и через минуту возвращался оттуда, держа в каждой руке по известной всем трости.
— Вот видите,— сказал он, поднося к глазам гостей верхние площади золотых наблудашников.
Ахилла-дьякон так и возвысился, что такое сделано политикаем Савеляем для различения одностойных троек; но увы, ничего такого резкого для их различия не было заметно. Напротив, одностойность их даже как будто еще увеличилась, потому что посередине наблудашника той и другой трости было совершенно одинаково вырезано окруженное сиянием всеедящее око; а вокруг око краткая, в виде узорчатой каймы, вязная надпись.

— А чит, отец протопоп, нет? — заметил, не утерев Ахилла.

— К чему здесь тебе литеры нужны? — отвечал, не глядя на него, Туберозов.

— А для различения их одностойности?

— Все ты всегда со задором лезешь, — заметил отец протопоп дьякону и при этом, приставив одну трость к своей груди, сказал: — вот эта будет моя. Ахилла-дьякон быстро глянул на наблудашник и прочел около всеедящего око: «Жезл Ааронов расцвел».

— А вот это, отец Захария, будет тебе, — закончив протопоп, подавая другую трость Захарии.

На этой вокруг такого же точно всеедящего око так же точно древнеславянской вязью было вырезано: «Даде в руку его посох».

Ахилла как только прочел эту вторую надпись, так пал за спину отца Захария и, уткнув голову в живот лекаря, заколотился и задергался в припадках неукротимого смеха.


Но дьякон не только нимало не сконфузился, но опять порычнул и закатился снова смеху.

— Чего смешешься? чего помираешь?

— Это кто ж баран-то выходит теперь? — вопросил, слева выговаривая слова, дьякон.

— Да ты же, ты. Кто же еще баран?

Ахилла опять залился, замогил руками и, изловив отца Захария за плечи, почти сел на него медведем и театральным шепотом забубнил:
— А вы, отец Захария, как вы много логике учились, так вы вот это прочитайте: «Да в цену его послу». Нуте-ка, решите по логике: чему такая надпись соответствует?
— Чему? Ну говори, чему?
— Чему-с- А она тому соответствует, — заговорил протяжнее дьякон, — что дали мол, дескать, ему линейкой палку в руку.
— Врешь.

— Вру! А оно же воон у него «жезл расцвел»! А, небось ничего про то, что в руку дано, не обозначено? Почему? Потому что это сделано для превозведения, а вам это для уважения черното, что, мол, дана палка в лапу.

Отец Захария хотел возразить, но и вправду слегка смущился. Дьякон торжествовал, наведя это смещение на тихого отца Бенефактова; но торжество Ахиллы было недолговечным.

Не успел он оглянуться, как увидел, что отец протопоп пристально смотрел на него в оба глаза и чуть только заметил, что дьякон уже достаточно конфузился, как обратился к гостям и самым спокойным голосом начал:
— Надпись эти, которые вы видите, я не сам выдумал, а это мне консисторский секретарь Афанасий Иванович присвоил. Случилось нам, гуляя с ним перед вечером, зайти вместе к золотарю; он, Афанасий Иванович, и говорит: вот, говорит, отец протопоп, какая мне пришла мысль, надпись вам на тросях подобала, вот вам этакую: «Жезл Ааронов», а отцу Захарии вот этакую очень пристойно, какая теперь значится. А тебе, отец дьякон... я и о твоей трости, как ты меня просил, думал сказать, но нашел, что лучше всего, чтобы ты с нею вовсе ходить не смел, потому что это твоему сану не принадлежит."

При этом отец протопоп спокойно подошел к углу, где стояла знаменитая трость Ахиллы, взял ее и запер ключом в свой гардеробный шкаф.

Такова была величайшая из расправ на старогородской половине.
— Отсюда, говорил дьякон, — было все начало болезни моей. Потому что я тогда не стрепил и озлобился, а отец протопоп Савелий начал своею политикой еще более уничтожать меня и довел даже до ярости. Я свирепел,
а он меня, как медведя на рогатину, сажал на эту политику, пока я даже осановаться стал.

Это был образчик мелочности, обнаруженной на старости лет протопопом Савелием, и легкомысленности дьякона, навлекшего на себя гнев Тюберозова; но как Москва, говорят, от копеечной свечи сгорела, так и на старогородской поповке вслед за этим началась целая история, выдвинувшая наружу разные недостатки и превосходства характеров Савелия и Ахиллы.

Дьякон лучше всех знал эту историю, но рассказывал ее лишь в минуты крайнего своего волнения, в часы расстройства, раскаяния и беспокойства, и потому когда говорил о ней, то говорил нередко со слезами на глазах, с судорогами в голосе и даже нередко с рыданиями.

ГЛАВА ТРЕТЬЯ

— Мне, — говорил сквозь слезы взъерошенный Ахилла, — мне по-настоящему, разумеется, что бы тогда следовало сделать? Мне следовало пасты к ногам отца протопопа и сказать, что так и так, что я это, отец протопоп, не по злобе, не по ехидству сказал, а единственно лишь чтобы только доказать отцу Захарии, что я хоть и без логики, но ничем его не глупей. Но торчания меня обуяла и удержала. Досадно мне стало, что он мою трость в шкаф запер, а потом после того учитель Варнавка Препотенский еще подоспел и подгадил... Ах, я вам говорю, что уже сколько я на самого себя зол, но на учителя Варнавку вдвойне! Ну, да и не я же буду, если я умру без того, что я этого просвирничего сына учителя Варнавку не взовшу!

— Опять и этого ты не смешь, — останавливал

Ахиллу отец Захария.

— Отчего же это не смело? За безбожие-то да не смело? Ну, уж это извините-с!

— Не смейся, хоть и за безбожие, а все-таки дратся не смейся, потому что Варнава был просвирин сын, а теперь он чиновник, он учитель.

— Так что, что учитель? Да я за безбожие кого вам угодно возделаю. Это-с, батюшка, закон, а не что-нибудь.
Да-с, это очень просто копчится: замотал покрепче руку ему в аксиссы, потряс хорошенько, да и выпустил, и ступаю, мол, жалуйся, что бить духовным лицом за безобразие... Никуда не пойдет-с! Но боже мой, боже мой как я только вспомяну — и что это тогда со мною поделалось, что я его, такого негодяя Варнавку, слушал и что даже до сего дня я еще с ним как должно не расправлялся! Ей, право, не знаю, откуда такая слабость у меня? Ведь он тогда Сергея-дьячка за рассуждение о громе я сейчас же прибили; комиссара Даниилку мешанина за едение яиц на улице в прошедшем великий пост я опять тоже неупустил и всенародно весьма прилично по ухам оттремал, а вот этому просвирнику сыну все до сих пор спускаю, тогда как я этим Варнавкой более всех и узвален. Не будь его, сей распри бы не разыграться. Отец протопоп гневался бы на меня за разговор с отцом Захарий, но все бы это не было долговременно; а этот просвирник сына Варнавка, как вы его нынче сами видеть можете, учитель математики в уездном училище, мне тогда, озлобленному и узваленному, как подтолкнул: «Да это, говорит, например туберозопская еще, кроме того, и глупа». Я, знаете, будучи узвален, страх как жаждал, чем бы и самому отцу Савелию узвать, и спрашиваю: чем же глупа? А Варнавка говорит: «Тем и глупа, что еще самый факт-то, о котором она гласит, недостоверен; да и не только недостоверен, а и невероятен. Кто это, говорит, засвидетельствовал, что жезл Аронов-расцвел? Сухое дерево разве может расцвести?» Я было его на этом даже остановил и говорю: «Пожалуйста, ты этого, Варнава Васильч, не говори, потому что бог идет в хохот, побеждается естества чин; но при этом, как вся эта наша разция у акшизничих у Биззокой проиходила, а там все это разные возилиня да вновь все хорошее: все го-го, гостеря да го-марги, я... прах меня возьми, и недрекагась. Я, изволите понимать, в винном угаре, а Варнавка мне, знаете, тут мне по-своему, по-ученому торочит, что «тогда ведь, говорит, вон и erke фарес было на пире Вальтасаровом написано, а теперь, говорит, ведь это вместо; я вам могу это самое сейчас фосфорной спичкой написать». Ужасается я; а он все дальше да больше: «Да там и во всем, говорит, бездна противоречий...» И пошел, знаете, и пошел, и все опровергает; а я все это сижу да
слушаю. А тут опять еще эти го-марго, да уж и достаточно даже сделался уязвлен и сам заговорил в вольнодумном шипле. «Я, говорю, я, если бы только не видел отца Савелиевской прямой, потому как знаю, что он прямо алтарю предстоит и жертва его прямо идет, как жертва Авлеву, то я только Каппом быть не хочу, а то бы я его...» Это, понимаете, на отца Савелия-то! И к чему-то это; к чему это я там в ту пору с ним заговорил? Ведь не глупец ли? Ну, а она, эта Дашка Нефалимка, Вязюкина-то, говорит: «Да вы еще понимаете ли, что вы лепечете? Вы еще знаете ли цену Капп-то? что такое, говорят, ваш Авлев? Он больше ничего как маленький барашек, он низкоколлажный иска
tель, у него рабская натура, а Капп гордый деятель — он не помирается с жизнью подневольною. Вот, говорит, как его английский писатель Бирон изображает...» Да и пошла-с мне расписываться! Ну, а тут все эти го-ма-го меня тоже напиртуозили, и вот вдруг чувствую, что хочу я быть Каппом, да и шабаш. Вышел я оттуда домой, дошел до отца протопопова дома, стал пред его окнами и вдруг подперся по-офицерски в боки руками и закричал: «Я царь, я раб, я червь, я бог!» Боже, боже: как страшно вспомнить, сколько я был бестыж и сколько же я был за то в ту пору постыжен и уязвлен! Отец протопоп, услышав мое козелогласие, вскошил с постели, подошли в сорочке к окну и, распахнув раму, гневным голосом крикнули: «Ступай спать, Капп неистовый!» Верите ли: я даже затерпел весь от этого слова, что я «Капп», потому, представьте себе, что я только собирался в Капны, а он уже это провидел. Ах, боже! Я отошел к дому своему, сам следов своих не разумею, и вся моя стропотность тут же пропала, и с тех пор и доныне я только скороблю и стекаю.

Повторив этот рассказ, дьякон обыкновенно задумывался, поникал головой и через минуту, вздохнув, продолжал мягким и грустным тоном:

— Но вот-с дни бегут и текут, а гнев отца протопопа не проходит и до сего дня. Я приходил и винился: во всем винился и каялся, говорил: «Простите, как бог грешников прощает», но на все один ответ: «Иди». Куда? я спрашиваю, куда я пойду? Почтмейстерша Тимошка мне все советует: «В полк, говорят, отец дьякон, идите, вас полковые любить будут». Знаю я это, что полковые очень могут
ынья любить, потому что я и сам почти вони; но что из
меня в полку воспоследует, вы это обсудите? Ведь я
там с ними в полку уже действительно Каним сдела-
юсь... Ведь это, ведь я знаю, что все-таки один он, один
отец Савелий еще меня и содержит в субординации,— и
он... а он...

При этих словах у дьякона зашипели в груди слезы, и
он, всхлипывая, заканчивал:
— А он вот какую низкую штуку со мною придумал:
чтобы молчать! Что я ни заговорю, он все молчит... За что
же ты молчишь? — вскичил дьякон, вдруг совсем начи-
nавая плакать и обращаясь с поднятыми руками в ту сто-
рону, где полагал быть дому отца протопопа.— Хорошо,
ты думаешь, это так делать, а? Хорошо это, что я по
дьяконству моему подхожу и говорю: «благослови, отче?»
и, руку его целую, чувствую, что даже рука его холодна
для меня! Это хорошо? На троницы день пред великою
молитвой я, слезами обливаясь, прошу: «благослови...»
А у него и тут умиленье нет. «Буди благословен!» гово-
рит. Да что мне эта форменность, когда все это без ласко-
вости!

Дьякон ожидал утешения и поддержки.
— Заслузи,— замечает ему отец Захария,— заслу-
жи хорошошенького, он тогда и к лаской прости.
— Да чем же я, отец Захария, заслужу?
— Примерным поведением заслужи.
— Да каким же примерным поведением, когда он со-
всем меня не замечает? Мне, ты, батя, думаешь, легко, как
я вижу, что он скорбит, вижу, что он нынче в столь частой
задумчивости. «Боже мой!— говорю я себе,— чего он в
таком изумлении? Может быть, это он и обо мне...» По-
этому что ведь там, как он на меня ни сердится, а ведь он все
это притворяет: он меня любит...

Дьякон оборачивался в другую сторону и, стуча кула-
ком по ладони, выговаривал:
— Ну, просвирник сын, тебе это так не пройдет! Будь
я взаправду тогда Каним, а не дьякон, если только и этого
учителя Варнаву публично не псковеркаю!

Из одной этой угрозы читатели могут видеть, что не-
кому упоминаемому здесь учителю Варнаве Препотен-
скому со стороны Ахиллы-дьякона угрожала какая-то
самая решительная опасность, и опасность эта станови-
лась тем грознее и ближе, чем чаще и тяжелее Ахилл
начинал чувствовать томление по своему потерянному раю,
по утраченному благорасположеню отца Савеляя. И вот,
наконец, ударил час, с которого должны были начаться
кана Варнавы Преподобенского рукой Ахилла и совершенно
совпадавшее с ним событием начало великой старородоский
драмы, составляющей предмет нашей хроники.
Чтобы ввести читателя в уразумение этой драмы, мы
оставим пока в стороне все тропы и дороги, по которым
Ахилла, как американский следопыт, будет выслеживать
своего врача, учителя Варнаву, и погрузимся в глубины
внутреннего мира самого драматического лица нашей по-
вести — уйдем в мир неведомый и незримый для всех, кто
посмотрит на это лицо в близко и издали. Проникнем в
чистейший домик отца Туберозова. Может быть, стоя
внутри этого дома, найдем средство заглянуть внутрь
души его хозяина, как смотрят в стеклянную улей, где
пчела строит свой дивный сот, с воском на освещение лица
божьего, с медом на укладу человека. Но будем осторожны и
dеликатны: наденем легкие сандалии, чтобы шаги ног,
наших не встревожили задумчивого и грустного прото-
попа; положим сказочную шапку-невидимку себе на го-
лову, дабы любопытный зрач наш не смущал серьезного
взгляда чинного старца, и станем иметь уши наши от-
вертым ко всему, что от него услышим.
ANALYSIS AND COMMENT

This excerpt contains genuine dialogue in the initial section (the latter part of Chapter II), along with extended monologue, with only brief, occasional interjections by others in its second part (Chapter III). The paragraphing reflects this difference: in the first part, paragraphs are relatively short and the action moves briskly; in the second, paragraphs become very long as Achilla pours out his heart.

Achilla’s language is grammatical, but his vocabulary and syntax are colloquial with touches of просторечие and clerical jargon (e.g., штиль for стиль [21 (3)] and аксио́сы [21 (2)]). While there is some slang, it is minimal and there are no spelling distortions to indicate substandard speech and no striking malapropisms, unless one considers the rendition of the French Haut Margaux and Haut Sauternes as го-марго and го-сотерн as falling into that category. (As will be discussed subsequently, this spelling was doubtless used instead of the original French to reflect Ahilla’s lack of education.)

If we examine the rendition of this passage by previous translators we find, not surprisingly, that Hapgood’s is clumsy and consistently off key. It is plodding, usually painfully literal, yet reveals occasional misunderstandings of the text. She clearly had no feel for colloquial language. Witness, for example, the following passages (page and line references relate to the Russian text):

- “But I am intolerably curious to foresee in what it will consist.” [14 (26-27)]
- “…and if I have not guessed it now, then after this you may call me a hundred-fold fool.” [15 (22-23)]
- “Because at that time I did not endure in patience, but waxed angry, and father archpriest Savely began to humiliate me still more with his craft, and drove me even to fury. I raged, and he transfixed me with that craft of his like a bear on a boar-spear, until I even began to grow like Satan.” [18 (40)-19 (2)]
“O, heavens, my heavens, how terrible it is to recall how shameless I was, and how disgusted and wounded I was along at that time!” [21 (21-23)]

“…on hearing my goat-shout…” [21 (24)]

“…all my refractoriness vanished on the spot.” [21 (30-31)]

“Whither? I ask, whither shall I go?” [21 (30-31)]

Hapgood’s occasional insertion of a contraction or a colloquial phrase or expression cannot salvage her rendition; the overall impression is that nobody ever could have talked like that. Both Mongault and Luther have a much better feel for colloquial language. Just compare their translations of the passages quoted above in Hapgood’s version:

Mongault

-- Je grille de savoir quelle malice il va tirer de son sac.

Si cette fois je me trompe, vous pourrez me traiter de buse tant qu’il vous plaira.

Parce que, n’est-ce pas, cette affaire-là me fit bisquer, mais plus je rageais, plus monsieur l’archiprêtre m’emberlificotait avec ses finesses. Je m’y enferrais comme un ours dans l’épieu; ça me mettait en rogne, si bien qu’à la fin des fins j’étais devenu un vrai Satan.

Seigneur, quelle honte me prend quand je songe à mon impudence d’alors et à la mortification qu’elle me valut!

Luther

“…und wenn ich es nicht erraten habe, so könnt ihr mich hundertmal einen Esel nennen.

Denn ich wollte es nicht leiden und ward erbittert. Der Vater Sawelij aber began mich mit seiner Politik immer mehr zu vernichten und brachte mich bis zur hellen Raserei. Ich wütete, er aber packte mich mit seiner Politik, wie die Jäger den Bären mit dem Spieß, so daß ich ganz zum Teufel wurde.

Grundgütiger Gott, wie entsetzlich ist mir jetzt die bloße Erinnerung an meine Schamlosigkeit und an die Schmach und Pein, die mir dafür zuteil ward!
Mongault

Quand il entendit le beau sabbat que je faisais

Luther

... mein Gemecker vernommen ...

mon aplomb était tombé du coup ...

meine ganze Widerspenstigkeit war hin ...

Où veut-il que j’aille?

Wohin? Ich frage, wohin soll ich gehen?

It is apparent from the selections quoted above that both Mongault and Luther have more consistency of style and utilize a more colloquial language than Hapgood, but Luther—as usual—is more accurate and less given to departing from the text for no obvious reason. In the next-to-last passage, for example, there seems no good reason to mistranslate стропотность as aplomb.

While the excerpt we are dealing with contains few passages that are difficult to understand precisely, some specific words and expressions may benefit from more detailed discussion.

12 (13-14) Сим подарением тростей на нас наведено сомнение:

The first mention of the walking sticks to emanate from Achilla’s lips is anything but colloquial. It is stately, formal, “churchy”—and indeed is worded in a manner more consistent with Tuberozov’s language in his diary than the rather careless colloquial normally heard from Achilla. Still, it does not seem out of place: in introducing an incident which formed one of the great psychological traumas of his life, Achilla indicates by his choice of quasi-biblical language the importance it holds for him. The time for colloquial language comes later, when he pours out his emotions to friends, but
this sentence must be translated with language both stately and—if possible—with a biblical aroma if it is to carry the overtones of the original.

In this respect, Hapgood’s “By this gift of walking-sticks doubt is brought upon us,” seems clumsily unnatural rather than a normal utterance of a semi-literate churchman who characterizes a deeply disturbing event in language reminiscent of the scriptures. Even so, Mongault’s flight of fancy which led him to render Achilla’s sentences as “Ce gracieux don va être pour nous une pierre d’achoppement et de scandale,” is even worse. It seems more suited to a Gallic courtier than a rather crude Russian deacon. Achilla says nothing of a gracious gift but refers concretely to “this gift of walking sticks,” does not speak of future troubles, but rather of what has been done, makes no reference to the potential for scandal, and displays no glib reliance on a cliché such as “pierre d’achopement.” It is simply wrong, in sense, tone and the overall impression it conveys.

Luther, like Hapgood, at least gets the sense right: “Durch diese Schenkung der Stäbe ist ein Zweifel in uns geweckt worden,” but I miss the biblical tone of the Russian original.

I would propose something like “Doubt has been visited upon us by these gift canes.” This is simple and straightforward, but the use of “visited upon” in this context imparts a dignity to the statement that is consistent with the language Leskov used.

12 (30) **министр юстиции:** All the other translators take the easy way out and render this literally as “Minister of Justice” or the French or German equivalent. And, indeed, one cannot object strenuously to this. Still, if one has the contemporary American reader in mind, one might have some qualms. Achilla is clearly seeking accolades for Tuberozov to emphasize the latter’s stature and wisdom. Given the
experience of recent history, much of the American (and not only American) public no longer associates automatically the titles of high government officials with these qualities. I would feel more comfortable translating the term “a regular Solomon,” even though I recognize that if this is what Leskov had wanted Achilla to say, he could have used the Solomon reference himself.

13 (17) да-с: Achilla uses the enclitic –с frequently in this section. To cite just a few instances at random in addition to the one noted above, we have что-с [13 (39)], чему-с [18 (6)], извините-с [19 (32)], этого-с [19 (37)], Да-с [20 (1)], and Никуда не пойдет-с [20 (4)]. Originally a contraction of сударь, it was used as a mark of extreme politeness or of servility. In this sense, the term is now largely obsolete (though it was not in the nineteenth century) but it was used both then and, to a lesser degree now, also in an ironic sense. In the excerpt we are examining, Achilla always uses it in an ironic or purely rhetorical sense.

Though the word “sir” is used in English in a manner roughly (though not precisely) analogous to the use of the –с in Russian, the enclitic should obviously not be translated as “sir” every time it appears. Being short and joined to other words, it tends to be employed with greater frequency (when it is employed at all) than “sir” is in English. And often there are other ways to get the point across more effectively. In my proposed translation, I have at times translated it “sir,” at times (when it is useful to give a suggestion of просторечие) as “yessir,” or “nosiree,” at times simply omitted it, and at times recast the expression (e.g., извините-с on page 19, line 32 is rendered “What do you take me for?” which seems a more natural utterance of an English speaker than “Excuse me, sir!”)
13 (18) **сполитикует:** This is a verb used repeatedly by Achilla to express his suspicion that Tuberozov plans to do something to “elevate” his walking stick and denigrate Zaharia’s. Translating it literally as “to politick” or “to play politics” will not do, given the specific and quite divergent meanings these terms have in contemporary English. Even Hapgood recognized this and translated the verb with such expressions as “employ some subtlety” or “use craft.” Since the verb is просторечие, I would prefer a more colloquial idiom such as “to have something up his sleeve.”

14 (19) **ты своё пред собой содержи:** While the word order is colloquial, Tuberozov’s choice of words is unusual. “Пред собой,” in the place of the usual “у тебя,” provides a graphic image of carrying the stick “before you.” And “содержи” in the sense used is both obsolete and unusual. Furthermore, пред is the Church Slavonic rather than Russian form of the preposition. All of this gives the simple statement an antiquated cast, which has been largely ignored by previous translators. In his “garde-la par-devers toi,” Mongault does reproduce the unusual use of the preposition, but fails to suggest the other overtones, while Luther (“den deinen magst du bei dir behalten”) reproduces none of the special character of the statement. I would suggest something like “Retain yours in your employ,” to indicate in a general fashion that the statement was not simply a natural “Keep yours with you.”

15 (13) “Едет! Савелий! едет наш поп велий!” Obviously shouted as a rhyming jingle, this character must be preserved even at the expense of the literal meaning. Except for Hapgood (naturally), the other translators recognize this. Compare:

- He’s coming! Savely! Our great priest is coming!
- Il s’en vient, Sabel,
- Instant solonel!
Er kommt! Der Probst Sawelij!
Die edle, große Seele!

My version would be:

Savely’s on his way!
A great and glorious day!

17 (8) **вязная надпись:** Вязь is a Church Slavic manuscript style featuring vertical elongation of letters, use of ligatures to tie a word or phrase into a single unit, and also, usually, placement of some letters within others so that they read vertically within the word. It was originally used in ornamental headings in manuscripts, and subsequently developed for use in ornamental engraved inscriptions. The effect can be visualized from the following two examples.\(^2\)

17 (32-33) **баран ты этакой кучерявый:** Both Hapgood and Luther preserve the ram simile (“you curly-headed ram,” “du krauser Schafbok du”) but Mongault changes the image (grand serin). Since ram is not a common pejorative epithet in English, it does seem advisable to find a different animal, the more so since, a few

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lines later, Achilla picks up the epithet and flings it back at Zaharia (Кто же еще баран?—line 39). “Goat” seems to fit best in this context, but since most species of goat do not have a curly fleece, I would have Zaharia call Achilla a shaggy goat.

19 (23) Варнавка: In other instances I have transliterated Russian names in order to preserve a sense of the Russian setting. In Prepotensky’s case, however, I have chosen to use the English equivalent of his Christian name, because in a subsequent passage (included in the next excerpt) he complains that it is easy to distort his name and the Barney/Blarney alteration was irresistible. In any event, Варнава and Barnaby are both derived from the same Greek name and both have parallel diminutives, Варнавка and Barney.

19 (27) просвириного сына: The epithet Achilla applies repeatedly to Barney means literally “communion bread baker’s son,” and that is precisely what Barney was. However, this phrase cannot be used in Russian without automatically calling to mind сукин сын (son of a bitch), and that is doubtless why Achilla used it so frequently. All previous translators missed this important point, however: Mongault simply omitted the epithet, while Luther and Hapgood translated it as a literally descriptive phrase (“Sohn der Hostienbäckerin;” “the altar-bread baker’s son”). I have translated it “son-of-a-baker,” which, when used as an epithet has exactly the same association in English that Achilla’s phrase does in Russian.

19 (28) взвошу: Dal’ defines звошить as meaning to lift something, as with a lever, or, dialectically, to anger someone. Neither meaning fits here, and a note to the 1957 Russian edition of the text says simply “здесь: наказать.” It therefore is not clear whether this is an aberrant use of the word by Leskov or a rare or dialectical
meaning. In all its meanings the word is unusual and does not appear in most
dictionaries. The translator should, therefore, seek something less ordinary than “punish”
to translate it.

Hapgood comes up with “pay off,” which is not bad, for a change. Mongault used
“frotter les côtes,” and Luther “abrechnen.” I wish I could find something more exotic,
but at this writing I have nothing better to suggest than “settle scores with.”

20 (2) покрепче руку ему в аксиосы: Аксиосы was clerical jargon
for “hair.” During the ceremony when novices were shorn, ἄξιος (worthy!) was
proclaimed, and from this, the Greek word was associated with hair. Both Luther and
Mongault translated it accurately, if somewhat colorlessly, as “Schopf” and “tignasse.”
Hapgood missed the meaning entirely (and also the implicit conditional of the verb) when
she rendered the phrase, “I twisted his arm in its socket.” While we obviously have no
comparable clerical jargon in English to employ, I would attempt to convey the slangy
aspect by a phrase such as “yank his mane.”

20 (6) негодивец: This word, of obvious meaning, was apparently
coined by Leskov since it appears neither in Dal’ nor in ССРЛЯ. Негодйай and негодник
are the usual words, which range in meaning from “scoundrel” to “ne’er-do-well.” Other
translators have used the equivalent of “good-for-nothing.” I am inclined to use
“pipsqueak,” even though it shifts the meaning somewhat, since it is less a cliché.

20 (10) комиссара Данилку: Danilka, the town loafer, was often
called—as an ironic honorific—“комиссар,” which in the nineteenth-century Russian
army was a keeper of stores, that is a quartermaster or commissary (in the sense used by
the United States Army at that time). Given the contemporary connotations of
“commissar” and “commissary” (now the store rather than the custodian thereof), they should of course be avoided in a translation. For this reason, I have called him Quartermaster Danilka.

20 (20) подтолдыкул: The notes to the 1957 edition of Leskov’s works define this rare word as “подготовил.” However, ССРЛЯ, after indicating that it is dialectical and просторечие, defines it more precisely as “вмешиваться с неуместными советами …” I believe that, in this context, the phrase “he worked me over” conveys both its meaning and its stylistic level.

20 (33-34) все го-го, го сотерни да го-марго: It is clear, both from Achilla’s usage and from the orthography Leskov employed, that Achilla did not speak French, and indeed that he misunderstood the meaning of haut in the names of the wines. In the nineteenth century, Russian writers normally put French phrases, spoken in French, in the original spelling, not in Cyrillic; Achilla has obviously not understood the geographic meaning of Haut in the wine names, but assumed that it refers to the quality; furthermore, he apparently pronounces the “h.” The impression of imperfect understanding is reinforced by Achilla’s subsequent reference to Haut Margaux as “го-ма-го” [21 (6)], dropping one of the letters which is pronounced (the French “r” does not sound like the Russian “п”). None of this is at all surprising, since one would not expect him to know French, and it would be natural for him to misunderstand the precise meaning of some of the French words bandied about in the society of provincial “intellectuals” which he is describing here. The problem for the translator, of course, is conveying this in the translation.
None of the existing translations we are examining succeed completely. Hapgood has “all the wine was good: everything was *haut-haut, haut-sauterne* and *haut margaux,*” which implies that Achilla was citing the names in French rather than a просторечие imitation of French. Mongault, in my opinion, also falls short with “á l’aide d’un tas de Haut-Margaux, Haut-Sauternes et autres vins tout á fait á la hauteur.” There is nothing here to suggest a semi-literate speaker and the misunderstood *haut* becomes a witty *double-entendre,* which could have been uttered by a sophisticated speaker indulging in a pun. Luther has “lauter gute Weine—nichts als ho-ho-ho: Haut Sauterne und Haut Margaux,” which is a little better than the others, but still does not make it as clear as the Russian text that Achilla neither understood nor pronounced the words correctly.

My solution would be to avoid the use of French spelling, but to reproduce the words phonetically. This suggests to the reader without explanatory notes that Achilla was not speaking French but imitating it. Thus the translation would read something like “it was all good wine, all that French wine, hoh-sowturn and hoh-margow.”

**21 (9) Данка Нефалимка:** Here, Ahilla is simply coining a name, based on a hazy recollection of a Biblical passage (Genesis 35.25) which lists the sons of Jacob and reads in the King James translation: “And the sons of Jacob and Bilhah, Rachel’s handmaid: Dan, and Naphtali.” There is no logical connection of these names with Bizyukina, as far as I can determine, and Achilla seems to have thrown the names in as a purely rhetorical device, an invented epithet which sounds vaguely but distinctly derogatory. The names probably popped into his mind because the discussion of Cain and Abel called to mind other names mentioned in Genesis.
Nevertheless, the English reader, even one thoroughly steeped in Biblical names, is hardly equipped to understand the mental process at work the way a Russian reader, with an instinctive feel for Russian word and name formation, can. Therefore, Hapgood’s translation as “that Danka Nefalinka, that Mrs. Biziukin,” seems ill-advised. Not only does Danka Nefalimka stand unexplained, but “Mrs. Biziukin” implies a degree of respect on Achilla’s part that clashes with the tone of Achilla’s comment. Mongault and Luther avoid the coined name entirely and translate the passage as “la satanée Biziukine” and “diese Person, die Biziukina.” However, the term satanée seems too strong and the German translation, while suggesting about the right degree of contempt, lacks any Biblical reference. I would be inclined to preserve the latter by translating “Danka Nefalimka” as “Jezebel,” since even those readers relatively ignorant of the Bible will immediately recognize the usage as both Biblical and pejorative.

21 (25-26) крикнули: The text in the third edition of Leskov’s Collected Works, published in Saint Petersburg by Marks in 1902-1903, has крякнули instead of крикнули here. Although the 1957 Soviet edition used for this translation is not a definitive critical text and offers no explanation for this discrepancy, крикнули seems to fit the meaning better than крякнули (quacked or wheezed), and therefore has been selected for the translation.

It should also be noted that in this passage Achilla consistently puts the verbs which refer to Tuberozov in the third person plural rather than the more usual third person singular. This form, a mark of respect and indication of Tuberozov’s higher status, is not used consistently by Achilla when Tuberozov is the subject: in general, he employs it only when he refers to Tuberozov by his title. Thus, in this sentence, отец
протопоп is the subject. (Note also 20 (16) “Отец протопоп гневались.) In English, the use of the title alone probably carries the overtone of respect adequately. In any event, we have at our disposal no grammatical device to reinforce this nuance.

* * * * *

This excerpt contains a number of direct references to Biblical passages, for example, Exodus 7.10 (the canes which turned into serpents); Numbers 17 (the rod of Aaron) and Daniel 5 (Belshazar’s feast). While it might be appropriate to provide the reader with notes citing these references, it is important that the translation present them in the same spirit in which they appear in the text. Attempts to go beyond the original text and offer further explanation or comment in the translation itself are hazardous and usually unnecessary. Hapgood and Luther seem to have understood this point but—with his usual penchant for explaining (and often Gallicizing) the text—Mongault sometimes errs to the point of editorializing in a manner that seriously distorts the original. For example, the sentence on page 12, lines 10-12, which refers to the Biblical account of the sticks cast before Pharaoh that became serpents appears as follows in Mongault’s translation: “Ces cannes étaiaent appelées á jouer parmi le clergé de Stargorod le rôle de ces bâtons que les magiciens d’Égypte jetèrent devant Pharaon et qui, s’il faut en croire la Sainte Écriture, se changèrent aussitôt en serpents” [stress added]. The italicized phrase does not occur in the original and it, of course, introduces a note of skepticism not only absent from, but out of keeping with, the text itself.

In conversation, Achilla is much given to quoting others directly, and this is particularly evident in his monologue in Chapter III. If one uses the conventional method
of indicating a quotation within a quotation (double quotation marks for the first and single ones for the second), this produces a text that can become a bit confusing when read rapidly. However, I believe that the translator should resist the temptation to convert direct quotations into indirect discourse, since this would reduce the vivid and spontaneous quality of Achilla’s account. If the Russian and French convention of introducing dialogue with a dash and reserving quotation marks for quotations within the dialogue were more common in English, it would produce a more sightly and readable text. However, since this is not a standard device in English, I have decided to follow conventional usage even though it results at times in a bewildering profusion of quotation marks.

Regarding paragraph division, I have chosen occasionally to combine or break up those in the original. In doing so, I have attempted to preserve the pace of the text as conveyed by the original paragraph length. I believe that, in general, the contemporary American reader is less tolerant of the long run-on paragraph than the Russian reader of the nineteenth century was, and that the same effect can be achieved in English by a smaller dose of the medicine.
SUGGESTED TRANSLATION

CHURCH FOLKS

PART ONE

Chapter II (continued)

Savely, Zaharia and Achilla were friends, but it would of course be a great injustice to suppose that they made no effort to add spice to life with episodes of misunderstanding and mild hostility, which have the benefit of stimulating human natures lulled by the idleness of provincial life. No, some such had occurred even here, and the pages of Tuberozov’s diary which await us will reveal many trifles which did not seem at all trivial to those who felt them, struggled with them and bore them. Yes, even they had misunderstandings.

Once, for example, the squire and marshal of the local nobility, Alexei Nikitich Plodomasov brought back from a trip to Petersburg several rather costly gifts for the local clergymen, to whom he was greatly attached. These included three walking sticks: two with identical gold knobs for the priests—that is, one for Father Tuberozov and one for Father Zaharia—and another for Deacon Achilla with a handsome silver knob inlaid with black enamel. These canes fell among the Stargorod clergy like the Biblical serpents that the Egyptian sorcerers cast before Pharaoh.

“Doubt has been visited upon us by these gift canes,” Deacon Achilla used to say.

“But, Deacon, what makes you say that?” asked those to whom he complained.
"Ah, you laymen really don’t understand these things if you think there’s no
doubt,” answered the deacon. “No sir, there’s great doubt here.” And the deacon
proceeded to explain this special woe.

“First,” he said, “as a deacon, my rank gives me no right to carry a staff like that;
it’s not proper because I’m not a pastor. That’s in the first place. But then I use it—the
staff, I mean—because it was a gift. That’s the second point. And, third, there’s the
disturbing matter of the canes being just alike: why do Father Savely and Father Zaharia
have staffs that are alike? Why treat them alike this way? Tell me why, please. Father
Savely—you know yourself—Father Savely—he’s a smart one, a philosopher, a regular
Solomon. And now I see he just can’t imagine why and is disturbed, terribly disturbed
even.”

“But why should he be disturbed, Deacon?”

“Well, first of all he’s disturbed because these gifts that are just alike mix things
up. How do you suppose you can tell whose is whose? Just try to figure out which one is
the Archpriest’s and which one is Zaharia’s when they’re both the same. But let’s
suppose you can mark them somehow to tell them apart—put a wax seal under the knob
or cut a mark into the wood—what are you going to do to take care of it from the political
standpoint? How do you make one less valuable or distinguished than the other when
they are worth the same? Believe me, it’s just impossible for the Archpriest and Father
Zaharia to be worth the same. That’s not in order! The Archpriest feels this and I see it
and I tell him, ‘Father Archpriest, you musn’t do anything more about it since, if you
please, I’ll put a wax mark on Father Zaharia’s walking stick or cut a notch in it.’ But he
says, ‘No! Don’t. Don’t you dare! You mustn’t!’ What does he mean I can’t? So I say,
‘If I have your blessing, I’ll secretly cut a little bit off the bottom of Father Zaharia’s with a knife so that he’ll never notice it’s shorter.’ But he says, ‘You’re stupid!’ Well, stupid, stupid, it wasn’t the first time I’ve heard that from him, and it doesn’t bother me coming from him because he deserves somebody taking the load off of him and I see how he’s disturbed by all of this and that worries me a lot. … So tell me that I’m stupid, stupid, stupid,” the Deacon exclaimed, “Yessir, I’ll let you. Say I’m stupid if he, Father Savely, is not cooking up something. I know for sure that he won’t let me do anything just because he has something up his sleeve himself.”

And it seems that Deacon Achilla was not mistaken. Not a month went by from the time the Stargorod clergymen were presented with the walking sticks which visited doubt upon them until Archpriest Savely suddenly planned a trip to the provincial capital. There was no reason to attribute any special significance to Father Tuberozov’s trip since he traveled rather often to the consistory on church business. No one even wondered why the Archpriest was going. But then Father Tuberozov, who had already settled himself in his carriage, suddenly turned to Father Zaharia, who was seeing him off, and said, “Oh, by the way, Father, where is your cane? Give it to me and I’ll take it to town.”

This request and that word, uttered in an offhand manner, suddenly riveted the attention of all those gathered in the yard to say goodbye to Father Savely.

The first was Deacon Achilla, who wheezed immediately and whispered in Father Benefactov’s ear, “There you are! I told you he’s got something up his sleeve!”

“Why take my cane to town, Father Archpriest?” Father Zaharia asked demurely, blinking his eyes and shoving the deacon aside.
“Why? Well, maybe I’ll show them there how people respect and honor you and me,” answered Tuberozov.

“Alyosha, run and get my staff,” Father Zaharia ordered his little son.

“Father Archpriest, maybe you’d like to take my cane to show too,” suggested Achilla as politely as he could manage.

“No, retain yours in your employ,” replied Savely.

“Why keep it with me, Father Archpriest? After all, I too … I mean, Squire Polodmasov honored me the same way with his attention,” the deacon stammered, somewhat hurt.

But the archpriest did not deign to reply to this request and set off with Father Zaharia’s cane, which had been handed to him, lying beside him. So Tuberozov went off and the two canes that were sources of confusion went off with him. Back home, Achilla labored to solve the riddle. Why had Tuberozov taken Zaharia’s cane?

“Well, so what? What business is it of yours? So what?” Zaharia tried to put an end to the deacon’s torturing curiosity.

“Father Zaharia, I tell you he’s got something up his sleeve.”

“Well, even if he has something in mind, what business is it of yours? Let him do what he wants.”

“But I can’t stand not knowing how this will come out. He wouldn’t let me cut your cane shorter. Stupid, he said. I advised him to mark one and he turned that down too. The only thing I can foresee…”

“Well, well, so you can see the future, you chatterbox?”

“The only thing … he certainly will have a precious stone set.”
“So you say. Well, where would he have the stone set?

“In the knob.”

“In his or mine?”

“In his, of course, in his. A precious stone. That’s something valuable.”

“If that’s so, then why did he take my cane along? So he has a stone set in his, but why take mine?”

The deacon slapped his forehead and cried out, “I sure played the fool on that one!”

“I certainly think so,” Father Zaharia asserted, and added a mild reproach: “and you, my brother, even studied logic. You should be ashamed!”

“Well should I be ashamed because I’ve studied logic and still don’t understand? That can happen to anybody,” the deacon replied, and without making any further guesses, continued to burn secretly with curiosity over what would happen.

A week passed and the archpriest returned. Deacon Achilla was breaking a steppe horse he had just gotten in a trade and was the first to sight the archpriest’s black carriage approaching. He flew through all the streets, stopped at open windows of acquaintances, and shouted, “Savely’s on his way! A great and glorious day!”

And then a new idea dawned on Achilla.

“Now I know what’s up,” he said to the crowd hurrying to the archpriest’s gate. “All my ideas up to now were only stupid nonsense. Now I tell you for certain that Father Savely sure as anything had Greek letters engraved, and if they’re not Greek, then they’re Latin. Yes, yes, that’s the only way. He had letters engraved for sure, and if I haven’t guessed it you can call me a fool from here to eternity.”
“Just wait. Wait and we’ll call you one, we’ll call you one,” Father Zaharia replied, repeating his phrases, as he stopped in plain view at the gate where the archpriest’s carriage pulled up.

Father Savely climbed out of the carriage in solemn dignity, entered his house, said a prayer, greeted his wife with three kisses on the lips, then greeted Father Zaharia, clasping his shoulders in embrace, and finally Deacon Achilla, whereupon the deacon kissed the archpriest’s hand and the archpriest pressed his lips to the deacon’s forehead. The greetings over, tea was served, conversation began, news of the provincial capital recounted, and when evening yielded to night, Father Tuberozov had not mentioned the walking canes that were on everyone’s mind.

A day, two days, three days went by and Father Tuberozov still did not raise the matter. It was just as if he had taken the canes to the capital and dropped them into the river so there would be no talk of them.

“At least you could show some curiosity! Ask him!” the impatient Achilla nagged Zaharia without letup.

“What am I supposed to ask?” replied Father Zaharia. You think I don’t have confidence in him, that I’m going to ask him to report what he did with them?”

“Well, you ought to ask out of curiosity, if nothing else.”

“Why don’t you ask yourself, you pest, if it’s just curiosity?”

“No—the only reason you don’t ask is that you’re scared.”

“What do you mean, scared?”
“You’re scared, that’s all. If it was me I’d ask him. Why be afraid? Just ask him. Say, ‘Father Archpriest, how is it with our canes?’ You’re just scared and that’s all there is to it.”

“All right, then ask him yourself.”

“But I can’t.”

“Why not?”

“He could put me down.”

“And you think he can’t do that to me?”

The deacon was simply burning with curiosity, but could not figure out a way to turn a conversation to the walking sticks. But then to his great joy the matter was resolved of its own accord. On the fifth or sixth day following his return, Father Savely invited the mayor, the school superintendent, the doctor, Father Zaharia and Deacon Achilla to tea following the church service and began recounting what he had heard and seen in the province capital. First the archpriest expatiated on the new buildings, then spoke of the governor, whom he criticized for lack of respect for the bishop and for constructing a water supply system, or—as he called it—“aqueducts.”

“These aqueducts,” said the archpriest, “will be of no use since the town is small and on top of that has three rivers running through it. But the new stores that keep opening have started offering quite exquisite things. I’ll show you right now something of the art they have there these days …”

With these words, the archpriest went into a side room and returned directly holding in each hand one of the famous walking sticks.
“There you are,” he said, bringing the upper surface of the gold knobs to his guests’ eyes.

Deacon Achilla strained intently to see what the crafty Savely had done to make the identical canes different, but—alas—he noted no sharp distinction between them. Instead, their identity even seemed to have been intensified, since identical all-seeing eyes surrounded by rays had been etched in the knob of each cane, and around the eye was a decorative border comprising a short inscription in Old Slavic manuscript style.

“Are there no initials, Father Archpriest?” asked Achilla, losing his patience.

“Why do you need initials here?” Tuberozov replied without looking at him.

“So they will be different!”

“You’re always talking rubbish,” the archpriest told the deacon as he pressed one cane to his breast and said, “This one will be mine.”

Achilla quickly glanced at the knob and read around the all-seeing eye: The Rod of Aaron Blossomed.

And this one, Father Zaharia, will be yours,” the archpriest concluded, handing the other cane to Zaharia. There was etched on this one, around the same all-seeing eye and in exactly the same Old Slavic script: A Staff Was Given Unto His Hand.

As soon as he read the second inscription, Achilla fell behind Father Zaharia’s back, butted the doctor in the belly, and began swaying and thrashing about in fits of uncontrollable laughter.

“So what is it, you pest, what, what?” stammered Father Zaharia, turning to face him as the other guests were still examining the engraver’s intricate work on the clerical staffs. “Initials, initials, you shaggy goat? Where are there initials here?”
The deacon, however, was not embarrassed in the slightest, but snorted again and rocked with laughter.

“Why are you splitting your sides?”

“Now, who turns out to be the goat?” the deacon inquired, barely suppressing his laughter as he spoke.

“Why you, of course. Who else?”

Achilla burst out laughing again, waved his arms, and grabbing Father Zaharia by the shoulders, almost floored him like a bear and muttered in a stage whisper: “Since you have studied logic a great deal, Father Zaharia, you read this: ‘A staff was given unto his hand!’ Well, now, use your logic. What does an inscription like that mean?”

“What does it mean? Well, you say what!”

“You ask what? Well, sir, what it means is,” the deacon intoned, “that he was given a slap on his hand with a ruler.”

“Nonsense!”

“Nonsense? Then why does he have ‘The rod blossomed’? Naturally there’s nothing about being given unto his hand. Why? It’s because this was done to elevate his, and as for yours, it was demoted by the hint that you had your paws slapped with a stick.”

Father Zaharia wanted to protest, but in fact he was a little embarrassed. The deacon had triumphed by inflicting discomfort on meek Father Benefactov, but Achilla’s triumph was short-lived.

As soon as he looked up, he saw that the archpriest had fixed both eyes intently upon him, and when the archpriest noted that the deacon was sufficiently abashed, he turned to the guests and said in the calmest tones, “These inscriptions you see were not
devised by me. The Consistory secretary, Afanasy Ivanovich, selected them. As we were walking together late in the day, we happened to look in a goldsmith’s shop.

Afanasy Ivanovich said, ‘Look, Father Archpriest,’ he said, ‘I have an idea. You ought to have inscriptions engraved on the walking sticks. Here is one for you: The Rod of Aaron. And here is one appropriate for Father Zaharia’—the one you see here. As for you Father Deacon—I considered mentioning your cane, as you requested, but concluded that it would be best if you did not use it at all, since it does not belong with your station.”

As he was talking, the archpriest calmly went over to the corner where Achilla’s famous cane had been placed, took it, and locked it in his wardrobe cabinet.

In this manner, the most serious of the disputes among the Stargorod clergy occurred.

“This,” the deacon used to say, “was the start of all my problems. I couldn’t bear it then and got mad, and Father Savely began to scheme all the more to wipe me out and he drove me crazy. I was beside myself and he goaded me like a bear with his scheming, until I really played the devil.”

This was a sample of the pettiness that Archpriest Savely displayed in his latter years, and of the deacon’s thoughtlessness, which drew Tuberozov’s wrath upon him. But just, as they say, Moscow was burned down by a penny candle, so did this incident touch off within the Stargorod clergy a chain of events that revealed various shortcomings and virtues in Savely’s and Achilla’s characters.

The deacon knew the story better than anyone else, but he would tell it only at times of extreme agitation, when he was upset, repentant, and worried. When he
recounted it, he often spoke with tears in his eyes, shudders in his voice, and frequently even with sobs.

Chapter III

“As for me,” the agitated Achilla would say through his tears, “as for me, you know what I really should have done then? I should have fallen to my knees before the father archpriest and said something like, ‘Father Archpriest, I didn’t say that out of anger or spite, but only to show Father Zaharia that I’m as smart as he is even if I don’t have much education.’ But arrogance took possession of me and held me back. I was put out because he’d locked my cane in his cabinet, and on top of that Barney Prepotensky, the teacher, turned up and made things worse. … Oh, I tell you, no matter how furious I am at myself, I have it in for Barney twice as much! Well, sure as my name is Achilla I’ll settle scores with that son of a baker of a teacher before I pass on.”

“You wouldn’t dare do that either,” Father Zaharia interrupted Achilla.

“How can you say I wouldn’t dare? When it’s for atheism you think I wouldn’t dare? What do you take me for?”

“You wouldn’t dare, even if it’s for atheism. You wouldn’t dare fight with him. Barney was a baker’s son, but now he’s a government official; he’s a teacher.”

“So what if he’s a teacher? For atheism I can deal with anybody you wish. That’s the law, brother, and nothing else. Yessir, it’ll come off easy. I’ll yank his mane, shake him up good and proper, let him go and tell him, ‘Go right ahead and complain that
you’ve been thrashed by a member of the clergy for atheism.’ … He won’t go nowhere, no siree.

“But, Lord A’mighty, I keep thinking about it and can’t get it out of my mind. What’s happened to me that I let myself listen to him, that pipsqueak Barney, and yet even now I still haven’t gotten even with him the way I should. I really don’t know how this weakness came on me. After all, I knocked Sergei the sexton down right on the spot when he was arguing about thunder; I boxed Quartermaster Danilka on the ears good and proper for eating eggs during lent last year, and did it right out in public. But still I’ve let that son of a baker Barney off the hook up to now even though he’s done me more harm than all the others put together. If it hadn’t been for him, this quarrel wouldn’t have started. The father archpriest would have been mad at me for my words to Father Zaharia, but that would have been over soon. But that son of a baker Barney, that math teacher in the county school—you can see him there now—worked me over when I was humiliated and hurt. ‘That inscription of Tuberozov’s,’ he babbles, ‘is stupid, aside from everything else.’ Y’know, I was in pain and was raring like the blazes to do something to hurt father Savely, and so I ask him why the engraving was stupid. And Barney says, ‘It’s stupid,’ he says, ‘because the very fact it proclaims is not authentic, and it’s not only not authentic, but is unlikely too. Who was it,” he says, ‘who witnessed Aaron’s rod blossoming? You think a dead stick can bloom?’

“I was just about to stop him there and say, ‘Barnaby Vasilyich, please don’t say that because God, if he wills, can triumph over the laws of nature.’ But then—like always happened during these sessions at Bizyukina’s, the tax man’s wife’s—there was lots of libations and it was all good wine, all that French wine, hoh-sowturn and hoh-
margow, and—darn me if I didn’t get soaked. Mind you, I’d had too much wine, and this Barney, y’know, keeps on babbling the way he does, like a scientist. ‘Back then, you know,’ he says, ‘MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPARSHIN was written at Balshazar’s feast, but now,’ he says, ‘that’s nothing; I can write that for you right now with a phosphor match.’

‘I was terrified, but he kept it up: ‘There’s no end of contradictions,’ he says, ‘in everything there.’ And he went on and on, y’know, and spoke against everything. And then there was more of that hoh-margow, and I had already been hurt through and through, and I began to talk like a free thinker myself. ‘If only I didn’t know how straight Father Savely is,’ I say, ‘how he stands right before the altar and his sacrifice goes straight up, like Abel’s sacrifice, and I don’t want to be a Cain—if it wasn’t for that, I’d let him have it …’

‘That, mind you, was about father Savely! Oh, why did I start talking about him at that time? Wasn’t that stupid? Well, so she—that Jezebel, Bizyukin’s wife—says, ‘Do you have any idea what you are talking about? Do you know what a strong man Cain was? What sort of person is your Abel?’ she says, ‘He’s a nobody, a cringing bootlicker; he has the soul of a slave. But Cain is a proud man who can get things done. He doesn’t reconcile himself to a subservient life. That’s how the English writer Byron portrays him.’ And she set to telling me about it. And all that hoh-margow had gone to my head and suddenly I felt like I did want to be Cain right then and there.

‘I left for home, got as far as the father archpriest’s house, stopped outside his window and put my hands on my hips like an army officer and shouted: ‘I’m a tsar; I’m a slave; I’m a worm; I’m a god!’ Oh, my God, my God, how horrible to remember how shameless I was and how I’d been hurt and humiliated. When the father archpriest heard
me bleating like a goat, he jumped out of the bed, came to the window in his nightshirt, threw open the window and shouted in an angry voice: ‘Go to bed, you frenzied Cain!’ Would you believe it, I shuddered all over at that word Cain because, imagine, I had only been thinking of being a Cain and he already saw that. Oh, my God! I went off home not even thinking about where my feet were taking me, and all my stubbornness disappeared then and there, and from then to this very minute I only groan and eat my heart out.”

When he finished the story, the deacon usually became thoughtful, hung his head, and with a moment’s pause, sighed and continued in a soft and sorrowful tone.

“But now the days go by and father archpriest still has it in for me as much as ever. I went to him and confessed, confessed to everything and repented. I said, ‘Forgive me, as God pardons sinners.’ But always got the same answer, ‘Go!’ Go where, I ask, where am I to go? Postmaster Timohin’s wife advised me, ‘Go to the army, Father Deacon, the soldiers in the regiment will love you.’ I know the soldiers would probably like me because I’m something of a fighter myself. But what would come of me in the army, have you thought of that? I really would turn into a Cain with the soldiers… After all, I know that when all’s said and done it’s just him, just Father Savely that can keep me in line. And as for him, he…”

With these words, tears fell onto the deacon’s chest and he finished his tale in sobs: “And then he came up with a low trick on me—to keep silent. Whatever I say, he never answers…

“Why don’t you speak?” exclaimed the deacon, raising his hand and pointing in the direction of the archpriest’s house. “You think it’s right to act that way, eh? Is it a good thing when I go up to him as a deacon and say, ‘Bless me, Father,’ and when I kiss
his hand I feel that even his hand is cold to me? Is that right? Before the High Mass on
the Day of the Trinity, I begged him, tears all over my cheeks. ‘Bless me.’ Even then he
had no mercy. ‘Be blessed,’ he says. What good is that formality to me when it’s done
without affection?”

The deacon waited for words of comfort and support.

“Earn it,” Father Zaharia advised him, “earn it well and then he will forgive you
tenderly.”

“But how do I earn it, Father Zaharia?”

“Earn it by exemplary behavior.”

“What good is exemplary behavior when he pays me no notice? You, Father,
may think I don’t mind seeing him grieve, seeing his mind wander so much these days.
‘My God!’ I say to myself, ‘Why is he acting so strange? Maybe it’s because of me.’
After all, no matter how much he may be mad at me, he’s really just pretending. He does
love me…”

The deacon turned to face the other direction and, striking one fist on the other
palm, spoke out: “All right, you son of a baker, you won’t get by with this! I’ll really be a
Cain and not a deacon if I don’t mangle that teacher Barney for all to see!”

Readers can see from this threat alone that Barnaby Prepotensky, the teacher
mentioned here, was most definitely in danger from Achilla the deacon, and this danger
became closer and more threatening the more often and keenly Achilla longed for his lost
paradise, Father Savely’s good graces. And now, frankly, the hour had come for Barnaby
Prepotensky’s punishment at the hand of Achilla to start, and for the beginning of the
great Stargorod drama, the object of our chronicle, which happened to coincide with that punishment.

In order to prepare the reader for this drama, we shall put aside for the moment all the paths and trails through which Achilla, like James Fenimore Cooper’s pathfinder, will pursue his enemy, the teacher Barnaby, and shall repair to the depths of the internal world of the most dramatic personality in our narrative. Let us enter that world which is unknown and invisible to all those who gaze at this character from near and from afar. Let us penetrate Father Tuberozov’s small, clean house. Perhaps, standing inside that house, we shall find a means of looking into the soul of its owner, as one watches a glass hive where the bees are building their wonderful comb, which is to illumine the face of God and provide honey for the delectation of man. But let us be careful and quiet: let us don light slippers so that our steps will not disturb the grave and pensive archpriest; let us put on the invisible cap of legend so that our curious gaze will not disconcert the serious countenance of the worthy eminence, and let us keep our ears open to everything we can catch from him.
BARNABY PREPOTENSKY

This excerpt, which describes in Prepotensky’s words his feud with Achilla over the human bones he has acquired, is placed toward the end of Part One of the chronicle. In the preceding excerpt the reader has learned the reasons Achilla wishes to settle scores with Prepotensky. His opportunity came when the latter was given the corpse of an unidentified drowned person, from which he extracted the bones for “study.” This act offends the religious convictions of the devout and gives Achilla a pretext for settling scores.

Leskov builds the narrative slowly, with frequent diversions to other topics. For example, he inserted the fifty-five pages of Tuberozov’s diary between the previous excerpt and this one.

Prepotensky’s account is in the form of a dialogue with one Daryanov, the relative of a friend of Prepotensky’s mother, who had been invited to dinner and surprises Prepotensky by appearing in his yard just after Barnaby had recovered his bones a second time and was guarding them fearfully in the expectation that Achilla would descend upon him.
ГЛАВА ДЕСЯТАЯ

— Горе мое, Валерьев Николаевич, началось с минуты моего рождения, — заговорил Препотенский,— и заключается это горе главным образом в том, что я рожден мою матерью!

— Утешьтесь, друг любезный, все люди рождены своими матерями,— проговорил, отирая со лба пот, Дарьянов.— Один Макдуф был вырезан из чрева, да и то для того, чтобы Макбета не победил — женой рожденный.

— Ну да, Макбета!.. Какой там Макбет? Нам не Макбеты нужны, а науки; но что же делать, когда здесь учиться невозможно. Я бог знает чем отвечать, что и в Петербурге, и в Неаполе, и во всякой стране, если где человек захочет учиться, он нигде не встретит таких препятствий, как у нас. Говорят, Испания... Да что же такое Испания? В Испании библий литературички нельзя иметь, но там и заговоры, и восстания, и все делается. Я уверен, что пусть бы там кто-нибудь завел себе kostи, чтобы учиться, так ему этого не запретят. А тут с первого дня, как я завел kostи, моя собственная родная мать пошла ко мне приставать: «Дай, дитя мое, Варнаша, я его лучше сороню». Кого это ей, спрашивается? Что это еще за он? Почему эти kostи он, а не она? Прав я или нет?

— Совершенно правильно.

— Прекрасно-с! Теперь говорят, будто я мою мать честью не урезонивал. Неправда-с! напротив, я ей гово-рил: «Маменька, не трогайте kostей, это глупо; вы, говорю, не понимаете, они мне нужны, я по ним человека изучаю». Ну а что вы с нею прикажете, когда она отвечает: «Друг мой, Варнаша, нет, все-таки лучше я его сороню...» Ведь это же из рук вон!

— Уж именно.
— Да то ли еще одно: она их в поминанье запи-сала-с!
— Будто?
— Честно вас уверяю! так и записано: «помяни господи раба твоего имрека».
— Что вы за чудо рассказываете?
— Да вот вам и чудо, а из этого чуда скандал!
— Ну?
— Да, конечно-с! А вы как изволите рассуждать? Ведь это все имеет связь с церковью. Ведь отсюда целый ряд недоразумений и даже уголовщины пахнет?
— Господи мой!
— Именно-с, именно вам говорю, потому что моя мать записывает людей, которых не знает как и назвать, а от этого понятно, что у ее приходского попа, когда он станет читать ее поминанье, сейчас полицейские инстинкты разыгрываются: что это за люди имреки; без имен?
— Вы бы ее уговорили, не писать?
— Уговоривал-с. Я говорил ей: «Не молитесь вы, по-жалуйста, маменька, за него, он из жидов». Не верит!
«Лжец, говорит, это тебя бес научит меня обманывать, я знаю, что жиды с хвостиками!» — «Никогда, говорю, ни у каких ни у жидов, ни у нежидов никаких хвостиков нет». Ну и спор: я как следует стою за евреев, а она против; я спорю — нет, нет, а она твердит: есть! Я «нет», она «есть». «Нет», «есть»? А уж потом как разволнуется, так только кричит: «Ки-ш-ш-ш, ки-ш-ш-ш», да, как на курицу, на меня ладошами пред самым носом хлопает. Ну, представьте же вы себе, еще говорят, нужна свобода женщина. Отлично-с, я и сам за женскую свободу; но это надо с толком: молодой, развитой женщине, которой хочет не стесняться своими действиями, давайте свободу, но ста-рухам… Нет-с, я первый против этого, и даже удивляюсь, как этого никто не разозвет в литературе. Ведь этим пользуются самые вредные люди. Не угнол ли вам попа Захария, и он вдруг за женскую эмансипацию! Да, да-с, он за мою мать. «Если ты, говорит, имеешь право не верить в бога, так она такой же человек, и имеет право верить!» Слышишь, такой же. Не будь этих взглядов, моя мать давно бы мне сдалась и уступила: она бы у меня и в церк-ковь не ходила и бросила бы свое просвещение, а по-
мы бы к Бизюкиной и нянки, а это всё против меня
вооружают или Ахилла, или сам Туберозов.
— Ну полно, пожалуйста!
— Да как же полно, когда я на это имею доказа-
тельства. Туберозов никогда не любил меня, но теперь он
меня за естественные науки просто ненавидит, потому что
я его срезал.
— Как же это вы его срезали?
— Я сто раз его срезывал, даже на той неделе еще раз
обрезал. Он в смотровой комнате, в ученике, пута-
ствовал ораторствовать, что праздничные дни будут заклю-
чать в себе что-то особенное этакое, а я его пари всех и оса-
дил. Я ему очень просто при всем указал на математи-
чески доказанную неверность исчисления праздничных
дней. Где же, говорю, наши праздники? У вас рождество,
а за границей оно уже тринадцать дней назад было. Ведь
прав я?
— То есть двенадцать, а не тринадцать.
— Да, кажется что двенадцать, но не в том деле, а он
сейчас застался по столу ладонью и закричал: «Эй, гляди,
математик, не доберись бы когда-нибудь за это до твоей
физики!» Во-первых, что такое он здесь разумеет под словом
физики?.. Вы понимаете — это и невежество, да и ци-
низм, а потом я вас спрашиваю, разве это ответ?
Гость рассмеялся и сказал, что это хотя и ответ, но
действительно очень странный ответ.
— Да как же-с! разумеется, глупо; но ведь таких
вещей нет целый ряд-с. И вот, например, даже вчера еще
вечером иду я от Бизюкиной, а передо мной немножко
переди идет комиссар Данилка, знаете, тот шляпный,
который за два целовых ездил у Гляча лошадь воро-
ватель, когда Ахилла масло бил, я с Данилой и разгово-
рились. «Что, говорю, Данило, где ты был?» Отвечает, что
был у исправника, от почтейстерш ягоды приносил, и
слушал, как там читали, что в чухонском городе Ревеле
мертвый человек без тления сто лет лежал, а теперь его
пели похоронить. «Не знаю, насолько правды, что
было такое происшествие, но только после там тоже и про
вас говорка была», — сообщил мне Данило. Я, разумеется,
встревожился, а он меня успокаивает: «Не про самих про
вас, говорит, а про ваших мертвых людей, которых вы у себя
содержите». Понимаете ли вы эту нитригу? Я дал
Даниилке двугривенный: что ж делать? это не хорошо, но шпиона нужен, и я всегда говорю, что шпиона нужно, и мы с Бизюиною в этом совершенно согласны. Без шпиона нельзя обойтись, вводя новые учения, потому что надо штудировать общество. Да-с, ну так вот... про что это я говорил? Да! Я дядя Даниилке двугривенный и говорю: расскажи-таки все. Он мне сказал, что как прочитал эту газету, так дядька и повел речь о моих костях. «Я, говорят, нарочно газету эту принес, потому что на это внимание обращаю». А совсем врет, потому что он ничего никогда не читает, а в этой газете ему Даниилка от Лянных кровей принес. «Это, говорит, Воин Васильевич, ваще с лекарем большая ошибка была дать Варнаве уточнения; но это можно поправить». Городничий, конечно, знает свой характер и говорит, что я не оттам, и я бы, конечно, и не оттам. Но Ахил говорят: «У него, говорит, их очень просто можно отобрать и преспокойно предать погребению». Городничий говорит: «Не дать ли квартальному предписание, чтоб отобрать кости?» Но этот бан-дит: «Мне ничего, говорит, не нужно: я их сейчас без предписания отберу и уложу в гробик в детский, да и кончино». 

Препотенский вдруг рванулся к костям, накрыл их руками, как пасека покрывает крылом испуганных приближенного коршуна шпиль, и произнес нервным голосом:  
— Нет-с, извините! пока я жив, это не кончено. И того с вас довольно, что вы всё это несколько замедляете!  
— Что же это такое «они» замедляют?  
— Ну, будто вы не понимаете?  
— Революционно, что ли? 

Учитель прекратил работу и с усмешкою кивнул головой.

ГЛАВА ОДИННАДЦАТАЯ

— Отбрав эти сведения от Даниилки,— продолжал Варнава,— я сейчас же поверну к Бизюиною, чтоб она об этом знала, а через час прихожу домой и уже не застаю у себя ни одной кости. «Где они? кричу, где?» А эта госпожа, моя родительница, отвечает: «Не сердись, говорит, друг мой Варнавешка (очень хорошее имя, извольте
видеть, дали, что его еще переделывать в Варпашенек да в Черташенек, не сердясь, говорит, их начальство к себе потребовало». — «Что за вдзор, кричу, что за вдзор: какое начальство?» — «А без тебя, говорит, отец дьякон Ахилла приходил в окно и все их забрал и понес». Нравится вам: «Начальство, говорит, потребовало, и Ахилла понес». — «Да вы, говорю, хоть бы мозгами-то, если они у вас есть, нежели умертвилось, какое же дьякон начальство?» — «Друг мой, говорит, что ты, что ты это? да ведь он помазан! Скажите вы, сделайте ваше одолжение! Вой вот смететесь, вам это смешно; но мне это, стало быть, не смешно было, когда я сам к этому бандиту пошёл. Да-с; Ахилла говорит, что я трус, и это и все так думают; но я вчера показал, что я не трус; а я прямо пошёл к Ахилке. Я прихожу, он дышит. Я постучал в окно и говорю: «Отдайте мне, Ахилла Андреич, мои кости!» Он, во-первых, насилию проснулся и знает, начинает со мною кобениться: «Нет что они, говорят, тебе кости? (Что это за фамильярное «ты»? что это за короткость?) Ты без костей складнее». — «Это, говорю, не ваше дело, как я складнее». — «Нет, совсем напротив. Мое, говорит, это дело: я священнослужитель». — «Но вы же, говорю, ведь не имеете права отнимать чужую собственность?» — «А разве кости, говорит, это разве собственность? А ты бы, говорит, ещё-то понял, что этакую собственность тебе даже не позволено содержать?» А я отвечал, что «и кресть, говорю, священнослужителями тоже, верно, не позволено: вы, говорю, верно хорошо из английских законов не знаете. В Англии вас за это повысили бы». — «Да ты, говорит, если уж про разные законы стал рассуждать, то ты ещё знаешь ли, что если тебя за это в жандармскую канцелярию отправить, так тебя там сейчас спустят по пояс в подвал да начнут в два пуха рвать. Вот тебе и будет Англия. Что? Хорошо тебе от этого станет?» А я ему и отвечаю: «Вы, говорю, всё знаете, вам даже известно уже, во сколько пухов там пороют». А он: «Конечно, говорит, известно: это по самому по простому правилу, кто сам претёрпевал, тот и понять может, что с обеих сторон станут с пучьями и начнут донимать как нельзя». — «Прекрасная, говорю, картина»; а он: «Да, говорит, ты это задел; а теперь лучше, брат, слушай меня, забудь про все свои глупости и уходи», и с этими словами, он опять завалился на свое логово. Ну, тут уже, разумеется,
я все понял, как он проврался, но чтоб еще более от него
выведать, я говорю ему: «Но ведь вы же, говорю, дырен,
и в жандармах не служите, чтобы законы наблюдать».
А он, представьте себе, ничего этого не понял, к чему это
я подвел, и отнял: «А ты почему, говорят, знаешь, что
я не служу в жандармах? А мне, может, и белая рукавица есть, и я тебе, пожалуй, сейчас и покажу, если
ты еще будешь мне мешать спать». Но я, разумеется, уже
dо этого не стал дожидаться, потому что, во-первых, меня
это не интересовало, а, во-вторых, я уже все, что мне
нужно было знать, то вывели, а потом, зная еготютские
привычки драться... «Нет-с, говорю, не хочу и вовсе не
интересуюсь вашими доказательствами», и сейчас же по-
шел к Бизюкиным, чтобы поскорее рассказать все это
Дарье Николаевне. Дарья Николаевна точно так же, как
и я сейчас, и говорит, что она и сама подозревала, что они
все здесь служат в тайной полиции.
— Кто служит в тайной полиции? — спросил Варнаву
его изумленный собеседник.

— Да вот все эти наши различные люди, а осо-
бенно попы: Савелий, Ахилл.
— Ну, батюшка, вы с своею Дарьей Николаевной,
просто сказать, рехнулись.
— Нет-с; Дарья Николаевну на этот счет не обма-
нешь: она ведь уж много вынесла от таких молодцов.
— Врет она, ваша Дарья Николаевна, — ничего она
нит от кого не вынесла!
— Кто не вынес? Дарья Николаевна?
— Да.

— Покорно вас благодарю! — ответил с комическим
поклоном учитель.
— А что такое?
— Помилуйте, да ведь ее секта, — с гордостью пропи-
севши scandals.
— В детстве; да и то, видно, очень мало.
— Нет-с, не в детстве, а всего за два дня до ее
свадьбы.
— Вы меня всё больше и больше удивляете.
— Нечего удивляться: это факт-с.
— Ну, простите мое невежество, — я не знал этого
факта.

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— Да как же-с, я ведь и говорю, что это всякому надо знать, чтобы судить. Дело началось с того, что Дарья Николаевна тогда решилась от отца уйти.
— Зачем?
— Зачем? Как вы странно это спрашиваете!
— Я потому так спрашиваю, что отец, кажется, ее не мил, не теснил, не навязывал.
— Ну да мало ли что! Ни к чему не навязывал, а так просто, захотела уйти — и ушла. Чего же ей было с отцом жить? Бизюкин ее младшего брата чуял, и он это одобрил и сам согласился с ней перевенчаться, чтоб отец на нее права не имел, а отец ее не позволял ей идти за Бизюкина и считал его за дурака, а она, решившись сделать скандал, уж разумеется уступить не могла и сделала по-своему... Она так распорядилась, что уж за другого ее выдавать ничего было думать, и об этом, понимаете, совершенно честно оказалась отцу. Да вы слушаете ли меня, Валерьян Николаевич?
— Не только слушаю, но с каждым вашим словом усугубляю мое любопытство.
— Оно так и следует, потому что интерес сейчас будет возрастать. Итак, она честно и прямо раскрыла отцу имеющий значение факт, а он ни более ни менее как сделал следующую подлость: он сказал ей: «Сьездил, мой друг, завтра в тетке и расскажи еще это ей». Дарья Николаевна, ничего не подозревая, взяла да и поехала, а она ее там вдвоем с этим барыней и высекли. Она прямо от них кинулась к жандармскому офицеру. «Осведомительствуйте, говорит, и донесите в Петербург,— я не хочу этого скрывать,— пусть все знают, что за учреждение такое родители». А тот: «Ни свидетельствовать, говорит, вас не хочу, ни доносить не стану. Я заодно с вашим ста- риком и даже охотно помог бы ему, если бы он собрался повторить. Ну что же еще после этого ожидать? Вот вам-с наша и тайная полиция. Родной отец, родная тетка, и друг оказывается, что все они не что иное, как та же тайная полиция! Дарья Николаевна одно говорит: «по крайней мере, говорит, я одно выиграла, что я их изучила и знаю», и потому, когда я ей вчера сообщил мои открытия над Ахиллом, она говорит: «Это так и есть, он шпигон! И теперь, говорит, в нашем опасном положении самый главный вопрос, чтобы ваши кости достать и по ним как
можно зее учить и учить. Ахилла, говорит, почему еще ны-
kуда не мог их сбыть, и вы если тотчас к нему прокраде-
tесь, то вы можете унести их назад. Одно только, говорит,
не попадайтесь, а то он может вас набить...»
 — Как «набить»?
 — Это так она сказала, потому что она знает Ахил-
линны прыщики; но, впрочем, она говорит: «Нет, ничего,
вы намотайте себе на шею мой толстый ковровый платок
и наденьте на голову мой ватный капор, так этак, если он
вас и пойман и выбьет, вам будет мягко и не больно».
Я всем этим, как она учил, хорошо отмотался и по-
шел. Прихожу к этому скоту на двор во второй раз... Со-
бака была залезла, но Дарья Николаевна это предвидела
и дала мне для собаки хусок пирожка. Я кормлю собаку
и иду, и вижу, прямо предо мною стоит телега; я к телеге
и все в ней нашел — все мои кости!
 — Ну тут, конечно, скорей за работу?
 — Уж разумеется! Я дурак снял с головы Дары Нико-
колаевны капор, завязал в него кости и во всю рысь
назад.
 — Тем эта история и кончилась?
 — Как кончилась? Напротив, она теперь в самом
разгаре. Хотите, я доскажу?
 — Ах, сделайте милость!

ГЛАВА ДВЕНАДЦАТАЯ

— Начну с объяснения того: как и почему я попал
ныше в церковь? Сегодня утром рано приезжает к нам
Александра Ивановна Серболова. Вы, конечно, ее знаете
не хуже меня: она верующая, и ее убеждения касательно
многое очень отсталые, но она моя матери кой-чем помо-
гает, и потому я жертвуя и заставляя себя с нею не ско-
рить. Но к чему это я говорю? Ах да! как она приехала,
маменка мне и говорит: «Встань, такой-то мой,
Вараша, провози Александру Ивановну в церковь, чтобы
на нее акцизников собаки не бросились». Я пошел. Я, вы
знаете, в церковь никогда не хожу; но ведь я же понимаю,
что там меня ни Ахилла, ни Савелий тронуть не смеют;
я и пошел. Но, стоя там, я вдруг вспомнил, что оставил
открытою свою комнату, где кости, и побежал домой. Прихожу — маменьки нет; смотрю на стену: нет ни одной косточки!
— Схоронила?
— Да-с.
— Без шуток, схоронила?
— Да полноте, пожалуйста: какие с ней шутки! Я стал ее просить: «Маменька, милая, я почитать вас буду, только скажите честно, где мои кости?» — «Не спрашивай, говорит, Варваша, иначе убью!» Я ей жало: — нет, таки не сказала! Злой-презрелый я шел в учитель, с самою твердью решимостью взять нынешнюю ночь заступ, разрыть им одну из этих могил на полгосте и достать себе новые кости, чтобы меня не переспорили, и я бы это непременно сделал. А между тем ведь это тоже небось называется преступлением?
— Да еще и большим.
— Ну вот значит! А кто бы меня под это подвел?..
мать. И это бы непременно случилось: но вдруг, на мое счастье, приходит в класс мальчик и говорит, что на берегу свиная каких-то кости вырыла. Я бросился, в полной надежде, что это мои кости, — так и вышло! Народ твердит: «Зарыть...» Я говорю: «Прочь!» Как вдруг слышу — Ахилла... Я схватил кости, и бежать. Ахилла меня за куртку. Я повернулся... трах! Пола к черту, Ахилла меня за вертунок — я трах... вертунок к черту; Ахилла меня за жилет — я трах... жилет пополам; он меня за шее — я трах, я убежал, и вот здесь сижу и отчаянно их, а вы меня опять испугали. Я думал, что это опять Ахилла.
— Да помилуйте, подите к вам Ахилла, да еще через забор! Ведь он дьякон.
— Он дьякон! Говорите-ка вы «дьякон». Много же на это смотрят. Мне комиссар Данилка вчера говорил, что он, прощаясь, сказал Туберозову: «Ну, говорит, отец Савелий, пока я этого Варвашу не сокрушу, не зовите меня Ахилла-дьякон, а зовите меня все Ахилла-воин». Что же, пусть воет, я его не боюсь, но я с этими пор знаю, что делать. Я решил, что мне здесь больше не жить; я, кое с кем в Петербурге в переписке; там один барин устран...
ANALYSIS AND COMMENT

Prepotensky is of course much better educated than Achilla, and his speech reflects this. Просторечие normally occurs only when he is quoting others with irony. He does make frequent use of colloquialisms, however, and in his own way pours out his emotions as Achilla did in the previous excerpt. The task for the translator, of course, is to make Prepotensky’s language consistent with his character as Leskov presents it: a provincial, anti-establishment “intellectual,” for whom “science” personifies modernity and freedom. It is a less difficult task than we faced with Achilla’s language, since Prepotensky tends to use images and expressions more international and less specifically Russian, and also because Western societies are familiar with broadly similar types in
their own midst. Thus, the translator has a more narrow gap to bridge and more abundant 
material at hand for the structure.

Perhaps for this reason, all the translations we are examining do a more accurate 
job of portraying Prepotensky than Achilla. Hapgood’s is rather stiff and unnatural and 
contains a few gratuitous errors, but it does not suffer from the profusion of howlers that 
marked the previous excerpt. Both Mongault and Luther succeed well in capturing the 
colloquial ring of the original and some of their solutions are instructive.

Snippets from a translation, particularly of colloquial language, provide an 
inadequate basis for evaluation, given the necessity of recreating the tone and personality 
of an individual’s speech, which can often require adjustments of individual passages. 
Nevertheless, it may be revealing to compare the way specific translators have dealt with 
particular colloquialisms. Those which follow, selected almost at random, require no 
commentary. The original phrase or passage is followed by quotations from Mongault, 
Luther and Hapgood respectively, and my suggestion follows in brackets. In some 
instances the entire phrase is colloquial; in others the individual colloquial words are 
italicized in the original.

Я Бог знает чем отвечаю ... 101 (17)

Je parie tout ce qu’on voudra …
Ich kann es ohne weiteres beschwören …
I will take my oath on anything you like …
[Suggestion: God knows why it is that …]

Ведь это же из рук вон! 101 (36)

Les bras vous en tombent, n’est-ce pas?
… das ist doch nicht zu Aushalten.
Now, isn’t that going altogether too far?
[Suggestion: The thing has gotten out of hand!]
Ну, пожалуйста! 103 (3)

Vous vous figurez cela, voyons!
Sie übertreiben!
Come, do stop that, please!
[Suggestion: Oh, come on!]

... потому что я его срезал. 103 (7)

... depuis que je l’ai fait quinaud …
Ich habe ihn ja einmal geschnitten.
… because I have put him to confusion.
[Suggestion: … since I showed him up.]

Я прихожу, он дрыхнет. 105 (14-15)

Il pionçait déjà …
Als ich hinkam, schnarchte er schon.
When I arrived, he was fast asleep.
[Suggestion: I come up and he’s snoring away.]

Он, во-первых, насильно проснулся и знает, начинает со мною кобениться: 105 (16-17)

J’ai eu toutes les peines du monde à le réveiller; et le voilà qui se met à faire le malin
Es dauerte eine Weile, bis er erwachte, und dann fing er gleich mit Unverschämlichkeiten an.
At first he woke up with difficulty, and began to make a fuss with me.
[Suggestion: I had a devil of a time waking him up, and then, you know, he started playing silly games with me.]

отглядел 106 (5)

… a donné dans le panneau
… und platzt heraus:
… and snapped out:
[Suggestion: … and blurted out:]

все эти наши различные люди … 106 (20)

Mais tous les “bien-pensants” d’ici …
All die braven Leutchen hier …
… all these various wretched people of ours …
[Suggestion: … all our pygmies here.]
 Ну, батюшка, вы с Дарьей Николаевной, просто сказать, рехнулись.

Ah, ça, mon cher, vous m’avez tout l’air d’avoir perdu la boule, la Bizioukine et vous.
… sind einfach verrückt geworden.
… lost your senses.
[Suggestion: … have gone off your rockers.]

такой-свой, друг мой Варнаша

mon petit gars
mein lieber Warnaschenka …
you thus-and-so, my dear, Varnasha …
[Suggestion: dear Barney, my lazybones …]

таки не сказала

… rein n’a pu la faire céder!
… es half’alles nichts!
… and still she wouldn’t tell me!
[Suggestion: … but no, she still wouldn’t say.]

подтрунивать

… lancent des points …
… sich … lustig zu machen …
… ridicule …
[Suggestion: … to make fun of …]

A few passages may benefit from a discussion of the problems they present:

--Ну да, Макбета … Какой там Макбет? Нам не Макбеты нужны, а науки: In the last sentence here, Prepotensky cites a saying by Pisarev that would have been recognized instantly by Russian readers of his time. Of our translators, only Mongault took note of this by placing the sentence in quotation marks and explaining the origin of the quotation in a footnote. While it is important to let the reader
know that Prepotensky is utilizing a well known quotation, I believe that this can be done
without resorting to a footnote by translating the passage: “Macbeth, you say. Why are
you spouting Macbeth? As Pisarev said, we don’t need Macbeths, but sciences …”

101 (30-31) бу́дто я мо́ю мать честью не урезо́нива́ю: Both честью and урезонивать are colloquial, the former meaning “properly” and the latter “to make
to see reason.” Hapgood confused the meaning of the first when she translated the
passage, “Now they talk as though I don’t persuade my mother respectfully.” Both
Mongault and Luther get the sense correctly with “On prétend que je ne sais pas faire
comprendre les choses à ma mère” and “Jetzt sagt man, daß ich meine Mutter nicht
vernüftig zuzureden verstehe.” While neither of the latter versions contain specific
colloquialisms, they do read as normal conversation on the part of an educated person
(zureden, for example, is less formal than, say, beeifussen). I would suggest something
like “Now they say I don’t reason with my mother the way I should.”

102 (1-5) она их в поминанье записала-с! … “Помяни Господи раба
tвоего имрека”: The поминанье is a list of the deceased for whom prayers are
requested. Имрекъ is the term formerly used in Church and civil documents to indicate
that the appropriate name should be supplied. Prepotensky’s mother simply copied it,
since she of course did not know the name of the dead person in question. Hapgood
translates the quoted passage as “Have in remembrance, O Lord, Thy servant Name,” and
appends a footnote to explain. Mongault translates раба твоего имрека as “votre
serviteur ‘UNTEL,’” and Luther as “Deines Knechtes Soundso.” While these
translations convey accurately the irony of the woman’s not knowing the identity of the
person for whom prayers are requested, they miss the humor of her having simply copied
instructions on the form to be used. I believe the situation can be conveyed adequately to
the reader without a footnote by rendering имрека as “Insert Name.”

103 (21-22) "Эй, гляди, математик, не добрались бы когда-нибудь за это до твоей физики!" Here, Tuberozov is indulging in a clever and humorous play on words, since in the nineteenth century, физика meant not only “physics,” as it does today, but also “physique.” Hapgood got the general meaning right but missed the pun when she translated the sentence “Hey there, mathematician, look out that you don’t suffer some day for your physics!” Mongault and Luther caught both with their versions: “Prens garde mathematician … ta physique pourrait bien un jour causer des désagréments à ton physique,” and “Paß auf, du Matematikus, daß man dir dafür nicht noch mal in die Physik fährt!” I would suggest something similar, such as: “You better take care, you mathematician, or your physics will have a run-in with your physique!”

103 (35) в чухонском городе Ревале: Чухонский was a pejorative adjective for “Finnish,” and Ревель was the name used under the Russian Empire for the city in Estonia now called Tallinn. Russians often referred to the Estonians as Finns, and the two peoples are of course closely related, linguistically and ethnically. In English, we have no pejorative term for Finn or Estonian (at least not one known to this writer) and Leskov probably used the term without pejorative intent—some dictionaries indicate that the word was used colloquially in St. Petersburg in the nineteenth century without any derogatory connotation.83 In the nineteenth century Tallinn was generally known in English by its German name, Reval. It is probably best to translate the phrase simply as

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83 Толковый словарь русского языка (Москва: Гос. Изд. Иностраных и национальных словарей, 1940.) Note also the lines from Pushkin’s Bronze Horsemance: “По мшистым, топким берегам чернели избы здесь и там, приют убогого чухонца.”
“in the Finnish town of Reval.” To speak of Tallinn would be an anachronism, since no
Russian would have used it in the nineteenth century; to refer to it inaccurately as Finnish
is simply to repeat the speaker’s mistake.

The story behind the undecomposed body in Tallinn is not explained in the text—
presumably because it was generally well known to Russian readers at the time. It would
make an interesting footnote, however, for the contemporary reader. The reference is to
the body of Karl Eugen, Duke de Croy (1651-1702), a member of a noble family in the
Walloon area of the Spanish Netherlands who served Austria during the war with the
Ottoman Empire in the late seventeenth century, then came into the employ of the King
of Poland, an ally of Peter the Great at the onset of the Great Northern War.\footnote{Meyers Konversations-Lexikon, fünfte Auflage. (Leipzig and Vienna: Bibliographisches Institut, 1897),
vol. 4, pp. 409-410.} He thus
turned up at the Battle of Narva as a Field Marshal on the Russian side and was captured
by the Swedes during that debacle. He was held at Reval/Tallinn from 1700 until his
death in 1702, and he managed to accumulate so many debts that upon his demise his
creditors took legal action to prevent burial of the body. His corpse was stored under
glass in the cellar of a church in Reval, and was finally buried only in 1863, more than a
century and a half after his death.\footnote{Н.С. Лесков, Собрание сочинений (Москва ГИХЛ, 1957), т. 4, стр. 533.}

104-105 (38-2) (очень хорошее имя ... в Варнашенек да и
Черташенек): Here we have an elaborate word play of the sort that brings many
translators to despair. When he quotes his mother’s use of the double diminutive of his
name (Варнашенъка), Prepotensky is reminded of other sound-alikes, which mean,
respectively, “little convicts” and “little devils.” On this one, Mongault simply threw in
the towel and omitted everything in the parentheses. Luther, who is usually ingenious in rendering word-play, failed on this one when he rendered it with a generalized statement “da haben sie mir diesen scheußlichen Namen gegeben und nun muß er noch so ekelhaft verdreht werden.” The attentive reader must wonder just what is so “ekelhaft” about “mein lieber Warnaschenka.” Hapgood took an easy but honest approach when she simply transliterated the words and explained in a footnote what they mean: “and a very pretty name that is, please observe, which she has given me, and it might also be twisted into Varnashenek, and Tchertashenek.”

Obviously, one cannot always find “sound-alikes” in another language that mean precisely the same as the Russian ones, but I believe that the thrust and style of the original is conveyed more precisely if one uses words with general negative connotations that sound somewhat like Barney. For this, I have chosen “blarney” and “varmint” and would translate the passage as follows: “you see, it’s a fine name they gave me; you can make Blarney and Varmint out of it.”

105 (17-19) “На что они, говорит, тебе кости? (Что это за фамильярное “ты”? Что это за короткость?) This presents no problem for the French and German translators since they can use “tu” and “du” to make the same point as “ты” in the text. It is not a good idea to resort to “thou” in English, however, since this is no longer used as a pronoun for familiar address. It comes as no great surprise, however, to note that this is precisely what Hapgood tried to do: “What dost thou want with those bones?” There are, of course many other ways of suggesting familiarity in English, and I would translate the passage, “’Look, buddy, what do you need the bones for?’ he says. (Why all this buddy business? Why so familiar?).”
In using the term логово (den, or lair) for Achilla’s abode, Prepotensky is of course reinforcing the epithet of animal or beast which he applies to the deacon from time to time. Although this is obviously an important overtone, Mongault is the only one of our three previous translators who takes note of it, but does so in a misleading way. (Mongault renders the passage “Sur ce je l’entends qui se rembuche,” which, with its image of an animal scurrying for cover, adds the inappropriate suggestion of an animal in flight.) Hapgood refers simply to “couch” and Luther to “Bett.” I would prefer a solution that carries the overtone of a wild animal without Mongault’s discordant suggestion of flight, and would suggest, “And with that I heard him pile back onto the couch in his lair.”

я все понял, как он проврался: Провраться is a colloquial word meaning to be caught in a lie or to give oneself away while lying, and none of our translators capture this particular meaning precisely. Mongault has “Je savais maintenant à quoi m’en tenir sur son compte,” which is an accurate general translation but one that lacks the color and specificity of the words Leskov has put in Prepotensky’s mouth. Luther’s “ich wußte sehr wohl was seine Flunkerei wert war,” could as easily mean that Achilla had indulged in bragging as that he had inadvertently given away a secret. And Hapgood, who apparently misread проврался as прорвался, got it completely wrong with her “I understood how he had broken in.” I would suggest, “he had already given himself away and I understood it all.”

Ан у меня ... : Ан is просторечие (note that it is used by Achilla, not Prepotensky), but none of the previous translators reproduce this stylistic overtone: (Peut-être que j’ai …; Vielleicht habe ich auch …; Perhaps. Perhaps now I
have...). I believe that one can suggest something of the stylistic level by rendering it:

“Nope, I just may have ... .”

**108 (4)** набить: An unusual verb to use in this context—as

Daryanov’s question that follows indicates—набить is used idiomatically in several meanings that are relevant: to drive a nail and to bag quarry, for example. Both Mongault and Luther choose colloquialisms to translate it: “parce qu’il vous flanquerait peut-être une tripotée” and denn er könnte Sie bös verklopfen.” Less satisfactory is Hapgood’s “he may murder you,” since the verb is too strong, even if we acknowledge that it is used in slang to connote an action falling short of causing fatal injury. I would select something like “or else he’ll nail you,” since this is colloquial, verging on slang, and carries a mental image similar to that conveyed by набить in some phrases.

* * * * *

As was the case with the previous excerpt, I have broken up some of the long, run-on paragraphs. I have, however, kept all direct quotations in direct discourse, rather than shifting some to indirect as the other translators did.
“My problems, Valerian Nikolayevich, began the moment I was born,”
Prepotensky commenced, “and these problems boil down to the fact that it was my
mother who gave me birth.”

“Take heart, old boy. Everybody is born of his mother,” Daryanov observed,
wiping sweat from his forehead. “Only Macduff was ripped from the womb, and that just
so Macbeth would not be conquered by one born of woman.”

Macbeth, you say. Why are you spouting Macbeth? As Pisarev said, we don’t
need Macbeths, but science, and what can you do if you can’t study here? God knows
why it is that in Petersburg, or in Naples, or in any country, if there is anything somebody
wants to study, he wouldn’t meet the kind of hurdles we have here. They say Spain…
But what sort of place is Spain? You can’t have Lutheran Bibles in Spain, but there are
conspiracies and uprisings and all sorts of things are going on. I’m sure that if someone
there got hold of bones for study, it wouldn’t be forbidden. But here, from the day I got
the bones, my own mother has been pestering me with, ‘Give them to me, my child,
Barney boy. I’d better bury him.’ Who is it she’s talking about, I’d like to know. And
what’s more, why say ‘he’? Why are the bones a ‘he’ and not a ‘she’? Am I right or not?”

“Quite right.”
“Fine! Now they say I don’t reason with my mother the way I should. That’s not true! It’s just the opposite. I said to her, ‘Mama, don’t touch the bones, that’s stupid. What you don’t understand is that I need them,’ I say, ‘I’m studying mankind from them.’ But what would you suggest I do with her when she answers, ‘Barney, my dear, no, all the same it’s best for me to bury him.’ The thing has gotten out of hand!”

“Sure seems so.”

“But there’s more. She inscribed these bones on the prayer list for the deceased!”

“You’re joking!”

“On my word of honor! The entry reads, ‘Remember, O Lord, Thy faithful servant Supply Name.’ “

“That’s marvelous!”

“Yes, that’s a marvel for you—and that marvel will bring a scandal with it.”

“How is that?”

“Sure it will. What would you expect? After all, all this is tied up with the Church. A whole chain of misunderstandings can come from that, and it even has the smell of a criminal case.”

“Good Lord!”

“It sure does, and I say that because my mother puts people on the prayer list when she doesn’t even know the names, and we know that when her archpriest reads her note, his police instincts will begin to gnaw at him; who are these Supply Name people, without Christian names?”

“Couldn’t you persuade her not to put it on the prayer list?”
“I tried. I told her, ‘Please, mama, don’t pray for him because he’s a Jew.’ She didn’t believe it; ‘You’re fibbing,’ she says, ‘the devil’s putting you up to trying to fool me. I know Jews have little tails!’ ‘Nobody has tails,’ I say, ‘Jews don’t and Gentiles don’t either!’ And so we argued. I stood up for the Jews like I should, and she was against them. I’d say they didn’t have tails and she’d insist they do! I’d say ‘No!’ and she’d say ‘Yes!’ And as she got excited, she started going ‘shush … shush … shush,’ and clapped her hands right at my face the way you do with chickens. Well, just imagine, they still say that women must be emancipated. That’s fine; I’m all for women’s freedom, but it must be done sensibly. Liberate the young, educated woman who doesn’t want to be embarrassed by her actions, but the old ladies… No, I’d be the first to oppose that, and am surprised that nobody has published an article on the subject.

“You know, the most harmful people make use of this. You take that priest Zaharia—he’s suddenly for the emancipation of women! Yes, yes, he’s for my mother. ‘If you have the right not to believe in God,’ he says, ‘then she’s a human being just as you are and has the right to believe!’ Hear that, a human being as you are. If it weren’t for these views, my mother would have given in long ago and let me have my way. She would have stopped going to church and would have given up her job baking communion bread and gone to Bizyukina’s as a nursemaid. It’s Achilla, or Tuberozov himself, who backs her up against me.”

“Oh, come on!”

“Why are you surprised? I have proof! Tuberozov never did like me, but now he really hates me for the natural sciences since I showed him up.”

“How did you show him up?”
“I’ve shown him up a hundred times, and I cut him down to size again just this week. He started prating in the principal’s office at school about holidays, claiming they are something special, and I trapped him before everybody. I simply pointed out to him before everyone the mathematically proven inaccuracy of calculating holy days. ‘You take our holidays,’ I say. ‘You have your Christmas, but abroad it occurred thirteen days ago.’ Right?”

“Well, twelve, not thirteen.”

“All right, maybe twelve, but that’s not the point. He slapped the table with the palm of his hand and shouted, ‘You better take care, you mathematician, or your physics will have a run-in with your physique!’ In the first place, what does he mean by the word ‘physique’? You understand—that’s ignorance, and cynicism to boot, and on top of this I ask you, was that any answer?”

His guest laughed and said that it was an answer, but really a very strange one.

“You said it! Of course it was stupid. But you know a whole lot of these things have happened. Take yesterday evening for example. There I was coming back from Bizyukina’s and Quartermaster Danilka was walking a little ahead of me. You know him—the town bum who was paid a couple of rubles to go steal a horse from Glich while Achilla was churning away. I struck up a conversation with Danilka and said, ‘Hello, Danilo, where’ve you been?’ He said he’d been at the police chief’s, had brought him berries from the postmaster’s wife, and had heard them reading there about a dead man in the Finnish city of Reval who lay for a hundred years without decaying, and now orders have been given to bury him. ‘I don’t know how much truth there is in that happening, but afterwards they started talking about you too.’ So Danilka told me. This naturally
alarmed me, but he tried to smooth it over and said, ‘Not about you yourself,’ he says, ‘but about those dead people you keep at your house.’ Understand the intrigue?

“I gave Danilka twenty kopeks. I couldn’t help it. It’s not a good thing, but spies are necessary, and I’ve always said they are and Bizyukina and I are in complete agreement on that point. If you’re introducing new teachings, you can’t get along without spies, because you have to find out what’s going on in the community.

“All right, now … where was I? Oh, yes. I gave Danilka twenty kopeks and said, ‘Tell me everything.’ Then he told me that when they had read the newspaper, the deacon turned the conversation to my bones. He said, ‘I brought this newspaper on purpose, so as to call attention to this.’ He was lying because he never reads anything, and Danilka had brought his walnuts from the Lyalins’ store in that paper. So he says, ‘Voin Vasilyich, you and the doctor made a real mistake when you gave Barnaby that drowned man, but it can be set right.’ The major of course knows my character and said that I wouldn’t give the bones up and of course I wouldn’t. But Achilla said, ‘It’s easy as pie to just take them from his place and turn them over for burial.’ The mayor asked whether he should give a police constable a warrant to seize them, but that bandit Achilla said, ‘I don’t need anything,’ he says, ‘I’ll just go take them without a warrant, put them to rest in a child’s grave, and it’s finished.’

Propotensky suddenly dashed to the bones, covered them with his arms and a hen covers frightened chicks with her wing when a hawk appears, and proclaimed in a nervous voice, “No, my good sirs, you’re wrong! As long as I live, it’s not finished! It’s quite enough from all of you to delay things a bit!”

“And what is it “they” are delaying?”
“You mean you don’t understand?”

“The revolution, you mean?”

The teacher stopped his work and nodded his head with a grin.

Chapter XI

“When I extracted this information from Danilka,” Barnaby continued, “I went straight back to Bizyukina’s to let her know, and an hour later I get home to find every single bone gone. ‘Where are they?’ I shout, ‘Where are they?’ And that lady, my maternal parent, answers, ‘Don’t get upset, my dear Barney boy’ (you see, it’s a fine name they gave me, you can make Blarney and Varmint out of it), ‘Don’t get upset,’ she says, ‘the government sent for them.’

‘What nonsense!’ I shout, ‘What utter nonsense! What government?’

‘While you were away,’ she says, ‘Father Deacon Achilla went through the window, collected all of them, and carried them off.’ Don’t you like that: ‘The government,’ she says, ‘sent for them, and Achilla carried them off.’

‘Well,’ I say, “you ought to give your brains, if you’ve got any, some exercise: what kind of government is Achilla?”

‘My dear,’ she says, ‘why do you say that? After all, he’s ordained.’ Now tell me how you’d answer that! But there you are laughing It’s funny to you. But it sure wasn’t funny to me when I went to that bandit myself. Yessir, Achilla says I’m a coward, and everybody believes it, but yesterday I proved I’m no coward. I went straight to that Achilla. I come up and he’s snoring away. I knock on the window and say, ‘Give me back my bones, Achilla Andreich!’
“I had a devil of a time waking him up, and then, you know, he started playing silly games with me. ‘Look, buddy, what do you need the bones for?’ he says. (Why all this buddy business? Why so familiar?) ‘You’ve got a better build without bones,’ he says.

‘It’s not your business,’ I say, ‘how my body looks best.’

‘Oh, no, you’ve got it all wrong,’ he says, ‘it is my business. I’m a member of the clergy.’

‘But,’ I say, ‘You don’t have the right to take someone else’s property.’

‘And bones,’ he says, ‘can bones be property? You ought to know that you’re not allowed to hold property like that.’

‘But I told him, ‘Members of the clergy are also not allowed to steal. You probably don’t know English law very well,’ I say. ‘They’d hang you for that in England.’

‘Well, if you want to talk about different laws,’ he says, ‘you ought to know that if you’re taken to the police station for this, they’d let you down through the cellar up to your waist and give you a thrashing with two lashes. So you’d have your England then. What do you think? Would that do you any good?’

“So I told him, ‘You know everything,’ I said, ‘You even know how many lashes they use to beat you there.’

‘Of course I know,’ he says. ‘They follow a simple rule that anyone who’s gone through it can understand: they come at you with lashes from both sides so as to wear you down the better.’

‘That’s a fine picture,’ I say.
“’Yes,’ he says. ‘You take heed of that. And now, listen to me, brother, you’d best forget all these stupid things and take off.’ And with that I heard him pile back onto the couch in his lair.

“Well, he had already given himself away and I understood it all, but in order to pry some more from him, I say to him, ‘But you’re a deacon, after all,’ I say, “You don’t serve in the police to enforce the laws.’ And imagine, he had no idea what I was driving at and blurted out: ‘And how do you know I don’t serve in the police?’ he said. ‘Nope, I just may have a white gauntlet around, and I’ll show it to you right now if you keep on pestering me.’

“Well, I didn’t wait around for that, of course. In the first place I wasn’t interested in it, and in the second place I had squeezed out all I needed to know, and then, knowing his brutish habit of fighting … ‘No siree,’ I said, ‘I don’t want to see it and don’t have the faintest interest in your evidence.’ Then I went right over to the Bizyukins to tell Darya Nikolayevna all about it as quickly as possible. And Darya Nikolayevna said just what I did just now, that she too suspected them all of serving in the secret police.”

“Who’s serving in the secret police?” Barnaby’s astounded interlocutor asked.

“Why all our pygmies here, and especially the priests: Savely, Achilla.”

“Good Lord, you and your Darya Nikolayevna have gone off your rockers, to put it bluntly.”

“Nosir, you can’t fool Darya Nikolayevna on this. She’s suffered a lot from such fellows.”
“She’s lying, your Darya Nikolayevna—she hasn’t suffered anything from anybody.”

“Who hasn’t suffered? Darya Nikolayevna?”

“Yes.”

“Well, I sure appreciate that!” the teacher observed with an ironic bow.

“So how did she suffer?”

“Why they even gave her a beating!” Prepotensky stated proudly.

“Maybe when she was a child, but even then, it would seem, all too seldom.”

“Nosir, not when she was a child, but just a couple of days before her wedding.”

“You amaze me more and more.”

“There’s nothing to be amazed at; it’s a simple fact.”

“Well, excuse my ignorance—I was not aware of that fact.”

“That’s just what I’m trying to tell you: everybody should know the facts to judge for themselves. It began when Darya Nikolayevna decided to leave her father.”

“What for?”

“What for? What a strange question to ask!”

“I ask because I don’t believe her father forced her or compelled her or chased her away.”

“What does that matter? He didn’t throw her out; she just decided to leave, so she left. Why should she live with her father? Bizyukin was tutoring her younger brother and he approved of her decision and agreed to marry her to eliminate here father’s rights, but the father thought Bizyukin was a fool and wouldn’t permit her to marry him, and since she had decided to create a scandal she couldn’t back down of course, and did it her own
way. … She took care of things so that it was out of the question to think of marrying her off to anyone else, and, you see, she told her father all about it quite honestly. Are you paying attention, Valerian Nikolayevich?”

“Of course I am, and every word you say increases my curiosity.”

“And right you are, because you’re really going to get interested now. So, she revealed to her father the significant fact honestly and openly, and he perpetrated the mean trick I’m going to tell you about, neither more nor less. He told her, ‘My dear, go visit your aunt tomorrow and tell her all about it.’ Darya Nikolayevna had no suspicions and went right ahead, but that fine lady and her father got together and gave her a thrashing. She left them and went straight to a police officer.

“’Take down my testimony,’ she said. ‘and report it to Petersburg—I don’t want to hide it—let everyone know what sort of an institution parenthood is.’

“But he said, ‘I’m not going to take any testimony and I won’t make a report. I’m a hundred percent with your father and I’ll be glad to help him out if he wants to do it again.’

“Well, what can you expect after that? There’s our secret police for you. Her own father, her own aunt, and suddenly it turns out that they are nothing else but the secret police! Darya Nikolayevna says one thing. ‘I’ve gained something, at least,” she says. ‘I’ve studied them and I know them.’ And so, when I informed her yesterday of my discovery about Achilla, she said, ‘That’s how it is: he’s a spy. And now,’ she says, ‘in our dangerous position the main thing is to get your bones back and use them to teach as maliciously as possible. Achilla,’ she says, ‘couldn’t get rid of them at night and if you
can steal into his place, you might be able to carry them out. But just one thing,’ she says, ‘Don’t get caught or else he’ll nail you.’”

“What did she mean, ‘nail you’?”

“She put it that way because she knows Achilla’s habits. But then she said, ‘No, don’t worry. Wrap my heavy muffler around your neck and put my quilted hood over your head, and that way, even if he catches you and beats you, it’ll be soft for you and won’t hurt.’ I wrapped myself up with all those things like she showed me and left. I come up to that beast’s yard a second time. … The dog would have barked, but Darya Nikolayevna thought of that and gave me a piece of meat pie for the dog. I feed the dog and go into the yard and see a cart standing there, right before me! I go to the cart and find everything there, all my bones!”

“I guess you really go a move on then!”

“You can say that again! I took off Darya Nikolayevna’s hood in a flash, wrapped all the bones in it, and dashed off full speed.”

“So that’s the end of the story?”

“The end? Not in the least. We’re still in the middle of it. Shall I continue?”

“By all means!”

Chapter XII

“Let me begin by explaining how and why I ended up in church today. Alexandra Ivanovna Serbolova came to see us early this morning. You know her, of course, as well as I do. She believes in God and her convictions are very backward in many respects, but
she helps my mother and for this I make a sacrifice and force myself not to argue with her. But why am I saying this? Oh, yes! When she came, mama says to me, ‘Get up, dear Barney, my lazybones, and take Alexandra Ivanovna to church, so the tax collector’s dogs don’t jump at her.’

“I went. I never go to church, you know, but after all I understand that Achilla and Savely don’t dare touch me there, so I went. But while I was in church I suddenly remembered that I had left my room unlocked where I had the bones and I ran home. I get there and find mama gone. I look over the room and there wasn’t a single bone left.”

“She buried them?”

“Yessir!”

“No joking, she buried them?”

“Why should I joke? I began begging her, ‘Mama dear, I love and respect you, only tell me honestly where my bones are.’

“Don’t ask, Barney,’ she says, ‘They’re now at peace, dear.’

“I did everything. I cried, threatened suicide, finally even promised to say prayers, by God, but no, still she wouldn’t say. I went to school in the most foul mood, firmly determined to get a spade tonight, dig up one of the graves in the churchyard, and get myself some new bones so as not to lose the argument, and I certainly would have done that. By the way, that’s probably also considered a crime, isn’t it?”

“Yes, and a serious one at that.”

“And so you see! And who would have brought me to this? My mother. And it certainly would have happened, but all at once, to my luck, a boy came to class and said that a pig had dug up some sort of bones on the river bank. I dashed out, fully expecting
that those were my bones—and so they were! The people around kept saying, ‘Bury them!’ … I said, ‘Get away!’ — and then I hear—Achilla. I grabbed the bones and took off. Achilla had me by the tail of my coat. I turned and rip! To hell with the coattail. Achila had me by the collar. I … rip!, and to hell with the collar. Achilla had me by the vest—I … rip, and the vest is in two. He goes for my neck… I slip loose and sprint away and here I was sitting and cleaning them, and you frightened me again. I thought that was Achilla again.

“But, really, you don’t think he’d come again, not over the fence! He’s a deacon, after all.”

“He’s a deacon! ‘Deacon,’ you say. A lot of difference that makes to him!

Quartermaster Danilka told me yesterday that as Achilla was leaving, he said to Tuberozov, ‘Well, Father Savely,’ he says, ‘until I’ve mangled that Barnaby, don’t call me Achilla the deacon, call me Achilla the warrior.’ All right, let him go to war, I’m not afraid of him. But I know now what I’m going to do. I’ve decided I can’t live here any longer. I’m in correspondence with someone in Petersburg. A gentleman there is organizing an enterprise, and I’ll go to Petersburg. I tell you, I’ve already given it a try. Darya Nikolayevna and I have sent several articles there, and they always write back, ‘Make it stronger.’ That’s fine, they want it stronger. There, I’ll make it strong: I won’t pussyfoot around. But here you can’t draw your breath when you almost pay with your life for a dead bone. But, you know, even there in Petersburg vile things are going on. Even some of the most loyal newspapers are beginning to make fun of our growing passion for the natural sciences. Did you read that?”

“I think I saw something like that.”
“Well, so you saw it too! Then tell me why in that case they called on us to dissect frogs and all the rest.”

“I don’t know.”

“You don’t know? Well, I can tell you that they won’t get away with it! Yessir, I’ll gather up my bones, go to Petersburg, and will stick those bones right in their snouts, in their snouts! And let them haul me into court.”
TERMOSESOV, THE PETERSBURG SCOUNDREL

This excerpt, Chapters IX and X of Part Two, follows shortly after the preceding selection in terms of the “chain of events” recorded in Leskov’s “chronicle.” The fifty-five pages that separate it from the preceding excerpt bring the story of Prepotensky’s bones (and Part One) to an amusing conclusion with Achilla chasing Barnaby through the streets and threatening him after he took refuge with the Bizyukins. Violence is averted only by the timely intervention of Tuberozov, who warns Achilla not to pursue the matter. The reader is then diverted by a visit of the dwarfs from the Plodomasovo estate, at which time Nikolai Afanasyevich recounts the tale which comprises the excerpt in Chapter Six of this study. The scene is then set for this passage by the arrival in Stargorod of an inspector, one Prince Bornovolokov, and his secretary-assistant, Izmail Termosesov. The inspection team is housed at the Bizyukins and from their arrival, Darya Bizyukina is much taken by Temosesov, who she assumes is a Petersburg “liberal” of the sort she aspires to be.
Глава девятая

Влюбленная Визюкина уже давно слышала сквозь затворенную дверь кабинета то тихое, утюное, плескание, то яркие взрывы и горловые фыркания; но по-прежнему, а Термосесов не является. Неужто он, едва не накавернулся с этим своим бессловесным вихрастым князем, или он спит... Чего мудреного: ведь он устал с дороги. Или он, может быть, читает... Что он читает? И на что ему читать, когда он сам умнее всех, кто пишет... Но, во время этих впечатлений дверь отворилась, и на пороге предстал мальчик Ермощка с тазом, полным мыльной водой, и не затворил за собою двери, а через это Дарьино наливо все видно. Вон далеко, в глубине комнаты, маленькая фигурка вихрастого князька, который смотрел в окно, а вон тут же возле него, но несколько ближе, мясистый торс Термосесова, Ревизор и его писемоводитель оба были в дезабилье. Бороводоков был в панталонах и белой как кипень голландской рубахе, по которой через плечи лежали крест-накрест две алые ленты шелковых подтяжек; его маленькая белокурая головка была припажена, и он еще тщательнее натирал ее металической щеткой. Термосесов же стоял весь выпуклый, представляясь ему своею физиономией и своей фигурой; ворот его рубахи был расстегнут, и далеко за локоть засученные рукава открывали мускулистые и обросшие волосами руки.

На этих руках Термосесов держал длинное русское полотенце с выпитыми на концах красными петушками и крепко тер и трепал в нем свои вздернутые мокрые волосы.

По энергичности, с которой приятнейший Измайлович Петрович произволил эту операцию, можно было без ошибки отгадать, что тут веселье, мученье и искренние фыркания, которые минуту тому назад неслись из комнаты сквозь затворенные двери, пускал непременно Термосесов, а Борноводоков только свирепел и плескался по-утиному. Но вот Ермощка вернулся, дверь захлопнулась, и сладостное видение скрылось.

Однако Термосесов в это короткое время уже успел склонить под своим орлиным охом и не упустил случая утешить Визюкину своим попадением без вихрастого.
князя. Он появился в знакомом наступить саке своем и, держа за ухо Ермощу, выпихнул его в переднюю, крикнув вслед ему:
— И глаз не смей показывать, пока не позвову!
Затем он запер вплотную дверь в кабинет, где оставался князь, и в том же наряде прямо подсел к акцизиции.
— Послушайте, Бизюкина, ведь этот, маточка, нельзя! — начал он, взяв ее бесцеремонно за руку. — Посудите сами, как вы это вашего подлого мальчику изволили! я его называл поросенком за то, что он князю все руки облив, а он отвечает: «Моя мать-с не сильна, а Аксенья». Это ведь, конечно, всё вы виноваты, вы его так названчивировали? Да?
И Термосесов вдруг совершенно ным голосом и самою мягкотой интонацией произнесь: «Ну, так да, что ли? да?» Это да было произнесено таким тоном, что у Бизюкиной захлопнуло в сердце. Она поняла, что ответ требуемается совсем не к тому вопросу, который высказан, а к тому, подразумеваемый смысл которого даже не испугал своим реалистом; и потому Бизюкина молчала. Но Термосесов наступал.
Места долгому раздумью не было, и Бизюкина, тревожно вскинув на Термосесова глаза, начала было робко:
— Да я не виж... 
Но Термосесов резко прервал ее на полуслове.
— Да! — вскинув он, — да! и довольно! И больше мне от тебя никаких слов не нужно. Давай свои ручонки: я с первого же взгляда на тебя узнал, что ты соня, и другого ответа от тебя не ожидал. Теперь не трать время, но докажи любовь поцелуем.
— Не хотите ли вы чую? — пролепетала, как будто бы не слыхав этих слов, акцизица.
— Нет, этим меня не забавляй: я голова не чаянная, а я голова отчаянная.
— Так, может быть, вина? — шептала, вырываясь, Дарья Николаевна.

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— А скажи-ка мне теперь, зачем же это ты такая заядлая монархистка? — начал он непосредственно после поцелуя, держа пред своими глазами руку дамы.
— Я вовсе не монархистка! — торопливо отреклась Визюкина.

— А по ком же ты этот траур носишь? по мексиканскому Максимиллану? — И Термесов, улыбаясь, указал ей на черные полосы за ее ножами и, отодвинув ее от себя, сказал: — Ступай вымой руки!

Аксиньяна вспыхнула до ушей и готова была расплакаться. У неё всегда были безукоризненно чистые ногти, а она нарочито загрязнила их, чтобы только заслужить похвалу, но какие тут оправдания?.. Она бросилась в свою спальню, вымыла там свои руки и, выходя с улыбкой назад, объяснила:
— Ну вот я и опять республиканка, у меня белые руки.

Но гость погрозил ей пальцем и отвечал, что республиканство — это очень глупая шутка.

— Что еще за республика! — сказал он, — за это только горячо достаться может. А вот у меня есть с собою всего правительства фотографические карточки, где хочешь ли, я их тебе подарю, и мы их развесим на стену?

— Да у меня они и у самой есть.


Пойманная и необъясняемая аксиньяна снова сплелась до ушей, но вынула из стола оправленные в рамки карточки и принесла по требованию Термесова молоток и гвозди, которыми тот и принялся работать.

— Я думаю, их лучше всего здесь, на этой стене, разместить? — рассуждал он, воя пальцем.

— Как вы хотите.

— Да чего ты все до сих пор говоришь мне вами, когда я тебе говорю ты? Говори мне ты. А теперь подавай мне сюда портреты.

— Это все муж накупил.

— И прекрасно, что он начало уважает, и прекрасно! Ну, мы гостей министров всех рядом под нюхок.
Давай? Это кто такой? Горчаков. Кандлер, чудесно! Он нам Россию отстоял! Ну, молодец, что отстоял,— давай мы его за то первого и повесим. А это кто? ба! ба! ба!

Термосесов поднял вровень с своим лицом карточку покойного графа Муравьева и пропел:
— Михайло Николаич, здравствуйте, здравствуйте, здравствуйте!
— Вы с ним разве были знакомы?
— Я?.. то есть ты спрашиваешь, лично был ли я с ним знаком? Нет; меня бог миловал,— а наши кое-кто наслаждались его беседой. Ничего; хвала и превозносят. Он одну нашу барыню даже в Христову веру привел и Некрасова музы вдохновил. Давай-ка я его скоро в повешу! Ну, вот теперь и всё как следует на месте.

Термосесов соконил на пол, взял хозяйку за локти и сказал:
— Ну, а теперь какое же мне от тебя поощрение будет?

Бизюкпой это показалось так смешно, что она тихонько рассмеялась и спросила:
— За что поощрение?
— За все: за труды, за заботы, за расположение. Ты, верно, неблагодарная? — И Термосесов, взяв правую руку Бизюкиной, положил ее себе на грудь.
— Правда, что у меня горячее сердце? — спросил он, польхуясь ее смущением.

Но Дарья Николаевна была обижена и, дернув руку, сердито заметила:
— Вы, однако, уже слишком дерзки!
— Те-те-те! — «ви слишком дельски», а совсем «не слышком», а только как раз впору,— передразнил ее Термосесов и обвел другую свою свободную руку вокруг ее станы.
— Вы просто нажгли! Вы забываете, что мы едва знакомы,— заговорила, вырывающаяся от него, разгневанная Дарья Николаевна.
— Ни капли я не наглец, и ничего я не забываю, а Термосесов умен, прост, естествен и практик от природы, вот и все. Термосесов просто рассуждает: 'если ты умная женщина, то ты понимаешь, к чему разговоришьсь с мужчиной на такой короткой ноге, как ты. со мною гово
рила; а если ты сама не знаешь, зачем ты себя так держишь, так ты, выходя, глупа, и тебе дорожить не стоит. Бизюкина, конечно, непременно желала быть умной.
— Вы очень хитры, — сказала она, слегка отклоняя свое лицо от лица Термоссова.
— Хитер! На что же мне тут хитрость? Разумеется, если ты меня любишь или я тебе нравлюсь...
— Кто же вам сказал, что я вас люблю?
— Ну, полно врать!
— Нет, я вам правду говорю. Я вовсе вас не люблю, и вы мне врать не кра́йте!
— Ну, полно врать вдво́ре! Как не любишь? Нет, а ты вот что: я тебя чувствую, и понимаю, и открою тебе, кто я такой, но только это надо наедине.
Бизюкина молчала.
— Понимаешь, что я говорю? чтоб узнать друг друга вполне — нужна рандевушка... с политической, разумеется, целью.
Бизюкина опять молчала.

Термоссов вздохнул и, тихо освободив руку своей дамы, проговорил:
— Эх вы, женщины, всероссийские женщины! А туда же с поляками разыгаются! Нет, далеко еще вам, подруги, до поляка! Дайка! Изманила Термоссова полька, она бы с ним не рассталась и горы бы Араратские с ним перевернула.
— Полька — другое дело, — заговорила акцизница.
— Почему другое?
— Они любят свое отечество, а мы свое ненавидим.
— Ну так что же? У полек, стало быть, враги — все враги самостоятельности Польши, а ваши враги — все русские патриоты.
— Это правда.
— Ну так кто же здесь твой злейший враг? Говори, и ты увидишь, как он испытает на себе всю тяжесть руки Термоссова!
— У меня много врагов.
— Злейших называй! Называй самый злейших!
— Злейших двое.
— Имена сих несчастных, имена подавай!
— Один... Это злейший дьякон Ахилла.
— Смерть дьякону Ахиллу!
— А другой: протопоп Туберозов.
— Гибель протопопу Туберозову!
— За ним у нас весь город, весь народ.
— Ну так что же такое, что весь город и весь народ?
Термесов знает начальство и потому никаких городов
и никаких народов не боится.
— Ну, а начальство не совсем его жалует.
— А не совсем жалует, так тем ему вернее и хапут;
теперь только закрепи все это как следует: «полюбив
стань моей, Иродиада!»
Близкая беспрестанно его поцеловала,
— Вот это честь! — воскликнул Термесов и, рас-
спросив у своей дамы, чем и как досаждали ей ее вра-
ги Туберозов и Ахилла, пожал с улыбкой ее руку и уда-
лился в комнату, где оставался во все это время его ком-
паньон.

ГЛАВА ДЕСЯТАЯ

Ревизор еще не спал, когда к нему возвратился его
счастливый секретарь.
Одетый в белую коломяжковую жакетку, спятельный
сопутник Термесова лежал на приготовленной ему по-
стели и, закрыв ноги легким пледом, дремал или мечтал
с опущенными веками.
Термесов пожелал удостовериться, спит его началь-
ник или только притворяется спящим, и для того он тихо
подошел к кровати, нагнулся к его лицу и назвал его по
имени.
— Вы спите? — спросил его Термесов.
— Да, — ответил Борзоволоков.
— Ну где ж там да? Значит не спите, если откли-
каетесь.
— Да.
— Ну, это и выходит нелепость.
Термесов отошел к другому дивану, сбросил с себя
свой сак и начал тоже умыватьсяся на покой.
— А я этим временем, пока вы здесь дремали, много
кое-что обработал, — начал он, укладываясь.

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Борноловиков в ответ на это опять уронил только одно да, но «да» совершенно особое, так сказать, любопытное да с оттенком вопроса.
— Да, вот-с как да, что я, например, могу сказать, что я непонятно проползнувшие для нас сделал открытия.
— С этой дамой?
— С дамой? Дама — это само собой, — это дело между собой. Нет-с, а вы помните, что я вам сказал, когда выхали вас в Москве на Садовой?
— Ох, да!
— Я вам сказал: «Ваше сиятельство, премилостивейший мой князь! Так со старыми товарищами нельзя обходиться, чтобы их бросать: так делают только одни подлецы». Сказал я вам это или не сказал?
— Да, вы это сказали.
— Ага! вы помните! Ну так вы тоже должны помнить, как я вам потом развел мою мысль и доказал вам, что вы, наши принципы égalité, 1 обратимся теперь к преимуществам своего рода и состояния по службе, должны не задирать носов перед нами, старыми монтаньирами и бывшими вашими друзьями. Я вам это все путем растолковал.
— Да, да.
— Прекрасно! Вы поняли, что со мной шутить плохо, и были очень покладисты, и я вас за это хвалю. Вы поняли, что вам меня нельзя так подкидывать, потому что голова-то ведь не свой брат, и головая-то мало ли кто что может припомнить? А у Термосесова память первый сорт и сметка тоже водится: он еще, когда вы самым красивым революционером были, знал, что вы непременно сверните,
— Да.
— Вы решились взять меня с собою вроде письмоводителя... То есть, если по правде говорить, чтобы не оскорблять вас лестью, вы не решились этого сделать, а я вас заставил взять меня... Я вас припугнул, что могу выдать ваши переписочки кое с чем из наших привислянских братий.
— Ох!
— Ни чего, князь: не вздыхайте. Я вам что тогда сказал в Москве на Садовой, когда держал вас за пуговицу и когда вы от меня удирали, то и сейчас скажу: не тужите...
и не охватите, что на вас напал Термоссев. Изманил Термоссев вам большую службу сослужит. Вы вон там с вашою нынешнею партией, где нет таких плутов, как Термоссев, а есть другие, ближе его, газеты заводите и стреймитесь к тому, чтобы не тем, так другим способом над народными инспекцией получить.

— Да-с.
— Ну так никогда вы этого не получите.
— Почему?
— Потому что очень неискусны: сейчас вас патриоты по лапам узнают и за вихор да на улицу.
— Гм!
— Да-с; а вы бросьте эти газеты да возьмитесь за Термоссева, так он вам дело уладит. Будьте-ка вы Иван Царевич, а я буду ваш Серый Волк.
— Да, вы Серый Волк.
— Вот оно что я есть: я Серый Волк, и я вам, если захочу, помогу достать и златогривых коней, и жар-птиц, и царь-девиц, и я учил вас вновь на господарстве.

И с этим Серый Волк, быстро сорвавшись с своего логова, перескочил на кровать своего Ивана Царевича и тихо сказал:
— Подвиньтесь-ка немножко к стене, я вам кое-что пошепчу.

Борисоволоков подвинулся, а Термоссев присел к нему на край кровати и, обняв его рукой, начал потихоньку речь:
— Хлестите-ка по церкви: вот где языка! Ею набольших-то хорошошенько пугните!
— Ничего не понимаю.
— Да ведь христианство равняет людей или нет? Ведь известные, так сказать, государственные люди усмотрелитоже вред в переводе библии на народные языки. Нет-с, христианство... оно легко может быть толкуемо, знаете, этак, в опасном смысле. А таким толкователем может быть каждый поп.
— Попы у нас плохи, их не боятся.
— Да, это хорошо, пока они плохи, но вы забываете-с, что и у них есть хлопотуны; что, может быть, и их пособят, и тогда пало станет иные. Не вольготить им нужно, а нужно их подтянуть.
— Да, пожалуй.
— Так-с; стойте на том, что все надо подобрать и подтянуть, и благословите судьбу, что она послала вам Термесова, да держитесь за него, как Иван Царевич за Серого Волка. Я вам убери такой отчет, такое донесение вам сочиню, что враги ваши, и те должны будут отдать вам честь и признают вас административный гений. Термесов еще понизил голос и заговорил:

— Помните, когда вы здесь уже, в здешнем губернском городе, в последний раз с правителем губернаторской канцелярии из клуба идучи, разговаривали, он сказал, что его превосходительство жалеет о своих прежних бескозырках и особенно о том, что допустил себя до фамильярности с разными патриотами.

— Да.

— Помните, как он упоминал, что его превосходительству один вольнодумный поп даже резюмейт наговорил.

— Да.

— Ведь вот вы небось не спохватились, что этот поп называется Туберозов и что он здесь, в этом самом городе, в котором вы растягиваетесь, и решительно не будете в состоянии ничего о нем написать.

— Борисовичу вдруг вспомнил и, свистя на кровати, спросил:

— Но как вы можете знать, что мне говорил правитель канцелярии?

— А очень просто. Я тогда поговорил с ним вас шеп. За вами ведь не худо присматривать. Но теперь не в этом деле, а вы понимаете, мы с этого попа Туберкулова начнем своею тактику, которая в развитии своем докажет его вредность, и вредность вообще подобных независимых людей в духовенстве; а в окончательном выводе явится логическое заключение о том, что религия может быть допускаема только как одна из форм администрации.

А коль скоро вера становится серьезной верой, то она вредна, и ее надо подобрать и подтянуть. Это вам уже первый ваша мысль, и она будет повторяться вместе с вашим пением, как повторяются мысли Макиавелли и Меттерниха. Довольны ли вы мною, мой повелитель?

— Да.

— И уполномочивает меня действовать?

— Да.
— То есть как разуметь это «да»? Значит ли оно, что вы этого хотите?
— Да, хочу.
— То-то! А то ведь у вас «да» значит и да и нет.
Термососов отошел от кровати своего начальника и добавил:
— А то ведь... нашему брату, холопу, долго бездействовать нельзя: нам бабушки не ворожать, как вам, чтобы прямо из англичан в сатрацы попадать. Я и о вас, да и о себе хлоючу; мне колодать уже надоело, а куда ни сунешься, все формуляри один: «красный» да «красный», и никто брать не хочет.
— Побелитесь.
— Белил не на что купить-с.
— Зачем вы в Петербурге в шпионы себя не предложили?
— Ходил-с и предлагал,— отвечал беззастенчиво Термососов,— но с нашим нынешним реализмом-то уже все эти выгодные вакансии стали заняты. Надо, говорят, прежде чем-нибудь зарекомендоваться.
— Так и зарекомендуйтесь.
— Дайте случай способности свои показать; а то, ей-богу, с вас начну.
— Скот,— прошипел Борноволоков,— Мм-м-м-м-у-у-у! — замычал громко Термососов.
Борноволоков вскошил и, схватясь в ужасе за голову, спросил:
— Это еще что?
— Это? это черный скот мчит, жratвы просит и приглашает белых быть с ним вежливее,— проговорил спокойно Термососов.
Борноволоков скрипнула в досаде зубами и завернулся молья к стене.
— Ага! вот этак-то лучше! Смирись, благородный князь, и не кичись своей белизной, а то так тебя разрежу, что выйдешь ты серо-буро-соловый, в полотене голубой с крапинами! Не забывай, что я тебе, брат, послан в наказание; я тени в листах твоего венца. Неся меня с почтеньем!
Умалиший Борноволоков задушив вздох и притворился спящим, а торжествующий Термососов без приговора заснул на самом деле.

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ANALYSIS AND COMMENT

Termosesov is, of course—like Prepotensky and Bizyukina—a caricature, the most unalloyed negative character in the chronicle. As a character, he exhibits a continuation of Leskov’s polemical style in his earlier unsuccessful novels Некуда (No Way Out—1864) and На ножах (At Daggers Drawn—1870-71). Termosesov, however, performs a key function in the Соборяне plot: his malicious denunciation of Tuberozov not only provides a basis for official suspicion but indirectly stimulates Tuberozov’s daring sermon which was the immediate cause of the archpriest’s “martyrdom.” Although some critics consider Termosesov’s presence essentially that of a diabolus ex machina and a serious flaw in the chronicle as a whole, this is a question that need not preoccupy the translator, except to the degree that it may affect a judgment as to whether the work as a whole deserves translation.

Whatever the weakness of Termosesov as a literary character, one fact is evident: Leskov has meticulously calibrated Termosesov’s language to conform to the character he chose to portray. Cynical and unprincipled, Termosesov uses language that conveys these characteristics vividly. He is obviously well educated, and his aggressive verbal sallies bristle with literary and historical allusions that would be quite alien in, say, Prepotensky’s mouth. He is also adept at word play, often using it to intensify the discomfort or even humiliation of his interlocutor. Let us take up each of these features in turn.

86 Hugh McLean, for example, commented that “…Termosyosev is a comic-strip villain who nearly wrecks the novel by his presence,” (Nikolai Leskov: The Man and His Art. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), p. 202.) On the advice of several Russian literary scholars, I have spelled the name Termosesov rather than Termosyosev used by McLean.
Literary and Historical Allusions

Most of the citations and allusions in this excerpt would have been familiar to Russian readers in Leskov’s day; some of them presumably still are, but recent Russian editions of Соборяне contain explanatory notes in recognition of the fact that contemporary readers cannot be expected necessarily to recognize names and quotations that were part of the standard intellectual stock of the reading public more than a century ago. This consideration applies a fortiori to today’s non-Russian reader. In dealing with the problem, the translator has two broad choices: to insert some explanatory signals in the text, or to append explanatory notes. Earlier, when dealing with Prepotensky’s paraphrase of Pisarev, I suggested the former course. In Termosesov’s case, however, this does not seem advisable. It is clear that Termosesov is flaunting his erudition, and to have him identify his quotations or further explain his historical references would conflict with the stylistic function of these features of his speech. Therefore, it often seems best to amplify the translation with notes. The question is not so much one of translation as of elucidation of obscure points, whether in the original or in the translation.

The following passages in this excerpt may benefit from annotation:

166 (39-40) “слаще мирра и вина”: A quotation from a short poem by Pushkin that utilizes motifs from the opening of the Song of Songs. (“Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth—For your love is more delightful than wine.”) The entire poem reads as follows:

В крови горит огонь желанья,
Душа тобой уязвлена,
Лобзай меня; твои лобзанья
Мне слаще мирра и вина.
Склонись ко мне главою нежной,
И да почию бежмятежный,
Пока дохнет веселый день
И двигнется ночной тень.\(^{87}\)

The full poem is even more suggestive than the words quoted by Temosesov—note their context: “Kiss me; your kisses/ Are sweeter to me than myrrh and wine.” Reference to the poem, therefore, intensifies the insulting directness of his approach to Bizyukina.

167 (6-7) мексиканскому Максимилиану: Maximilian was executed in 1867, just a few years before Соборяне was published. Since it was the most famous case of the execution of a monarch (or would-be monarch) contemporary with events in the chronicle, Termosesov’s reference to it seems quite natural. One would hope that no reader would need a note to identify Maximilian, but given the scant attention to history in many curricula today, such a hope may not be warranted.

168 (1-13) Горчаков ... Муравьев: Here, the reader may legitimately expect assistance in grasping the ironic implications. Alexander Mikhalovich Gorchakov (1798-1883), Russian diplomat, Foreign Minister and eventually State Chancellor, was noted during his tenure as Foreign Minister for resisting British and French diplomatic pressures following the Polish insurrection of 1861.\(^{88}\) Mikhail Nikolayevich Muravyov (1796-1866) was an arch-conservative who opposed the abolition of serfdom and who went into retirement as the result of that step in 1861. He was called out of retirement by the Tsar when the Polish rebellion occurred in 1863 and named Governor-General of the

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\(^{87}\) А.С. Пушкин, Сочинения (Москва: ОГИЗ, 1949), стр. 126.

\(^{88}\) The explanatory note to the 1957 Soviet edition of Leskov’s works asserted that Gorchakov resisted British, French and Austrian “interference” in “the mutual relations of Russia and Poland,” thus implying that Poland was an independent country at the time and also that diplomatic communications constituted “interference.”
Province of Vilna (then Russian Poland, today Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania). He dealt so harshly with the Poles, and with those Russians who supported them, that he acquired the appellation “Muravyov the Hangman.” The mention of Nekrasov’s muse is based on an incident, notorious at the time, when Nekrasov composed a laudatory poem to Muravyov in a transparent effort to prevent closure of his journal Современник (The Contemporary), bringing upon himself thereby the ridicule of the liberals and the contempt of Muravyov.

170 (9-10)  “полюби и стань моей, Иродиада!”: This is a paraphrase of two lines from Heinrich Heine’s Atta Troll, which reads as follows in the original:

   Liebe mich und sei mein Liebchen, 
   schönes Weib, Herodias!  

Atta Troll seems to have been well known in Russia in the 1860s and 1870s, with more than one translation published. Its satirization of radical pomposity and much political journalism of the time may have attracted Leskov (and Termosesov) to it.

171 (18-21)  принцы égalité ... монтаньярдами: Here, the references are to the French Revolution. The first calls up an image of the duc d’Orléans, proprietor of the Palais Royal, one of the breeding grounds of revolutionary sentiment in the Paris of the 1780s, who renounced his noble title in 1792 and assumed the name Philippe Égalité. Nevertheless, this gesture, his membership in the Jacobin Club and his vote to execute Louis XVI provided insufficient protection during the Terror and he was consigned to the guillotine in 1793. His son, Louis-Philippe, duc de Chartres, followed his father into the

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90 The 1957 Soviet edition of Leskov notes that the quotation was taken from a Russian translation of Atta Troll by Mikhailov. Mongault states in a note to his Leskov translation that at least two different Russian translations of Atta Troll were published in the 1860s, by Pisarev and Averkiev, respectively.
Jacobin Club, but defected to the Austrians in 1793, a few months before his father was executed. After several years in exile, he returned to France after the Bourbon restoration and was crowned King of the French following Charles X’s abdication in 1830.

Termosesov’s term is remarkably apt to signify nobles who support revolutionary causes and subsequently revert to their noble status. Strictly speaking, however, it is not (and has no need to be) historically precise. There was only one Égalité—the father—and he and his son were dukes, not princes. Furthermore, it was the son, not the father, who reverted to noble status after having supported the revolution. What the expression does is conflate the historical record of father and son, make it representative of a particular character type, and to apply this to a Russian phenomenon and specifically to Bornovolokov. To achieve all this in two words is indeed admirable.

As for the second term cited, the “Montagnards” comprised the more radical faction of the French National Convention in the early 1790s. Termosesov uses the word to suggest that the group to which he and Bornovolokov had belonged was one at the extreme left of the political spectrum.

There seems no valid reason to change the second term in the translation, though it should be written with an upper-case “M” rather than the small letter used by Hapgood. The first term, принцы égalité, presents a more delicate problem. Numerous possibilities of translation spring immediately to mind: “Prince Equalities,” “Princes Equality,” “Prince Égalités,” “Princes Égalité,” or—putting the father’s assumed name in the plural—“Philippe Égalités” or its English equivalent. Hapgood translates the passage: “you, our Prince Égalité,” which makes it apply only to Bornovolokov rather than a class
of people to which he belongs. Mongault has “nos ‘prince Égalité’,” and Luther “Sie als unsere heutigen Prinzen Égalités,” thereby preserving the plural.

It is important to preserve the plural if the sense of the term is to be rendered accurately, and all the possibilities listed above do so, at least in their written forms. When some are pronounced, however, the plural is not always clear. “Princes” sounds very much like “princess,” particularly when followed by a word beginning with a vowel. Also, readers who know French may hesitate over the pronunciation intended for a word like Égalités; the final “s” would not occur in French, and if it did, it would be silent.

Does this really make any difference? Since the translation is designed primarily for reading silently, is it not enough for the written text to be clear? I would argue that aural intelligibility is in fact an important consideration when rendering direct quotations of spoken language, even if all who use the translation read it silently. After all, most readers “hear” the sounds in their mind’s ear, and a passage subject to confusion of meaning when spoken does not ring true as a reproduction of colloquial language.

One could solve this particular problem by using the English equivalent for the name—“Prince Equalities,” for example. This choice would be open to another objection, however, since the reference to the French Revolution is clearer if the French name is preserved, and while a note could be provided as a crutch for the reader, the translator should endeavor to minimize the necessity to go beyond the text for full comprehension. To facilitate easier recognition of the family on which the reference is based, “Philippe Égalités might be used, but aside from the question of whether to pronounce the “s” or not, it is not as felicitous as Leskov’s term since it uses the name of only one of the two people to whom the analogy is drawn.
Bearing these considerations in mind, I would be inclined to translate the words “Égalité princes.” While not ideal, this rendition does preserve the French name, forms a plural which is less subject to aural confusion than some of the others, and uses a construction that is common in colloquial English (e.g., “the Johnson boys,” “the Rockefeller brothers”).

172 (14-15) Иван Царевич ... Серый Волк: These are characters in a Russian fairy tale. As it is clear from the text subsequently, Gray Wolf performs various services for the dispossessed Ivan Tsarevich. Both Hapgood (who translates the sentence, “Do you play Ivan Tsarevich, and I’ll be your Grey Wolf.”) and Mongault (whose translation reads, “Soyez le ‘Prince Ivan,’ je serai votre ‘loup gris.’”) provide footnotes to that effect. Luther, however, is able to dispense with annotation by translating it, “Seien sie mein Märchenprinz Iwan, so will ich Ihr grauer Wolf sein.” I would suggest following Luther’s lead and translating the sentence, “You just be Prince Ivan, like in the fairy tale, and I’ll be your Gray Wolf helper.”

At this point it should be noted that we have used the same word—“prince”—to translate three different Russian words: князь, принц and царевич. Each of the terms has a specific meaning in Russian, the first being a Russian noble title held largely by descendants of ruling princely houses of medieval time, the second a generic used only for foreign princes and the third applied to the son of a tsar (and in fairly tales a tsar could be a ruler with a very small domain). It is unfortunate that we, along with French and German translators, have only one convenient term to render the more specific words. The loss in specificity seems rather minor in this instance, however, and it is
compensated to some degree by the fact that one word facilitates the reader’s understanding of Termosesov’s playful allusions to Bornovolokov’s title.

174 (17-18) я тебе, брат, послан в наказанье ...: Here, Termosesov adapts two lines from a speech by Mazepa in Pushkin’s *Poltava*, which read as follows:

Петру я послан в наказанье;
Я терн в листах его венца.

Of our three translators, only Mongault made note of the quotation. He translated the sentence as follows, and provides a footnote to indicate the source:

N’oublie pas, mon cher, que je t’ai été envoyé par le ciel en châtiment de tes péchés. Oui, oui, oui, je suis “une épine entre les feuilles de ta couronne”.

Luther and Hapgood simply translate it straight without quotation marks or a note.

Although Mongault adds a few phrases to the original (“par le ciel,” “de tes péchés,” and “Oui, oui, oui”), which make the passage more long-winded than it should be, his technique of supplying quotation marks and a note citing the source seems fitting in this instance. Quotation marks are not present in the original, and indeed the quotation is not precise since Termosesov has amended it to make it apply to Bornovolokov, not Peter the Great. Still, the source would be unmistakable to most Russian readers and the foreign reader should not be left in ignorance. Therefore, I would propose: “Don’t forget, brother, that ‘I was sent to you in punishment; I’m a thorn among your garland’s leaves’,” with a footnote identifying the passage in Pushkin’s *Poltava*.

Word Play

Whereas providing notes to elucidate a literary or historical reference is as defensible in a translation as it is in a modern edition of a classic in the original language,
the same cannot be said of word play. It, after all, is an integral part of the original text, and ideally the translator should find a comparable play on words in his own language to render it. This is not always possible, and a poor second best is an insertion in the text of words explaining or indicating the nature of the aberration. Least satisfactory, in my view, is annotation that explains what the translator has been unable (or too lazy) to render more directly.

We have dealt with examples of word play previously, and this excerpt furnishes several more. Fortunately, all are relatively easy to imitate, at least in part, in English.

166 (11-12) “Моя ма́ть-с не сви́нья, а Аксиньё́”: Several elements in the servant boy’s clever riposte deserve attention. The play on сви́нья/Аксиньё́ is the most striking and the most important to reflect in the translation. One should also note that the mother’s name, Aksinya, is associated with those elements of society that normally use просторечие, the peasantry and the urban working class. (Ксения is the formal, literary form of the name, and Ксенья the colloquial variant.91) Finally, we note the use of the enclitic –с, which conveys an element of respect, even though it probably reflects an almost involuntary speech habit on the part of the boy when he is addressing his social “betters.”

Hapgood translated the boy’s response almost literally (the use of the enclitic –с is ignored), then annotates it: “My mother isn’t a sow, but Aksinya.” Luther does it more satisfactorily with: “Meine Mutter ist keine Sau, sondern eine Frau!” Besides ignoring the use of the enclitic, however, this version fails to reflect the fact that Yermoshka used

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91 Н.А. Петровский, Словарь русских личных имен. (Москва: Русский язык, 1980), стр. 137. Петровский actually labels Аксинья the “народная форма имени,” but, as was noted earlier in this study, the names placed by Petrovsky in this category fall generally within the просторечие range as defined by Girke. Subject to the caveats set forth in Chapter Two, Girke’s definitions and categories provide the basis for our discussion of stylistic levels.
his mother’s given name, the form of which is of some significance. Mongault, in contrast, changes the image entirely and offers the following ingenious rendition:

Comme ce satané garnement répandait de l’eau sur les manches du prince, je l’ai traité de salaud. Et voilà ce morveux qui me réplique: “En fait de sale eau, monsieur, c’est vous qui en faites pour le moment!”

The play on the homonyms salaud/sale eau is clever and effective, but Mongault’s rendition subtly shifts the overall impression this incident leaves of Termosesov. In the original, Termosesov insulted the boy by calling him a pig and the boy replied in a manner which was not directly insulting, but defensive and amusing. Termosesov’s furious reaction, therefore, even if it was largely feigned to provide a pretext for a tête-à-tête with Bizyukina, gives an early unmistakable impression of his character. In Mongault’s version, the boy defends himself with a direct insult to Termosesov, making the latter’s professed annoyance somewhat more understandable and the insight into his character less striking.

I would prefer something similar to Luther’s, but which uses a name. One possibility would be, “Sir, my mother’s not a piggy but a Pelageya.” Alternatively, it might read, “…not a piggy but a Peggy,” or “… not a sow but a Sue.” However, neither Peggy nor Sue are specific Russian names, so it would seem that “Pelageya” fits better.

166 (35-36) я голова не чайная, а я голова отчаянная: “I’m not a tea head but a desperate head,” Hapgood translated it, with semantic accuracy but without the word play. Luther suggests the latter with his, “Ich bin kein Teekessel, sondern ein Dampfkessel.” Mongault, as is his habit from time to time, just omits the sentence. I would suggest: “It’s not tea but teasing that I’ve got in my head.”
Bizyukina was affecting a French accent with the uvular “p” and a frontal pronunciation of “tl” and “bl”—a manner of speech that some nobles and intellectuals adopted in the nineteenth century and which implied a disdainful or condescending attitude toward the Russian language and culture. In some respects it is comparable to Americans affecting a British pronunciation.

Hapgood makes a stab at reproducing Termosesov’s mimicry with, “You-ah altogever too audasus,” but this does not convey to the English-speaking reader the import of the speech distortion. Mongault produces a smoother sentence with, “Eh non, ma ‘zère’, répliqua Termosessov en parodiant le zézaïement de sa belle.” In French, however, zézaïement refers to a speech defect rather than an affectation. This time it is Luther who ignores the aberrant pronunciation. Given its significance, his omission must be considered a serious lapse.

One could, of course, get across the idea of non-standard pronunciation with a sentence like, “You ah weally too fwesh,” but this smacks of Buggs Bunny and baby talk, not of an imitation of foreign pronunciation. In order to make the situation clear to the reader, it is probably necessary to employ both distorted spelling and some explanation, and I would suggest the following: “Tsk, tsk, tsk! ‘You ah ree-al-ly too fre-ash.’ No, not ree-ah-ly too, mee-ah-ly the right amount for the occasion,” Termosesov mimicked her affected, foreign-sounding speech … .

This malicious distortion of Tuberozov’s name to make it sound like tuberculosis was—surprisingly—ignored by all our three translators. (Or, can it be that their editors “corrected” what they took for a
typographic error?) In any event, it is a significant touch and easy enough to convey. We can have Termosesov refer to “this Tuberculosis priest.”

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There remain a few other points of interest that fall into neither of the categories we have been discussing.

On page 167, lines 37-38, we once again have a passage where the `ты/вы` contrast is crucial. Termosesov notes that Bizyukina continues to use “вы” in talking to him, while he has been addressing her as “ты,” and asks her to use “ты” as well. The obvious way to render this in English (though apparently not so obvious as to occur to Hapgood, who once again resorted to “thou”) is to equate “ты” with first names. Therefore, I have translated the passage as “Why is it you are still calling me Mr. Termosesov while I’m calling you Darya? Call me Izzy.”

This does not totally dispose of the matter, however, since Bizyukina continues to use “вы” throughout the chapter. To indicate this I have introduced a “Mr. Termosesov” at the most logical subsequent place (page 168, line 29 in the original).

On several occasions Termosesov uses diminutives with semantic overtones that should be retained in the translation. The following may serve as examples:

- “Рандевушка” [169 (18)] is used with jocular and mildly deprecatory effect. Mongault renders it effectively as “un bon petit rendez-vous,” but neither Luther nor Hapgood acknowledge the diminutive: both have simply “rendez-vous.” I would suggest “a little rendezvous.”
• “Переписочки” [171 (35)] carries overtones of contemptuous irony which previous translators ignored. I would translate it “billets-doux” instead of the “correspondence” used by others since that adds a highly ironic tone in the context.

• “Народишком” [172 (6)] also suggests irony and contempt. Hapgood tried to show this by translating it “dear populace,” but Mongault’s translation conveys it more effectively by using “le populaire.” Luther, however simply translates it “das Volk” and gives no indication of the diminutive. I would be inclined to translate it “the dear hoi polloi.”

When Termosesov uses folksy sayings from the просторечие stylistic level, it is always with irony and condescension. For example, “голод-то ведь не свой брат” [171 (26)] (literally, “hunger, after all, is not one’s brother”) is one of a group of sayings that utilize “не свой брат.” In these sayings, the phrase has various meanings: that something or someone is not good company, is not the likes of the interlocutors, or is unavoidable. Dal’ lists the following examples of sayings in which it is used:

Смерть не свой брат; разговаровать не станешь.
Death is not your brother; you won’t be having a chat.

Казна не свой брат.
The Treasury (or Government) is not your brother.

 Бог не свой брат, не увернешься.
God is not your brother; you won’t avoid him.

Начальство не свой брат; много говоришь не станешь.
The boss (or management, or government) is not your brother; you won’t be having much to say.
In Termosesov’s phrase, “не свой брат” means “is not good company,” and our translators deal with it with varying degrees of resourcefulness. Hapgood has “hunger makes a man desperate,” which conveys the general sense but misses the proverbial overtone and the concrete image. Luther has “Hunger ist ein böser Berater,” which is better, being more concrete, but still lacks the folksy coloration. Mongault is the most imaginative. His “la faim fait sortir le loup du bois” utilizes a different image, but is apt. Something comparable would be an acceptable solution in English, but in order to adhere as closely as possible to the original image I would suggest “Hunger, after all, makes a spiteful buddy ….”

The saying “бабушки не ворожат” [174 (8)] is another folk saying Termosesov uses with heavy irony. Ворожить means literally “to tell fortunes,” but the saying “ему бабушка ворожит” means either that one has good prospects or good connections. The latter meaning is inherent in the proverb “Хорошо тому жить, кому бабушка ворожит” (He lives well who has friends in the right places), which is roughly equivalent to the saying “It’s not what you know, but who you know.”

Both Hapgood and Luther ignored the proverb with its implication of good connections. Hapgood translated the clause in which this expression appears as, “… the old grandmas don’t tell our fortunes, as they tell yours, so that we turn straight from nihilists to satraps.” But this translation makes little sense, because it is not clear to a reader how telling a fortune can open doors of advancement otherwise closed. Luther took care of this in his rendition, which runs, “Uns hat keine gütige Fee gelehrt, wie man aus einem Nihilisten im Handumdrehen zum Satrapen wird.” This, however, is still not precisely what Termosesov was suggesting, which was that Bornovolokov’s noble birth
gave him connections that made his jump from rebel to ruler possible. Mongault recognized this when he rendered the passage as follows: “Nous ne sommes pas comme vous nés coiffés, nous ne pouvons pas prétendre devenir d’un coup, de nihilistes, satrapes.”

Since the allusion to Bornovolokov’s noble birth is implicit rather than explicit in Termosesov’s words, I would prefer to keep the emphasis on connections, and believe that the colloquialism “to pull strings” furnishes the means to do so at an appropriate stylistic level. My suggestion, therefore, would be, “We don’t have strings to pull like you do so that we can skip right up from nihilist to satrap.”

Finally, we have another instance in this excerpt of an animal simile that would appear discordant in English if retained. This occurs when Bornovolokov calls Termosesov “скот” (cattle) and the latter answers with a “Moo” [174 (24-25)]. Since the bovine image in English is associated more with docility than with rascality, it seems advisable to replace the cow with a pig. Thus, I would translate the passage, “Swine!”, followed by, “Oink, oink.”

Now let us turn to the suggested translation of the entire excerpt.
Through the locked door of the study our infatuated Bizyukina had been hearing quiet splashing sounds like ducks make on a pond, interspersed with vigorous sprinkling of water and gurgling sounds, but all this had ceased and Termosesov had still not appeared. Does he have so much to say to that speechless towheaded prince of his that he’s still talking, or has he gone to sleep? … That wouldn’t be surprising; after all, he’s tired out from traveling. Or could he be reading? … But what would he be reading? And what does he need to read, when he’s smarter than all those writers? …

But while she was musing in this fashion, the door opened and the servant boy Yermoshka appeared on the threshold with a washbasin full of soapy water. He did not close the door behind him, and Darya Nikolayevna had a view of everything. Off in the depths of the room was the small figure of the towheaded prince, who was looking out the window, and there alongside him, but closer to the door, was Termosesov’s robust torso. The inspector and his assistant were both only partly dressed. Bornovolokov was in long underpants and a sparkling white shirt of Dutch linen; the two scarlet ribbons of his silk suspenders lay over his shoulders and crossed on his back; the blond hair on his small head was in order, but he was still smoothing it carefully with a metal brush. Termosesov in contrast stood right in the line of sight, presenting his features and body to
clear view; his shirt collar was open and his sleeve was rolled well past his elbow, displacing his muscular and hairy arms.

Termosesov was holding on these arms a long Russian towel with red roosters embroidered along the borders and was vigorously rubbing and patting the damp hair that stood out from his skin.

From the energy that dear Ismail Petrovich applied to this operation, one could confidently surmise that the powerful, cheerful and spontaneous trills audible minutes before through the closed door definitely emanated from Termosesov, while Bornovolokov only quacked and splashed like a duck. But then Yermoshka came back, the door slammed, and the delicious view was blocked.

In that brief time, however, Termosesov’s eagle eye managed to survey the field and he did not pass up the opportunity to console Bizyukina by appearing without the towheaded prince. He came out with a robe thrown loosely over his shoulders and, holding Yermoshka by the ear, shoved him into the hall with the shout, “Don’t you dare show your face unless I call you!”

Then he closed the door to the study, where the prince remained, and sat down in the same garment alongside his hostess.

“Listen, Bizyukina, this really won’t do, my dear,” he began, taking her hand familiarly. “Judge for yourself, how you’ve spoiled that rotten boy of yours. I called him a little pig because he spilled water on the prince’s sleeve, and he says to me, ‘Sir, my mother’s not a piggy but a Pelageya.’ That’s all your fault, you know. It was you who ‘emancipated’ him, wasn’t it? Yes or no?”
Then Termosesov said in a completely different tone, with the softest intonation: “That’s right, isn’t it? Yes, yes?” He uttered ‘yes’ in such a tone of voice that Bizyukina’s heart stopped. She understood that an answer was expected to a question quite different from the one posed, the implied meaning of which frightened even her by its cynicism, and she therefore sat silent, but Termosesov continued the attack.

“Yes or no? Yes or no?” he continued pressing with a tinge of irritation.

There was no possibility of leisurely reflection and Bizyukina, casting an alarmed look at Termosesov, started to say meekly, “I really don’t kn—“

But Termosesov cut her off in the middle of the word, “Yes!” he exclaimed. “Yes, and done with it! You need say no more. Give me your hand. From the first glance I saw that we are made for each other and that’s exactly the answer I expected from you. Now let’s waste no more time, just show your love with a kiss.”

“Wouldn’t you like some tea?” his hostess stammered, as if she had not heard these words.

“No, that’s not what I’m after. It’s not tea but teasing that I’ve got in my head.”

“Then a glass of wine, maybe?” Darya Nikolayevna whispered as she freed herself.

“Wine?” repeated Termosesov. “You’re ‘sweeter than myrrh and wine’.” And with that he drew Madame Bizyukina to him and whispering, “Let’s dissolve in a kiss,” covered her crimson mouth with his leathery lips.

“Now tell me, why are you such a fervent monarchist?” he challenged her immediately after the kiss, holding the lady’s hand up to his view.

“Why, I’m no monarchist at all!” Bizyukina quickly protested.
“Then why are your fingernails in mourning? For Maximilian of Mexico?” And Termosesov, smiling, showed her the black under the nails and, giving her a push, said, “Go wash your hands!”

The hostess flushed to her ears and almost burst into tears. She had always had impeccably clean fingernails, but had dirtied them on purpose in order to win praise, but now there was no point in explaining. She rushed into her bedroom, washed her hands there, and announced as she came out smiling, “So now I’m a republican again: my hands are clean.”

But the guest shook his finger at her and replied that republicanism was a very stupid game. “Why fiddle around with a republic?” he said. “That can only get you into trouble. I have with me photographs of all the members of the government, and if you’d like, I’ll give them to you and we can put them on your walls.”

“But I already have them.”

“Where do you have them? Hid them, didn’t you, Darya? Right? I swear by Satan, I’ve guessed it; you were expecting guests from Petersburg and you took them down and hid them so you could parade your liberalism. That’s silly, my dear, really stupid! Go get them right now and I’ll hang them for you again.”

The hostess, trapped and exposed, again flushed, but took the framed pictures out of the drawer and brought Termosesov a hammer and nails as he demanded, and he set to work.

Don’t you think they’ll look best here, on this wall?” he suggested, pointing his finger.

“Whatever you say, Mr. Termosesov.”
“Why is it you are still calling me Mr. Termosesov while I’m calling you Darya? Call me Izzy. Now hand me the portraits.”

“My husband bought these.”

“And it’s a good thing that he respects the government, a good thing! All right, we’ll put the ministers in a row here underneath. Hand me one. Who’s that? Gorchakov. The Chancellor. Excellent! He stood up for Russia for our sakes. Good for him that he stood up for us. Let’s put him first for that. And who’s this? Well, well, well!”

Termosesov held up a picture of the late Count Muravyov to eye level and said, “Mikhayko Nikolayich, hello, hello, hello!”

“Did you know him?”

“Me? You mean was I personally acquainted with him? No. God was merciful, but some of my friends enjoyed talking to him. They had only compliments and praise. He led one of our young ladies to faith in Christ and inspired Nekrasov’s muse. Let me put him right up. Well, now everything is in place as it should be.”

Termosesov jumped down, took his hostess by the arms and said, “Well, what kind of reward am I going to get from you?”

This seemed so amusing to Bizyukina that she giggled and inquired, “A reward for what?”

“For everything. For the work, for the concern, for hanging the pictures. Aren’t you the grateful type?” Taking Bizyukina’s right hand, Termosesov placed it on his chest.

“Don’t you think I have a warm heart?” he asked, taking advantage of her embarrassment.
But Darya Nikolayevna was insulted and, withdrawing her hand, said angrily,

“Mr. Termosesov! You are really too fresh!”

“Tsk, tsk, tsk! ‘You ah ree-ah-ly too fre-ash.’ No, not ree-ah-ly too, mee-ah-ly the right amount for the occasion,” Termosesov mimicked her affected, foreign-sounding speech and put his free arm around her waist.

“You’re simply an impudent boor! You forget that we hardly know each other,” Darya Nikolayevna charged as she angrily tore herself from his grasp.

“I don’t have a trace of impudence and I don’t forget anything. Termosesov is by nature smart, straightforward, natural and practical. That’s the fact of the matter. Termosesov merely reasons that if you’re an intelligent woman then you understand why you talk to a man on intimate terms the way you’ve been talking to me. And if you don’t know why you’re behaving as you are, then you’re just a silly fool and there is no point in valuing your company.”

Bizyukina of course wanted above all to be considered intelligent. “You’re quite sly,” she said, turning her face a bit from Termosesov’s.

“Sly! Why do I need to be sly? Naturally, if you love me or I please you …”

“Who told you I love you?”

“Look, stop pretending!”

“No, I’m not pretending. I definitely am not in love with you and don’t like you the least bit.”

“That’s enough of talking nonsense! How can you say you don’t love me? I’ll tell you something: I can read you like a book; I understand you and I’ll show you what kind of person I am, but that has to be in private.”
Bizyukina was speechless.

“You understand what I’m saying? We need a little rendezvous to get to know each other completely …for a political purpose, of course.”

Bizyukina remained silent.

Termosesov sighed, released the lady’s hand gently, and said, “Oh, you women! Russian women! How different you are from Polish women! You’ve really got a long way to go to come up to the Poles! Just give a Polish woman Izmail Termosesov and she’d never part with him. She would stick with him and move mountains.

“ Polish women are quite different from us,” his hostess observed.

“Why are they different?”

“They love their country, but we hate ours.”

“So what? The Poles, I believe, have enemies—all enemies of Polish independence. Your enemies are all Russian patriots.”

“That’s true.”

“Well, so who is your most bitter enemy here? Tell me, and you’ll see him bear the full brunt of Termosesov’s hand!”

“I have a lot of enemies.”

“Tell me the worst ones! The very worst ones!”

“Two are the worst.”

“The names of those wretches! Give me their names!”

“Well, one … one of them is Deacon Achilla.”

“To the gallows with Deacon Achilla!”

“The other is Archpriest Tuberozov.”
“Down with Archpriest Tuberozov!”

“The whole town is behind them, all the people.”

“So what difference does that make? Let the whole town and all the people back them up. Termosesov knows the authorities so he doesn’t have to be afraid of town and people.”

“Well, the authorities don’t exactly have a soft spot in their hearts for him.”

“Is that so? Then he’s really kaput. Now we only need to seal the deal as is fitting: ‘Love me and be mine, Herodias!’”

Bizyukina kissed him without a second thought.

“Now that’s the honorable way!” Termosesov exclaimed, and after questioning her about how and why her enemies Tuberozov and Achilla had offended her, shook her hand with a smile on his face and retreated to the room where his companion had remained throughout.

Chapter X

The inspector was not yet asleep when his lucky assistant came back to the room. Clad in a white linen nightshirt, Termosesov’s high-born companion was lying on the bed prepared for him, feet covered with a light plaid coverlet, and was dozing or musing with his eyelids closed.

Termosesov wanted to establish whether his chief was asleep or only pretending to be, so he went up to the bed quietly, bent over his face, and called him by name.

“You sleeping?” Termosesov asked.

“Yes,” replied Bornovolokov.
“What do you mean, yes? You couldn’t be asleep or you wouldn’t answer.”

“Yes.”

“Now that’s absurd.”

Termosesov went over to the other couch, threw off his robe and also started settling down to rest.

“While you were lying here daydreaming, I accomplished quite a bit,” he began as he stretched out.

In reply to this, Bornovolokov again said simply “Yes,” but it was a special “yes,” a curious “yes,” so to speak, with a tinge of a question in it.

“Yessir, yes it is, because I can tell you that I’ve made some very useful discoveries for us.”

“With that lady?”

“The lady? Oh, that’s a separate matter, a mere interlude. That’s not it, but do you remember what I told you when I caught you on the Sadovaya Boulevard in Moscow?”

“Unfortunately, yes!”

“As I told you, ‘Your eminence, most gracious prince! You musn’t treat old friends this way, trying to drop them. Only scoundrels act that way.’ Did I tell you that or not?”

“That’s what you said.”

“So you remember! Then you must also recall how I explained my thinking to you and pointed out that our Egalité princes like you, now that you’ve returned to the privileges of your birth and your fat jobs, shouldn’t turn up your noses at the likes of us,
your old buddies and fellow Montagnards. I went through all that with you in great
detail.”

“Yes, you certainly did.”

“Fine! You understood that it was not a good idea to play around with me and you
were very obliging and I give you credit for that. You understood that it wouldn’t do to
cast me off, because hunger, after all, makes a spiteful buddy and when a man gets
hungry you never know what he’s going to dredge up out of his memory. And
Termosesov has a first-class memory and some gumption to boot. When you were a
bright red revolutionary, he already knew that you would be a turncoat some day.”

“Uh-huh.”

“You decided to take me with you as an assistant … that is, to tell the truth and
not insult you with flattery, you didn’t decide to do that but I forced you to take me. You
were terrified that I'd divulge some of those billets-doux you sent to our brothers of Free
Poland.”

“Ugh!”

“Never mind, prince, you needn’t sigh. I’ll tell you just what I told you that time
on the Sadovaya Boulevard in Moscow when I held you by your coat lapel and you tried
to get away from me: don’t moan and groan because Termosesov’s on your back. Izmail
Termosesov will do you a great service. Now take you and that party of yours. You
don’t admit scum like Termosesov. No, you’ve get only finer folk, and you start up
newspapers and you try by hook or crook to wangle jobs as inspectors of the dear hoi
polloi.

“If you say so.”
“Well, you’ll never make it.”

“Why not?”

“Because you’re very clumsy. The patriots will recognize you by your paws, will raise a storm and then pitch you out on the street.”

“Hm~”

“Yessir. Just get rid of these newspapers and back up Termosesov and everything will take care of itself. You just be Prince Ivan, like in the fairy tale, and I’ll be your Gray Wolf helper.”

“Yes, you’re a gray wolf all right.”

“That’s the way it is. I’m Gray Wolf and if you want I’ll get you steeds with golden manes, and firebirds, and princesses, and will put you back on your throne.”

With that, Gray Wolf sprang suddenly from his lair, jumped over to the bed of his Prince Ivan and said softly, “Move over toward the wall. I want to whisper something to you.”

Bornovolokov moved and Termosesov sat next to him on the edge of the bed, put his arm around him, and said in a low voice, “Lay into the Church. That’s where the ulcer is! Give them a real scare!”

“I don’t understand what you’re driving at.”

“Well, doesn’t Christianity consider all men equal? After all, eminent statesmen have considered it harmful to have the scriptures translated into the vernacular. No, Christianity … well, it can easily be interpreted, you see, in a dangerous way, and any priest can be that kind of an interpreter.”

“Our priests are so incompetent there’s no cause to worry.”
“All right, it’s fine so long as they are incompetent. But you forget that even they have partisans and if they’re not kept in check the priests would change too. We mustn’t compromise with them: what we need to do is tighten the leash.”

“You may be right.”

“Just so. Always stand for the short leash and you’ll bless fate for having sent you Termosesov. Cling to him as Prince Ivan did to Gray Wolf. I’ll put together a report for you, I’ll write you such a dispatch that even your enemies will compliment you and hail you as an administrative genius.”

Termosesov lowered his voice again and went on: ‘Remember when you were last with the governor’s executive secretary—you were coming out of the club and talking—and he said that His Excellency regretted some of his earlier errors of judgment and particularly the fact that he had indulged certain patriots with excessive intimacy?’

“Yes”

“Remember how he mentioned that one free-thinking priest had even addressed sharp words to His Excellency?”

“Yes.”

“But you probably didn’t realize that this priest’s name is Tuberozov and that he’s here in this town where you’re lounging about and won’t be in a position to write anything about him.”

Bornovolokov suddenly sat bolt upright and asked, “Now how is it you know what the executive secretary told me?”

“That’s simple. I was walking behind you very softly. It’s not a bad idea to keep an eye on you, after all. But that’s not the point now. You see, we must start our
campaign with this Tuberculosov priest and we’ll prove that he is harmful and that all such independent men in the clergy are. The final logical conclusion will be that religion can be permitted only as one of the forms of public administration. As soon as faith becomes a serious faith, it is harmful, and it must be pulled up and put on a leash. You’ll be the first to express this thought and I assure you it will be repeated with your name, like the thoughts of Machiavelli and Metternich. Are you satisfied with me, my lord and master?”

“Yes.”

“And you authorize me to act?”

“Yes.”

“What do you mean by that ‘yes’? Does it mean that this is what you want?”

“Yes, it does.”

“Fine! Because, you know, sometimes ‘yes’ from you means ‘yes and no’.”

Termosesov stepped away from his superior’s bed and added: “You see, we brother slaves can’t afford to waste time. We don’t have strings to pull like you do so we can skip right up from nihilists to satraps. I’m looking out for you and also for me. I’ve had enough of going hungry. Wherever I turn there’s always the same answer, ‘You’re a Red,’ and nobody will hire a Red.”

“Turn white.”

“I can’t afford the whitewash.”

“Why didn’t you sign up in Petersburg as an informer?”
“I tried,” Termosesov replied without embarrassment, “but with the ‘realism’ that prevails today, all those vacancies were taken. They said I’d have to do something to prove myself first.”

“So do something to prove yourself.”

“Give me a chance to show what I can do, or else I’ll start out on you.”

“Swine!” Bornovolokov hissed.

“Oink, oink!” Termosesov uttered in a piercing squeal.

Bornovolokov jumped up, clutched his head in horror and asked, “What does that mean?”

“That? That’s just your black pig’s voice, begging for slop and asking the white pig to be a bit more polite to him,” Termosesov explained unperturbed.

Bornovolokov ground his teeth in rage and turned to the wall without a word.

“Now that’s better! Calm down, my noble prince, and don’t flaunt that white color of yours so much or I’ll take a paint brush to you and you’ll wind up so striped and splattered that you’ll glow in the dark! Don’t forget that ‘I was sent to you in punishment, I’m a thorn among your garland’s leaves.’ Wear me with care!”

Enervated, Bornovolokov suppressed a sigh and pretended to fall asleep. Triumphant, Termosesov dropped right off to an unfeigned sleep.
ACHILLA WRITES FROM PETERSBURG

This excerpt, taken from Part Five, Chapter IV, comes toward the end of the chronicle, just before Tuberozov’s death. As the scene opens, Tuberozov is returning from his exile in the province capital, but is still prohibited from exercising any ecclesiastical or pastoral functions. His beloved wife, Natalya Nikolayevna, had died during his exile.

Tuberozov is met by Achilla, who has been living in Tuberozov’s house since Natalya died, and they decide that they will live together from then on. However, when the archdeacon in the province falls ill, Achilla is unexpectedly assigned to accompany the bishop to Saint Petersburg for a meeting of the Holy Synod. Most of the chapter comprises quotations from the letters Achilla writes from the province capital, Moscow, and St. Petersburg and the conversation he has with Tuberozov immediately after his return.

These passages are notable for Leskov’s attempt to portray the misunderstandings and muddled thinking a superficial exposure to urban life and the radical “intellectuals” of the day produced on the dull-witted but well-meaning Achilla. Here, as in some of his other works, he has Achilla make frequent use of malapropisms. This reinforces the picture of a person who has acquired some of the slogans and attitudes of the radical intellectuals, but at a level so superficial and inaccurate that he is unable even to pronounce the words for key concepts properly.
ГЛАВА ЧЕТВЕРТАЯ

Войдя в свой дом, где в течение довольно долгого времени оставался хозяином и единственным жильцом дьякон Ахилла, протопоп поцеловал стихийного исполнна в сухой пробор его курчавой головы и, ободря вместе с ним все комнаты, перекрестил пустую осиротевшую кроватку Наталии Николаевны и сказал:

— Что же, друг, теперь нам с тобой уже не стоит и расходиться,— станем жить вместе!

— И очень изволите рад, и готов, и даже сам так располагал,— ответил Ахилла и опять обеими руками обнял протопопа.

Так они и остались жить вдвоем: Ахилла служил в церкви и домохозяйчил, а Туберозов сидел дома, читал Джона Бушена, думал и молился.

Он показывался из дома редко, как, лучше сказать, совсем не показывался, и на вопросы навеевавших его людей, почему он не выходит, коротко отвечал:

— Да вот... все... собираюсь.

Он действительно все собирался и жил усиленной и сосредоточенною жизнью самоповеряющего себя духа.

Ахилла отстранил его от всех забот и поучений, и это давало старцу большое удовольствие собираться.

Но недолго суждено было длиаться и этому блаженству. Ахиллу ждала честь: его брал с собою в Петербург архиерей, вызванный на череду для присутствования в синоде.

Губернский протодьякон был нездоров.

Расставание дьякона с Туберозовым было трогательное, и Ахилла, никогда не писавший никаких писем и не знавший, как их пишут и как отправляют, не только выразил писать отцу Туберозову, но и испытал это.

Письма его были оригинальны и странны, не менее чем весь склад его мышления и жизни. Прежде всего он просил Туберозову писать из губернского города и в этом письме, вложенном в конверт, на котором было надписано: «Отцу протопорею Туберозову, секретно и в собственные руки», извещал, что, живучи в монастыре, он отомстил за него цезарю Троадио, привязав его коту на спину колбасу с надписанием: «Сию колбасу я хозяину носу» и пустив кота бегать с этого носом по монастырю.

Через месяц Ахилла писал из Москвы, сколь она ему понравилась, но что народ здесь прелукавый, и особенно...
петье, которые два раза звали его пить вместе с ним, но он, взяв из пивоварни, что угодно, пили без паники. Такой их певческий пыл был только довольно подвижным.

Еще немного спустя он писал уже из Петербурга: «Прелестный друг мой, я ваш высокопределенный отец Савелья. Радоваться, живу я, и на подворье, которое будет ордой монастыря, но соблазну ухватил как много, потому что все равно что среди шума города. Но по ваше все-таки, несмотря на сию шумность, скучаю, ибо вме- но? если бы был, то отрадней бы гораздо ему я добавить, одевались. Советы ваши были поэты и со- стоян, в постоянном у всех почитании, на что у меня, в своем московском ламеле, которого пить не за- хотел. Пью самую малость, да я то главное всего для того, что через иные опасаюсь, как бы хорошее знакомство не растерять. Хорошо здесь много, но дьяло на- стоящих, как по-нашему требуется, нет; все теноры, арийки, по-нашему разве только к кладбирам, и хотя ненавидят себя и очень даже француз, но и собою все против нас жаждут и в служении всё думают о словах, о нередко даже и не в ноту, почему певцам с ними потра- лять хорошо невозможно. Я же, как в этом сведение, их моде не подражал, а служу по-своему, и зато хоть я при- езжий, но купечество приглашало меня в Гостиный ряд под воротами в шатер молебен служить и, окромя денеж- ного подношения, за ту службу дали мне три фурляровые платки, какие вы любите, и я их вам привезу в гостицы. На здоровье! Скучаю я тоже немало, жалую по своей необразованности, да и потому, что отозводу далеко. Из угощений здесь все больше кофеи. Да я по-дальшь у кого и бываю, потому что надо все в сторону; я же езжу на пол-императел, а на нем никуда в сторону не- возможно, но вы этого, по своей провинциальности, не поймете: спишу точно на доме, на крышке очень высоко, и если сходить оттуда, то надо иметь большую ловкость, чтобы сшибуть далек на всем скаку, а для жена головы, по причине их одежды, этого даже не позволяют. Извозчики же здесь, по замечанию, весьма насмешливы, и будто наш брат духовный станет их нанимать, но жертвует очень дешево, то они сейчас один о другом выкрикивают «Напрасно, батюшка, с ним сеять: он все смеет.»
в лужу выпала», а потому и не ряжу их вовсе. Варнавку нашего однажды астретил, но не тронул, потому что и он и я оба ехали на встречных пол-импералах, и я ему только успел погрозить, да, впрочем, он здесь стал очень какой-то дохлый. Насчет же вашего песчания, что вы еще в запрещении и не можете о себе на литургии молчать, то, пожалуйста, вы об этом нимало не убывайте, потому что я все это престесвенно обдумала и дополнила, и вселавитель это видит. Полагаюсь так, что хотя и не можете вы молиться сами за себя из уездного храма, но есть у вас такой человек в столице, что через него идет за вас молитва и из Казанского собора, где спаситель отечества, светлый князь Кутузов погребен, и из Исакиевского, который весь снаружи урожайный, от самого низа даже до верха, молитвенный этот за вас богослужит, ибо я, четверо ектении величаво за кого положено возглашать, а про самого себя шепотом твое имя, друже мой, отец Савелий, потайно произношу, и молитву за тебя самую усердную отсылал всенощное превечному, и жалуюсь, как ты напрасно пред всеми от начальства обжен. А ты особливо того слова, пожалуйста, себе и не думайте и не говорите, что «един мои изочтены», потому что это нам с отцом Захарией будет со временем очень прискорбно и я тебя, честное слово, разве малым чем тогда переживу. 
Засим следовало подписи: «временем столичный за протодиякону своей епархии Старогородского уездного собора дьякону Ахилю Десницкому».
Было и еще получено письмо от Ахиля, где он писал, что «счастным случаем таки спасти с Препотенским и думал с ним прошедшее биться, но выжил заму тому совсем другой оборот, так что он даже и был у него в редакции, потому что Варнава теперь уже был редактором, и Ахиля видел у него разных литераторов и исключал там с Варнавой примириться. Примирились же этому выставлялись та причина, что Варнава стал (по словам Ахиля) человек жестоко несчастный, потому что неведомых женился на здешней барышне, которая гораздо пышкой дамы строила и судит все против брака, а Варнаву говорит, нередко бьет, и он теперь уже совсем не такой: сам мне открыл, что если бы не опасался жены, то готов бы даже за бога в газете заступиться, и ругательски
ругает госпожу Бизюкину, а особенно Термоссеова, ко-торый чудесно блюдо себя устроил и получал большоё же-
лованье на негласной службе для надзора за честными людьми, но арар его смущал жадностью: стал фальшьными
бумажки перепущать и теперь в осторог сел». Наплаке же
вездяя Ахилл хвалился тем, что он видел, как в театре
представляли. «Раз (объяснял он), было это с певцами,
ходил я в штатском уборе на самый верх на оперу «Жизнь
за царя», и от прекрасного пения голосов после целую
ночь в восторге плакал; а другой раз, опять тоже переря-
женный по-цивилижному, ходил глядеть, как самого царя
Ахиллу представляли. Но только на меня даже ни крошки
не похоже: выскочил актер, весь как есть в латах, и на
пятку жалится, а дей мне этакую сбрую, я бы гораздо
громче разыграл. Остальная же игра вся по-языческому
с открывостью до самых пор, и здовому или одинокому
человеку это видеть несложно».
И еще, наконец, пришло третье и последнее письмо,
которым Ахилла «звался, что скоро вернется домой, и
всед затем в один сумрачный серый вечер он представ;
пред Туберозова внесли, как радостный вестник.
Подворовавшись с дьяконом, отец Савелий тотчас же
сам бросился на улицу запереть ставни, чтобы скрыть от
любопытных радостное возвращение Ахиллы.
Беседа их была долгая. Ахилла выписал за этою беседой
целый замковар, а отец Туберозов все продолжал беспре-
ставляю напивать ему новые чашки и приговаривал:
— Пей, голубушка, кушай еще,— и когда Ахилла выпи-
шал, то он говорил ему: — Ну, теперь, братец, рассказы-
вай дальше: что ты там еще видел и что узнал?
И Ахилла рассказывал. Бог знает что он рассказывал:
это все выходило нестро, громадно и несладко, но всего
более в его рассказах удивляло отца Савелия то, что
Ахилла жестат и несмутно и нелегко снешал свою
фей самыми страшными словами, каких он до поездки в
Петербург не только не употреблял, но, вероятно, и не
знал!
Так, например, он ни к селу ни к городу начинал с
того:
— Представь себе, голубчик, отец Савелий, какая ком-
бинация (причем он беспощадно напирал на нее).
Или:
— Как он мне это сказал, я ему говорю: пусть, же ву перло, это, брат, сахар дюю.
Отец Туберозов хотя с умилением внимал рассказам Ахиллы, но, слыша частое повторение подобных слов, поморщился и, не вытерпев, сказал ему:
— Что ты это... Зачем ты такие пустые слова научился вставлять?
Но бесконечно увлекаящийся Ахилла так нетерпеливо разворачивал перед отцом Савелием всю сокровищницу своих столичных заимствований, что не берется никаких слов.
— Да вы, душечка, отец Савелий, пожалуйста, не опа- сайтесь, теперь за слова ничего — не запрещается.
— Как, братец, ничего? слышать скверно.
— О-о! это с непривычки. А мне так теперь что хочешь говори, все ерунда.
— Ну вот опять.
— Что такое?
— Да что ты еще за пакостное слово сейчас сказал?
— Ерунда-с!
— Тьфу, мерзость!
— Чем-с? все литераты употребляют.
— Ну, им я книги в руки: пусть их и сидят с своею «герундой», а нам с тобой на что эту герунду заимствовать, когда с нас и своей русской чепухи довольно?
— Совершенно справедливо, — согласился Ахилла и, подумав, добавил, что чепуха ему даже гораздо более нравится, чем ерунда.
— Помилуйте,— добавил он, опровергая самого себя,— чепуху это отмочишь, в сейчас смех, а они там съерупят, например, что бога нет, или еще какие пустики, что даже попервоначалу страшно, а не то спор.
— Надо, чтоб это всегда страшно было,— кротко шепнул Туберозов.
— Ну да ведь, отец Савелий, нельзя же все так строго.
Ведь если докажут, так деться некуда.
— Что докажут? что ты это? что ты говоришь? Что тебе доказали? Не то ли, что бога нет?
— Это-то, батя, доказали...
— Что ты врешь, Ахилла! Ты добрый мужик и хри- стианин: перекрестись! что ты это сказал?
— Что же делать? Я ведь, голубчик, и сам этому не рад, но против хвата не попречь.
— Что за «хвакт» еще? что за факт ты открыл?
— Да это, отец Савелий... зачем вас смущать? Вы себе читайте свою Букину и веруйте в своей простоте, как и прежде сего веровали.
— Оставь ты мое Букину и не заботься о моей простоте, а посуди, что ты на себя говоришь?
— Что же делать? хвакт! — отвечал, вздохнув, Ахилла.
Туберозов, смущаясь, встал и потребовал, чтоб Ахилла непременно и сейчас же открыл ему факт, из коего могут проистекать сомнения в существовании бога.
— Хвакт этот по каждому человеку прыгает,— отвечал дьякон и объяснил, что это блоха, а блоху всякий может сделать из опилок, и значит все-де могло сотвориться само собою.
Получив такое искреннее и наивное признание, Туберозов даже не сразу решился, что ему ответить; но Ахилла, высказавшись раз в этом направлении, продолжая и далее выражать свою петербургскую повседневность.
— И взгляду теперь,— говорил он,— если мы от этой самой ниточной блохи пойдем дальше, то и тут нам ничего этого не видно, потому что тут у нас ни книг этих настоящих, ни глобусов, ни труб, ничего нет. Мрак непостижим до того, что даже, я тебя скажу, здесь и смелости-то такой, как там, нет, чтоб очень рассуждать! А там я с литературами, знаюшь, сел: попался посидел, ну и вижу, что религия, как она есть, так ее и нет, а блоха это положительный хвакт. Так по наклю выходит...
Туберозов только посмотрел на него и, похлопав глазами, спросил:
— А чему же ты до сих пор служил?
Дьякон ничего не сконфузился и, указав рукой на свое чресца, ответил:
— Да чему и все служат: мамону. По науке и это выведено, для чего человек трудится,— для еды; хочет, чтоб мы есть были и тотому и тому не чувствовать. А если бы мы не хотели, так ничего бы и не делали. Это называется борба (дьякон произнес это слово без ы) за существование. Без этого ничего бы не было.
— Да вот видишь ты, — отвечал Туберозов, — а бог-то ведь, ни в чем этом не нуждаясь, сотворил свет.
— Это правда, — отвечал дьякон, — бог это сотворил.
— Так как же ты его отрицаешь?
— То есть я не отрицаю, — отвечал Ахилл, — а я только говорю, что, восходя от хвата в рассуждении, как блока из опилок, так и вселенная могла сама собой явиться. У них бог, говорят, «кислород»... А я, прах его знает, что он есть кислород! И вот видите: как вы опять заговорили в разные стороны, то я уже опять ничего не понимаю.
— Откуда же взялся твой кислород?
— Не знаю, ей-богу... да лучше оставьте про это, отец Савелл!
— Нет, нельзя этого, милый, в тебе оставляй! Скажи: откуда начало ему, твоему кислороду?
— Ей-богу, не знаю, отец Савелл! Да нет, оставьте, душечка!
— Может быть, сей кислород безначален?
— А идол его знает! Да и его к кущему!
— И конца ему нет?
— Отца Савелл! да пусть его совсем к свиньям, этот кислород. Пусть он себе будет хоть и без начала и без конца: что нам до него?
— А ты можешь ли понять, как это без начала и без конца?
Ахилл отвечал, что это он может. И затем громко продолжал:
«Един бог во святой тронце споколемый, он есть вечен, то есть не имеет ни начала, ни конца своего бытия, но всегда был, есть и будет».
— Ахилл! — произнес с улыбкой Туберозов и, так же с улыбкой приподнявшись с своего места, взял Ахиллу дружески за руку и сказал:
— Поддем-ка, я тебе что-то покажу.
— Извольте, — отвечал дьякон.
ANALYSIS AND COMMENT

Achilla’s writing, although “strange”—that is, replete with malapropisms, archaisms, and other non-standard terms, is remarkably grammatical for a person who had never written a letter before he left Stargorod for St. Petersburg. For that reason, the translator needs to be careful not to overdo the contrast of his prose with standard literary language. An English-speaking person at his educational level would probably show more irregularities of spelling and grammar than of vocabulary. Therefore, if the translator is unable to find equivalents for some of the words that are considered dialectical or просторечие, he may compensate to some degree by using non-standard spelling or grammar.

The conversation between Achilla and Savely upon the former’s return from Petersburg embodies an explicit discussion of the fashionable (among “nihilists”) slang that Achilla picked up and remembered for the most part inaccurately. The challenge there for the translator is to find similar linguistic distortions that a poorly educated English speaker might have adopted in an analogous situation.

The following are some of the specific words or phrases that might cause problems for the translator:

274 (18) собираться: Normally translated “I am about to,” or—more literally—I am collecting myself, in this context Savely clearly means that he is preparing himself to meet his maker. Mongault translates it “je me recuille,” and Luther “Ich mache mich immer bereit.” Hapgood has “I’m … preparing myself,” which is not bad. However, I would prefer, “I’m getting ready.”
Сию колбасу я хозяину несу: Hapgood translates it literally: “I’m carrying this sausage to my master.” Both Mongault and Luther preserve the rhyming jingle:

Je porte à mon patron  
Ce gros saucisson.

Diese Wurst bring’ich, der Kater,  
Meinem Herrn, dem frommen Vater.

I would suggest something like the following:

This sausage I bear on my back  
Is meant for my master, a hack.

In this case I believe it is permissible to elaborate on what Leskov actually wrote. It is probably not at all clear to the contemporary reader of English why Achilla’s tag on the cat could be considered insulting. It becomes clearer if “hack” is used to rhyme with “back.”

лампопо: I have not found the word in any Russian dictionary available to me, though the meaning is clear. It may be a corruption of the French lampée, defined by Larousse as “liquide qu’un avale d’un coup,” or “chug-a-lug” in contemporary American slang. Hapgood simply transliterates the word, while Mongault uses “panaché” and Luther, “Blachdnublach.” I believe that “toddy” would convey the idea to the American reader.

на пол-имперiale: The империал was a horse-drawn streetcar with seats on the top as well as inside, but a пол-империал was a coin. Achilla has confused the words. Mongault translates it literally, but puts it in quotation marks (“demi-impériales”) and adds a footnote. Luther does not reflect Achilla’s misuse of the term, calling it simply an Omnibus. Hapgood refers to “roof-seats of the stages.” Since
we refer to double-decker buses, I believe we can suggest Achilla’s confusion of terms by having him call the conveyance a “double-stacker.”

Achilla sprinkles dialectical, obsolete, colloquial and просторечие words throughout his letter—as one would expect. Examples are: окромя [275 (26)], подарение [275 (27)], гостинец [275 (28)], сицить [275 (37)], буде [275 (39)], не убивайте [276 (7)], особенно [276 (21)], and невдавнях [275 (26)]. It is unnecessary to find an exact stylistic equivalent for each word; the same effect can be obtained by sprinkling words of a similar stylistic level in the translation. This was the practice followed by both Mongault and Luther.

One letter quoted runs for a page an a half in a single paragraph. This is clearly an occasion when the translator should not break up the paragraph. In it, Achilla jumps from one subject to another in stream-of-consciousness fashion, just as a speaker might who is recounting experiences with enthusiasm.

Most of Achilla’s malapropisms and mispronounced words turn up when he returns to Stargorod from St. Petersburg and recounts his experiences to Savely. In this case, it is best for the translator to try to find or invent an equivalent to Achilla’s mistake. Some examples:

277 (40-41) комбинация (with stress on ы) A mispronunciation of комбинация meaning “scheme” in this context. Luther translates it “Kumbination” with the stress on the “u.” Monagault simply calls it “une combine,” which fits the meaning but does not convey the distorted pronunciation. Since changing the stress on “combination” does not really work in English, I would suggest distorting “contrivance” and have Achilla say, “contrivashun.”
278 (1-2) **я ему говорю: ну нет, же ву перду, брат, сахар дюду:** A nonsense phrase, spoken in an imitation French. Mongault replaced it with a more coherent expression, “Non pas de ça, à bas les pattes, mon coco!” Luther preserves some of the nonsense words and much of the sound with, “Nein, mein Bester, je vous perdu! Das wäre mir gerade der rechte Türlüütütü!” Hapgood has, “Well, there’s no vous perdu, that’s sugar du-du, my dear fellow!” I would suggest: “I say to him, ‘No siree, zhuh voo perdyu, brother, that’s all just sugar do-do.”

278 (16): **ерунда:** Today, this is a fairly common colloquial alternative to чепуха or вздор, but it was not in Leskov’s time. According to V.V. Vinogradov, the derivation is uncertain, and Leskov’s supposition that it was a corruption of the German *hier und da* is not correct.92 Leskov’s contemporaries used it occasionally in their private correspondence, but apparently not in their literary works. Tuberozov pronounces it герунда, and Achilla even forms a verb out of it (съерундить). Mongault translates it with *blague* and Luther, *Quatsch mit Sauce*, while Hapgood uses *fiddle-faddle*. None of these terms, however, would seem to justify Savely’s strong reaction. I would suggest translating it *crap*.

279 (2) **хвакт:** Achilla’s mispronunciation of *факт*. Mongault does not reproduce the variant, but has him say, “Les faits sont les faits.” Luther, also, simply uses *Faktum*. Hapgood reproduces the distortion literally, with *kvakt*. This, however, is not a distortion an English speaker is likely to make. Since I believe that it is important to indicate that Achilla used a variant pronunciation, I would have him say *factor*. Savely’s reaction and the context would make clear that he means *fact*.

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Achilla’s mispronunciation of литераты. Mongault ignores it and has Achilla say littérateurs. Hapgood has literary men, while Luther captures the original variant with Literaten. I would suggest writer folks.
When he entered his house, where Deacon Achilla had long been master and sole occupant, the archpriest kissed the temperamental giant on his forehead where his curly hair was parted. As they walked together through the rooms, he made a sign of the cross over Natalya Nikolayevna’s empty, orphaned bed, and said, “Well, my friend, there is no need for us to part now. Let’s live together from now on.”

“Yes, I’d like that very much. I was even thinking of it myself,” Achilla replied, and enveloped the archpriest again in both his arms.

And so, from that time the two of them lived together. Achilla assisted in church services and kept house while Tuberozov sat home, read John Bunyan, contemplated, and prayed. He showed himself outside the house rarely; indeed, it would be more accurate to say he never did. When visitors asked him why he never went out, he answered laconically, “Well, I’m … still … getting ready.”

He in fact kept on getting ready and lived the intense, concentrated life of a person putting his own soul to the test. Achilla kept all cares and concerns from him, and this gave the elder the great privilege of getting ready.

But this bliss was not fated to last long. An honor awaited Achilla: the bishop, summoned to Petersburg when it was his turn to attend the Holy Synod, took Achilla with him since the Province archdeacon was ill.
The deacon’s parting with Tuberozov was touching. Achilla, who had never written any letters at all and did not know how to write and send them, not only volunteered to write Father Tuberozov, but even carried out his promise.

His letters were strange and original, no less so than the whole cast of his thinking and life. First, he sent Tuberozov a letter from the province capital. That letter, enclosed in an envelope on which was written “To Archpriest Tuberozov, SECRET AND FOR HAND DELIVERY,” contained the information that while he was living in the monastery, he took revenge for Tuberozov on the censor, Troady, by tying sausage to Troady’s cat with the inscription: “This sausage I bear on my back, Is meant for my master, a hack,” then releasing the cat to run around the monastery with its baggage.

In a month Achilla wrote from Moscow how much he liked the city, but that the people there were very crafty and especially the members of the choir, who had invited him twice to go drink toddy with them, but that he, “knowing from experience what kind of stuff this toddy is, could only be amazed that the choristers would dare make such a proposal.”

A little later he wrote from Petersburg:

“My dearest friend and your Reverence, Father Savely,

“Rejoice! I am living wonderfully in the church hostel, which is sort of like a little monastery, but even so it’s awful how much temptation there is because it’s just like we’re in the middle of a noisy city. But even with all this hubbub, I miss you very much, because if we were here together, we could have a better time enjoying everything. I keep in mind your good advice and have always been respected by everybody, and you have proof of that in that Moscow toddy I turned down. I don’t drink much at all, and when I
do, it’s cause I’m feared of breaking up good friendships if I don’t. There’s a lot of good things here but no real deacons like we have at home. They are all tenors—the sort that would be good only for graveside services at our church but even so they show off and their voices are thin as compared to ours and they chant the service like they’re just talking and on top of that sometimes not even in tune so there is no way the choir can sing in harmony with them. So far as I am concerned, I know my business and I don’t copy their ways but sing the service my way and even though I’m a stranger here some merchants invited me to the market to sing a service in a tent by the gate and in addition to money they gave me three silk scarves—the kind you like—and I’m going to bring them to you as a gift. To your health! I’m also bored quite a bit cause I don’t have much education of course but also cause we are far from everything. Most folks here serve coffee to guests. But I don’t do much calling cause we’re so far out and everybody lives on side streets. I ride on top of the double-stacker and you can’t go into any side streets on them, but you won’t understand what I’m saying cause you’re stuck in the sticks. You see, you sit like you do at home—on a high roof—and if you want to get off you’ve really got to be spry to jump down while the horses are galloping and they don’t even let persons of the female sex up on top because of their clothes. And I’ve seen how the cabbies here are very rude and if one of our brothers of the cloth tries to hire one for a small fare they shout at you about the driver—Don’t you take his carriage, Father, they say—He dumped a priest in a puddle yesterday, they shout, and that’s why I don’t take them at all. I did run into Barnaby once but I didn’t make contact with him cause we were both riding on top of double-stackers going in opposite directions so I was only able to show him my fist and by the way he’s gotten awfully sickly looking here. As for your
misfortune in still being under a ban so that you can’t pray for yourself during the liturgy, don’t you wear yourself out over that cause I’ve thought it all thru and thru and have taken care of it and the Almighty sees it. You can depend on it and even though you can’t pray for yourself in our church you have a man in the capital and he sends prayers for you up from the Kazan Cathedral where our country’s defender His Serene Highness Prince Kutuzov is buried and also from Saint Isaac’s which is all marble outside from the top to the very bottom and this man that prays in the capital is me. When I have read all the names on the prayer list out loud I add your name—my friend Father Savely—in a whisper and I pray hard as I can to the Eternal One and complain about the way the authorities mistreated you in public for no good reason. And I beg you specially not to say “My days are numbered” and not even to think that to yourself cause that would be a terrible thing for Father Zaharia and me and word of honor I don’t think I could live much longer myself.”

Underneath, the signature read:

“Acting Archdeacon in the Capital for His Bishop, Deacon of Stargorod Church, Achilla Desnitsyn”

Still another letter was received from Achilla, in which he wrote that he had met Prepotensky by a happy coincidence and was about to beat him up because of what happened in the past, but things took quite a different turn. Achilla even went to the office where Barnaby was working as an editor and Achilla saw all kinds of “writer folk” at his office and made peace with Barnaby there.

The reason for this reconciliation, in Achilla’s words, was that Barnaby had become a terribly unhappy man because not long ago he married up with a Petersburg
young lady who turned out to be like an old battleaxe, who complains about marriage and, they say, often beats up on Barnaby, and as for him he’s really got different: he even told the deacon that if he was not afraid of his wife he would even defend God in the newspaper and he really curses Madame Bizyukina and Termosesov even more. Termosesov had fixed himself up nice and pretty and was getting a lot of pay from secret work spying on honest people, but the Fiend led him astray with greed and he began to pass counterfeit money and now he’s cooling his heels in the pokey.

But Achilla was most proud of the fact that he had seen how they put on shows in the theater. “Once,“ he explained, “that was with members of the choir, I dressed in lay clothing and went to the top balcony at see the opera ‘A Life for the Tsar,’ and I was so moved by the beautiful singing that I cried most all night. Another time, dressed up again in civilian clothes, I went to take a look at how they played King Achilles himself.93 But he wasn’t a bit like me. An actor, looking like he was in armor, jumped out and complained about his heel. If you’d give me a harness like that, I’d play it a lot louder. In the rest of the play, the actors were uncovered like heathens, and it’s upsetting for a widower or a bachelor to see such things.”

A third and final letter arrived at last, which announced that Achilla would soon return home. Shortly thereafter, on a gloomy gray evening, he was suddenly standing before Tuberozov like a herald of good tidings.

When Father Savely had greeted the deacon, he dashed out to close the shutters in order to shield Achilla’s joyful homecoming from the eyes of the curious.

They had a long conversation. Achilla drank up a whole samovar of tea and Father Tuberozov kept refueling his cup and saying, “Drink, friend, have another one.”

93 The reference is to Offenbach’s La Belle Hélène, a burlesque on the Iliad.
And when Achilla had finished drinking, Tuberozov said to him, “Now, brother, tell me more. What did you see there and what did you find out?”

And Achilla started talking. God knows what all he said; it came out in a formless flood, all mixed up, but as his tales poured out, Father Savely was more and more surprised at the way Achilla had absorbed into his language, sometimes appropriately and sometimes not, the strangest words, which before his trip to Petersburg he not only did not use, but probably did not even know.

Thus, for example, he started this way out of the clear blue: “Imagine, my friend, Father Savely, a contrivashun like that,” or “And when he told me that, I say to him, “No siree, zhuh voo perdyu, brother, that’s all just sugar do-do.”

Although Father Tuberozov was taking in Achilla’s stories sympathetically, he began to frown at the frequent repetition of such words and, finally, unable to contain himself, said to Achilla, “Why do you do that? Why have you taken to sticking in empty words like that?”

But in his exaltation, Achilla was so eager to display to Father Savely the entire repertory of his Petersburg acquisitions that he had no desire to suppress any words.

“Now, now, my friend, don’t you get upset over that. These words don’t mean nothing, and there’s no reason not to use them.”

“Mean nothing, brother? They’re hateful to the ear.”

“Oh, well, that’s because you’re not used to them. Now folks can talk to me any way they want, it’s all a bunch of crap.”

“There you go again.”

“What do you mean?”
“What was that vulgar word you just used?”

“Crap, sir.”

“Whew, how nasty.”

“What do you say that for? All the writer folks use it.”

“Well, put books in their hands and let them sit with their ‘crap.’” You and I don’t need to borrow this ‘crap.’ We’ve got ‘nonsense,’ a perfectly good word.”

“You’re absolutely right,” Achilla agreed, and as he thought about it, remarked that he really liked “nonsense” better than “crap.”

“Y’know,” he added, contradicting himself, “if you blurt out ‘nonsense,’ they all laugh, and then they spout their crap, like that there’s no God or some such stupid stuff, and at first you get scared and there’s even an argument.”

“One should always be frightened of that,” Tuberozov whispered meekly.

“Well, but after all, Father Savely, you shouldn’t be so strict. After all, if they prove it, you can’t go hide.”

“Prove what? Why do you say that? What are you saying? What did they prove? Not that there’s no God!”

“Yes, they proved it, Father.”

“You must be out of your mind, Achilla! You’re a good man and a Christian. Cross yourself. Why did you say that?”

“What can I do? After all, my friend, I’m not happy about it, but you can’t deny a factor.”

“What do you mean, ‘factor’? What sort of fact have you discovered?”
“Now, now, Father Savely, why disturb you. You just read your Bunyan and keep your simple faith like you’ve always done.”

“You leave my Bunyan alone and don’t you worry about my simple faith, just judge what you’ve said against yourself!”

“What can I do? It’s a factor!” Achilla replied with a sigh.

Tuberozov, upset, stood and demanded that Achilla reveal to him that instant the fact that could inspire doubt in the existence of God.

That factor jumps around on everybody,” replied the deacon, and explained that he was talking about a flea. Since anybody can make a flea out of sawdust, he went on, this means that everything could create itself.

When he heard such a sincere and naïve confession, Tuberozov was slow deciding how to reply. Achilla, however, once he started speaking on the subject, continued to give expression to his Petersburg enlightenment.

“And now it’s the truth,” he said, “if we put that pesky flea aside, that we can’t see anything here. We don’t have the right kind of books, we don’t have atlases, or telescopes; we don’t see anything. We’re stuck so deep in ignorance that we don’t even want to think things through here the way they do there! You know, I met with those writer folks there, sat with them for a while, and I can see that religion, as it is, is really nothing, and the flea is a positive factor. And science tells us … “

Tuberozov only looked at him, and covering his eyes with his hand, asked, “And what have you been serving up to now?”

The deacon was not in the slightest embarrassed and pointing to his stomach, answered, “I’ve been serving what everybody does: mammon. According to science, and
this is proved, everybody labors for food. He wants to fill his belly and not go hungry. And if we didn’t want that, we wouldn’t do nothing. That’s called the struggle for egoistence. If it wasn’t for that, there wouldn’t be nothing.”

“Now see here,” answered Tuberozov. “God didn’t need any of that to create the world.”

“That’s true,” the deacon replied. “God created the world.”

“Then how can you deny Him?”

“Well, I don’t deny Him,” answered Achilla. “I only say that if you reason from the factor that a flea comes from sawdust, then the universe could have appeared all by itself. Those folks say God is oxygen … But the deuce knows what oxygen is. And look, when you start talking from the other side, I don’t understand anything any more.”

“Where did your oxygen come from?”

“Good Lord, I don’t know. Let’s leave the subject Father Savely.”

“No, we can’t do that, my friend. We can’t leave it in you! Tell me, how did it originate, this oxygen of yours?”

“Good Lord, Father Savely, I don’t know! No, let’s change the subject.”

“Maybe this oxygen has no beginning?”

“Who the dickens knows? To the deuce with it!”

“And it has no end?”

“Father Savely! What do we care about this darned oxygents? What’s it to us, even if it has no beginning and no end?”

“Can you understand what it means to have no beginning and no end?”
Achilla said he could. And then he continued in a loud voice: “There is one God, united in the Holy Trinity, Who is eternal, having neither beginning nor end to His existence, Who always was, is and ever shall be.”

“Amen!” Tuberozov uttered with a smile, and still smiling, rose from his place, took Achilla by the arm affectionately, and said, “Come with me. I want to show you something.”

“Certainly,” the deacon replied.
CHAPTER SEVEN

THE SKAZ: A DWARF’S TALE

One of Leskov’s most characteristic devices was to use of one of his characters to tell a story. This enabled him to characterize the story teller by choice of language, and the object of the narrative by inference. After *Соборяне* was published, Leskov developed the *skaz* technique to near perfection; some of his most popular short stories were entirely in that form, for example, “The Steel Flea” (*Левша*), “Choice Grain” (*Отборное зерно*) and “Night Owls” (*Полунощники*). Typically, the *skaz* purports to be a record of speech, but, as we have already seen, Tuberozov’s diary can be considered a written analogue to it. The colloquial passages we examined in the preceding chapter also contain *skaz* elements, of course, but they described episodes in the eyes of the characters rather than a full narrative.

The reader of *Church Folks* would have met the dwarf Nikolai Afanasiyevich in the passage in Tuberozov’s diary describing his meeting with Boyarinya Plodomasaova. The excerpt we consider in this chapter contains Nikolai Afanasiyevich’s account of his encounter with Tsar Alexander I, his subsequent notoriety among Moscow’s aristocratic salons, and the unsuccessful efforts of his owner to mate him with a female dwarf owned by a general’s widow. He tells the story in straightforward fashion, as if it were completely natural for his “owner” to treat him as a subhuman pet, deny him the prospect of marriage and children, and to subject him to humiliating play-acting to impress her friends.

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Even before encountering this passage, the reader will be aware that Nikolai Afanasiyevich was far from a typical house serf, entirely aside from his small size. He has obviously absorbed much of the language and manners of the noble household—in contrast, for example, to the crude Deacon Achilla—without any touch of arrogance or overt condescension.

Throughout his literary career, Leskov was drawn to eccentrics, outcasts, and members of groups subject to discrimination or persecution, such as the Old Believers. His praise of the pauper Pizonsky, the nurturer of orphans—mentioned by Tuberozov in a diary entry discussed previously—is a relevant example. Yet each of these outcasts and eccentrics differs from the others: Pizonsky is meek and retiring, while Nikolai Afanasiyevich is outgoing, charming, and—despite his life as a virtual slave—capable of taking important initiatives. Later in Соборян, the dwarf plays a key role in persuading the church authorities to release Father Tuberozov from his confinement. Thus, while the narrative recounted below may be considered superfluous to the main events in Leskov’s chronicle, it provides essential insight into Nikolai Afanasiyevich’s character, without which his subsequent actions would not be plausible.
ГЛАВА ЧЕТВЕРТАЯ

— То, государь, было вскоре после французского замирения, как я со в бое почастием государем императором разговаривал.
— Вы с государем разговаривали? — сию же минуту перебили рассказчика несколько голосов.

— А как бы вы изволили полагать? — отвечал с тихою улыбкой карлик. — Да-с; с самим императором Александров Павловичем говорил и имел рассудок, как ему отвечать.
— Ха-ха-ха! Вот, бог меня убей, шельма какая у нас этот Николава! — извьл вдруг от удовольствия дьякон Ахилла и, клонуя себя ладонями по бедрам, добавил: — Гладите на него — маленький, а между тем он, клопштос, с царем разговаривал.
— Сиди, дьякон, смирно, сиди спокойно, — внушительно произнес Туберозов.
Ахилла показал руками, что он более ничего не скажет, и сел.
Рассказ начался снова.
— Это как будто от разговора моего с государем императором даже и начало имело, — спокойно заговорил Николай Афанаевич. — Госпожа моя, Марфа Андреевна, имела желание быть в Москве, когда туда ждали императора после вассальной его победы над Наполеоном Бонапартом. Разумеется, и я в этой поездке, по их воле, при них находился. Они, покойница, тогда уже были в больших летах и, по нездоровью своему, порядочно стали гневливы и обидчивы. Молодым господам по этой причине в дому у нас было скучно, и покойница этого видела и много за это досадовали, а больше всех на Алексея Никитича сердились, что не так, полагали, верно у них в доме порядок устроен, чтобы всем весело было, и что чрез то их все забывают. Вот Алексей Никитич и достали маменькин приглашение на бал, на который государь ожидали. Марфа Андреевна не скрыла от меня, что это им очень большое удовольствие доставило. Сделали они себе к этому балу наряд бешеный и для меня французу порному заказали синий фрак аглицкого сукна с золотыми пуговицами, панталоны, — сударьны, простите, — жилет, галстук — все белое; манишку с гофрейми и прижки на башмаки, сорок два рубля заплатили. Алексей Никитич для маменькина удовольствия так упросил, чтоб и меня можно было туда взять. Приказано было метрдотелю, чтобы везти меня в оранжерее при доме и напротив самого зала, куда государь войдет, в угол где-нибудь между цветами поставить. Так это, милостиные государы, все и исполнилось, но не совсем. Поставил меня, знаете, метрдотель в угол
у большого такого дерева, китайская пальма называется, и сказал, чтоб я держался и смотрел, что отсюда увижу. А что оттуда увидать можно? ничего. Вот я, знает, как Закхей-Митаря, цац-царап, да и валез на этакую маленькую искусственную скалу, валез и стою под пальмой. В зале шум, блеск, музыка; а я хочу и на скале под пальмой стою, а все ничего не вижу, кроме как один макушонок да тупень. Только вдруг все эти головы засуетились раздвинулись, и государь с князем Голицыным прямо входят от жара в оранжерею. И еще то, представьте, идет не только что в оранжерее, а даже в самый тот дальний угол прохладный, куда меня спрятали. Я так, сударьчи, и засох. На скале-то засох и не слезу.

— Страшно? — спросил Губерозов.

— Как вам дождешь? не страшно, но как будто волненье.

— А я бы убёг, — сказал, не вытерев, дьякон.

— Чего же, сударь, бежать? Не могу сказать, чтобы совсем ни капли не испугался, но не бегал. А его величество тем часом все подходит, подходит; уже я слышу даже, как сапожки на них рип-рıp-рıp; вижу уже я тиху у них этакий тихий, вдруг ласковый, да уж, знаете, на отчаянность уж и думаю и не думаю, зачем я пред ними на самом на вишу явлюсь? Только государь вдруг этак головку повернул и, вижу, изволили вскнуть на меня свои очи и на мне их и остановили.

— Ну! — крикнул, бледнея, дьякон.

— Я взял да им поклонился.

Дьякон вздохнул и, сжав руку карлика, прошептал:

— Сказывай же, сделай милость, скорее, не останавливайся!

— Они посмотрели на меня и изволят князю Голицыну говорить по-французски: «Ах, какой миниатюрный экземпляр! чей, любопытствуют, это такой?» Князь Голицын, вижу, в затруднительности ответить; а я, как французскую речь могу понимать, сам и отвечать: «Господи Плодомасовой, ваше императорское величество». Государь обратился ко мне и изволят меня спрашивать: «К какой вы нации?» — «Верноподанный, говорю, вашего императорского величества». «И Русский уроженец?» — изволят спрашивать, а я опять отвечал: «Из крестьян, говорю, верноподанный вашего императорского величе-
ства». Император и рассмеялись. «Bravo, — изволили по-шутить,— bravo, mon petit sujet fidèle»,1 — и ручкой этот меня за голову к себе и пожали.

Николай Афанасьевич понизил голос и сквозь тихую улыбку, как будто величайшую политическую тайну, шепотом добавил:

— Ручкой-то своею, знаете, взяли обняли, а здесь... не-приметно для них пуговочкой обшлаги нос-то мне совсем чувствительно больно придавали.

— А ты же ведь ничего... не закричал? — спросил дьякон.

— Нет, что вы, батюшка, что вы? Как же можно от ласк государя кричать? Я-с, — заключил Николай Афанасьевич, — только как они выпустили меня, я поцеловал их ручку... что счастлив и удостоен чести, и только и всего моего разговора с их величеством было. А после, разумеется, как сняли меня из-под пальмы и повезли в карете домой, так вот тут уж я все плакал.

— Отчего же после-то плакать? — спросил Ахилла.


— Маленький, а как чувствует! — воскликнул в вос-торге Ахилла.

— Ну-с, позвольте! — начал снова рассказчик. — Те-перь только что это случайное внимание императора по Москве в некоторых домах разгласилось, покойница Мафра Андреевна начала всюду возить меня и показывать, и я, истицу вам докладываю, не лгу, я был тогда самый маленький карлик во всей Москве. Но недолго это было-с, всего одну зиму...

Но в это время дьякон ни с того ни с сего вдруг оглу-шительно фыркнул и, свесив голову за спинку стула, тихо заходал.

Заметив, что его смех остановил рассказ, он припод-нялся и сказал:

— Нет, это ничего!.. Рассказывай, сделай милость, Николаева, это я по своему делу смеюсь. Как со мною однажды граф Клыхович говорил.

— Нет-с, уж вы, сударь, лучше высказитесь, а то оять перебьете, — ответил карлик.

— Да ничего, ничего, это самое простое дело, — воз-ражал Ахилла. — Граф Клыхович у нас семинарский кор-

1 Браво, браво, мой маленький везищеданный (франц.).
посмотрел, я ему поклонился, а он говорит: «Пошел прочь, дурак!» Вст и весь наш разговор, чему я рассмеялся.
   — И точно-с, смешно, — сказал Николай Афанасьевич, улыбнувшись, стал продолжать.
   — На другую зиму, — заговорил он, — Вихорова генеральша привезла из-за Петербурга чухоночку Метту, варальшу еще меньше меня на полец. Покойница Марфа Андреева слышать об этом не могла. Сначала всё изволили говорить, что эта варальша не натуральная, а сие, будто опоная, но как приехали и изволили сами Метту Ивановну увидать, и рассердились, что она такая беленькая и совершенная. Во сне стали видеть, как бы нам Метту Ивановну себе купить. А Вихорша та слышать не хотела, чтобы продать. Вот тут Марфа Андреева и объясняют, что «мой Николай, говорят, умный и государь отвечал умел, а твоя, говорят, девчушка — что ж, только на вид хороша». Так меж собой обе госпожи за нас и спорят. Марфа Андреева говорит той: продай, а эта им говорит, чтобы меня продать. Марфа Андреева вскипят вдруг: «Я ведь, — изволят говорить, — не для игрушек у тебя её торгую: я её в невеселом на выкуп покупать, чтобы Николая на неё женить». А госпожа Вихорова говорит: «Что ж, я его и у себя женила». Марфа Андреева говорит: «Я тебе от них детей дам, если будет», и та тоже говорит, что и они пожалуют детей, если дети будут. Марфа Андреева рассердится и велит мне пропасть с Меттой Ивановной. А потом опять, как Марфа Андреева не выдержит, заедем и, как только они пойдут, сейчас и объявляют: «Ну слушай же, матьшка генеральша, я тебе, чтобы попусту не говорить, тысячу рублей за твою уродницу да». а та, как назло, не порох меня, а две за меня Марфе Андрееве предлагает. Пойдут друг другу набивать и набивают, и опять рассердится Марфа Андреева, вскрикнет: «Я, матушка, своими людьми не торгую», а госпожа Вихорова тоже отвечает, что и они не торгуют, так и опять велел нам с Меттой Ивановной пропасть. До десяти тысяч рублей, милостивые государь, доторговались за нас, а все дело не поднялось, потому что моя госпожа за ту дает десять тысяч, а та за меня одиннадцать. До самой весны, государь мои, так тянулось, и доложу вам, хотя госпожа Марфа Андреева была духа великого и неоскудимого,
и с Пугачевым спорила, и с теми государствами танцевала, 
но госпожа Вихорева ужасно Марфы Андреевны весь ха-
рakter перелопили. Скучают страшно скучают! И на меня 
всё начинают гневаться! «Это вот все ты, — изволят гово-
рить, — скоей-такой пентох, что девку даже ни в какое 
воображение ввести не можешь, чтоб она сама за тебя 
просилась». — «Матушка, говорю, Марфа Андреевна, чем 
же, говорю, патанчица, я могу её в воображение вво-
дить? Ручку, говорю, матушка, мне, дураку, пожалуйте». 
А они еще больше гневаются. «Глупый, говорят, глупый! 
только и знает про ручки». А я уже все молчу.

— Маленький! маленький! Он, бедный, этого ничего 
не может! — участливо объяснял кому-то из соседству 
дьякон.

Карлик оглянулся на него и продолжал:
– Ну-с, так дальше — больше, дошло до весны, пора 
нам стало и домой в Плодомасово из Москвы собираться. 
Марфа Андреевна опять приказали мне одеваться, и чтоб 
оделся в гнездованное платье. Поехали в Вихорьё и опять 
не сгоровались. Марфа Андреевна говорят ей: «Ну, хоть 
позволь же ты своей каракатице, пусть она хоть по-
ходат с Николашей вместе пред домом!» Генеральша 
на это согласилась, и мы с Меттою Ивановной по трогуару 
против скоп и гуляли. Марфа Андреевна, покойница, и 
этому радовались и всяких костюмов нам обоим нашли. 
Приедем, бывало, они и приказывают: «Наденьте нынче, 
Николаша с Меттою, пейзанские костюмы!» Вот мы оба и 
являемся в деревянных башмаках, я в козном и в шляпе, 
а Метта Ивановна в высоком чепчике, и ходим так пред 
домом, и народ на нас стоит смотрят. Другой раз велют 
одеться турской с турчанкой, мы тоже опять ходим; или 
матросом с матроской, мы и этих ходим. А то были у нас 
тоже медвежьи пальцы, те из коричневой фланели, вроде 
чехов сшиты. Всунут нас, бывало, в них, будто руку в 
перчатку или ногу в чулок, ничего, кроме глаз, я не видно, 
а на махаечках такие суконные завязочки ушками поде-
ланы, трепетать. Но в этих пальцах нас на улицу не по-
сылали, а велют, бывало, одеться, когда обе госпожи за 
столом кофе кушают, и чтобы во время их кофе на копре 
против их стола бриться. Метта Ивановна пресильная 
была, даром что женщина, но я, бывало, если им дам хо-
рошенько подножку, так они все-таки сейчас и селют, но
только я, впрочем, всегда Метте Ивановне больше поддавался, потому что мне их жаль было по их женскому полу, да и генеральша сейчас, бывало, а их защиту собаку болонку кличут, а та меня за голенишки, а Марфа Андреевна сердятся... Ну их совсем и с одолением! А то тоже покойницы заказали нам самый лучший костюм, он у меня и теперь цел: меня одели французским гренадером, а Метту Ивановну маркизой. У меня этакий кивер медведь, меховой, высокий, мундир длинный, ружье со штыком и т. д., а Метте Ивановне роб и охала большое. Я, бывало, ставу в дверях с ружьем, а Метта Ивановна с охалом проходит, и я им честно отдаю, а потом Марфа Андреевна с генеральшей опять за нас торгуются, чтобы нас женить. Но только надо вам доложить, что все эти наряды и костюмы для нас с Меттой Ивановной все моя госпожа на свой счет делали, потому что они уж наверное надеялись, что мы Метту Ивановну купим, и даже так, что чем больше они на нас двух этих костюмов надевали, тем больше утверждались, что мы оба ихние; а дело-то совсем было не туда. Госпожа генеральша Вихорева, Каролина Карловна, как были из немок, то они ничего этому, что в их пользу, не препятствовали и принимали, а уступить ничего не хотели. Пред самою весной Марфа Андреевна ей вдруг решительно говорят: «Однако что же это такое мы с тобой, матушка, делаем, ни Мишу, ни Гришу? Надо же, говорят, это на чем-нибудь кончить», да на том было и кончили, что чуть-чуть их самих на Ваганьково кладбище не отнесли. Зачали покойницы, жемчуж покрылись, на всех стали сердиться и вот минуты одной, какова есть минута, не хотят ждать: вынь да полож им Метту Ивановну, чтобы сейчас меня на ней женить! У кого в доме Светлое Христово воскресенье, а у нас тревога, а к Красной Горке ждем последний ответ и не знаем, как ей передать его. Тут-то Алексей Никитич, дай бог здоровья, уж и им это дело насолило, видят, что беда ожидает неминуемая, вдруг надумались или с кем там в полку из умных офицеров посоветовались, и дожили махом, что будто бы Вихоршина карлица пропала. Марфа Андреевна все, знаете, от этого легче стало, что уж ни у кого ее нет, и начали они беспрестанно об этом говорить. «Как же так, расспрашивают, она пропала?» Алексей Никитич отвечает, что жил украл. «Как? какой жил?» — все расспрашивают.
Сочиняем им что попало: так, мол, жил этакий каштановатый, бородой, все видели, взял да понес. «А что же,— изволят спрашивать,— зачем же его не остановили?» Так, мол; он из улицы в улицу, из переулка в переулок, так и унес. «Да и она-то, рассуждают, дура какая, что ее несут, а она даже не кричит. Мой Николай ни за что бы, говорят, не дали.» — «Как можем, говорю, сударыня, жить сдать!» Всему уж оны как ребенок стали верить. Но тут Алексей Никитич вдруг ненароком маленькую ошибку дал и, покажу сказать, перехитрил: намерение их такое было, разумеется, чтобы скорее Марфу Андрееву со мною в деревню отправить, чтоб это тут забылось, они и сказали маменьке: «Вы,— изволят говорить,— маменька, не беспокойтесь: ее, эту карлушу, найдут, потому что ее ищут, и как найдут, я вам. Сразу и отпишу в деревню», — а покойница-то за это слово и ухватились: «Нет уж, говорят, если ищут, так я лучше подожду, я, главное, теперь этого жида-то хочу посмотреть, который ее унес!» Тут, сударь мой, мы уж и одного квартирного вместе с собою лгать подрядили: тот всякий день приходит и врет, что «ищут, мол, ее, да не находят». Она ему всякий день сипенькую, а меня всякий день к ранней обедне посылает в церковь, Иоанну Воиславищу к молебен о сбехах ставшей рабе служить...


— Да-с, Иоанну Воиславищу.

— Ну так, брат, поздравляю тебя, совсем не тому святому служил.

— Дьякон! да сделай ты милость, сидь, — решил отец Савелей, — а ты, Николай, продолжай.

— Да что, батюшка, больше продолжать, когда вся уж почти моя сказка и рассказана. Едем мы один раз с Марфой Андреевной от Иверской божней матери, а генеральша Вириорова и хлоп на самой Петровке нам настречу в коляске, и Метта Ивановна с ними. Тут Марфа Андреевна все поняла я... поверите ли, государи мои, или нет, тихо, но горько в карете заплакали.

Карлик замолчал.

— Ну, Никола, — подогнал его протопоп Савелей.

— Ну-с, а тут уж что же: как приехали мы домой, они...

и говорят Алексею Никитичу: «А ты, сынок, говорят, выходишь дурак, что смел свою мать обманывать, да еще квартирного приводил», — и с этим велели укладываться и уехали.
Nikolai Afanasiyevich’s speech employs formal, indeed antiquated words and expressions, but at the same time is usually colloquial in syntax and word order. He resorts increasingly to просторечие expressions as he gets warmed up with his story. He has a flair for metaphor and his overtly straightforward account is not devoid of humor. His references to his “superiors” are always respectful, even though he has every reason to resent the treatment to which he was subjected. He does refer to his late owner with a shortened, colloquial form of her patronymic: “Marfa Andrevna,” rather than the full Andreyevna.

Just as Tuberozov used the plural in referring to his bishop and to Boyarinya Plodomasova, Nikolai also usually uses the “respectful” plural in referring to the tsar, to the boyarinya, her son, and other nobles. He does so usually, but not always, presumably because he sometimes simply forgets and uses the logical singular. Thus, when he describes answering Tsar Alexander I on page 142, line 3, he says ему, whereas later he uses им when he needs a dative pronoun. Likewise, in line 18 on page 142 he says that his owner, Marfa Andrevna, имела желание, whereas subsequently he usually puts the verbs and pronouns referring to her in the plural. As was mentioned earlier, it is impossible to translate this distinction effectively in English. Even in Russian, one gets the impression that Nikolai would normally use the plural but occasionally simply forgets. The best the translator can do is to have Nikolai adopt a respectful tone when referring to his social “superiors.”

Leskov also indicates the oral nature of the narrative by putting much of it in long paragraphs, one running to nearly three pages. The dwarf’s story is broken only by
occasional interruptions by Achilla or Savely. The long paragraphs give the passage an almost breathless quality as it progresses. In this instance, of course, the extremely long paragraph should be preserved in translation.

A few expressions may benefit from further discussion.

141 (34) со в Бозе почишим государем: Church Slavic, thus Biblical, for “with His Majesty (or the emperor), sleeping in God,” a common phrase in Orthodox cultures for a deceased person who has gone to heaven. Hapgood retains the expression: “with the late Emperor, now asleep in the Lord.” Mongault omits it entirely: “avec feu l’empereur.” The German language permits Luther to employ a literal translation: “mit dem in Gott enschlafenen Kaiser.” Since the phrase is not common in English, I would suggest the following: “with His Majesty, the late emperor, God rest his soul.”

142 (5) шельма Achilla’s use of this просторечие term contrasts with Nikolai’s formal, often stately language. Though its literal meaning is “swindler,” it was used as a jocular expression of affection. Hapgood does not translate it directly, simply saying, “Look at him …” Mongault has “Quel gaillard …”, and Luther translates it “Kerl.” I would suggest using “scamp” to make the clause read, “…what a scamp we have in our Nicky boy (Николавра) here!”

143 (4) Закхей-Мытарь “Zacchaeus the publican,” from Luke 19 1-6. The Biblical reference reads as follows in the authorized version of the Bible:

1. And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho.
2. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich,
3. And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, for he was little of stature.
4. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him; for he was to pass that way.
5. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house.
6. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.

In Biblical English, “publican” is a tax collector, not the keeper of a tavern or public house as is the case in British English today. But what struck Nikolai about the story was the fact that Zacchaeus was “little of stature” and had to climb a tree in order to see Jesus. Hapgood mistranslates the phrase as “Zacchaeus the Pharisee.” Both Mongault and Luther get it right.

143 (4)  цап-царап  A colloquial expression to indicate a sudden action. Hapgood translates it “I seized hold …” which is not quite right. Mongault omits the expression, but Luther renders it accurately as “hoopla.” I would suggest, “I up and climbed …”

143 (21-26)  лик ... зрак ... очи  These are Church Slavic and Old Russian words, used in poetry and, here, to add dignity to the description of the Tsar. Hapgood misses the poetic nuance by using “face” for the first two and “eyes.” Mongault translates them, respectively, “visage,” “yeux,” and “regard,” while Luther uses “Gesicht,” “Blick,” and “Blick.” English has no exact stylistic equivalents of these three words, but I believe that the enraptured quality of the words Nikolai chose can be suggested by appropriate combinations of adjectives and nouns. Thus, I would suggest something like “calm visage” for лик ... тихий, “kind (or gentle) countenance” for взрак ласковый, and “deigned direct his vision toward me and fix it on me” for изволили вскинуть на меня свои очи и на мне их и остановили.

143 (22-24)  да уж, знаете, на отчаяность, уж и думаю и не думаю, зачем я пред ними на самом на виду являюсь? The expression уж и думаю и не думаю is
an idiom expressing a state of uncertainty. Hapgood misses the point and also mistranslates отчаяность with her “I was already thinking, you know, in my despair, yet I couldn’t think why I should reveal myself to him, where he could see me?” (Hapgood obviously confused отчаяность with отчаяние; the former does not mean despair but rather is an unusual colloquial word for bravery, particularly irrational or reckless bravery.) Both Mongault and Luther are closer to Leskov’s meaning but their translations lose some of the flavor. Mongault: “Je ne songeais plus à me demander ce que je faisais là planté devant lui.” Luther: “in meiner Verwirrung denk ich schon gar nicht mehr daran, daß ich gleich seinen Augen sichtbar warden muß.” I would suggest: “…well, y’know, I was so confused that it didn’t cross my mind that it would seem audacious for me to be standing there in His Majesty’s plain sight.”

143 (28) я взял да им поклонился The use of взял да indicates a sudden or unexpected action. I would translate it, “I up and bowed to him.” (Note that the им is a plural of respect, applied to the tsar.)

145 (11) опоенная Dal’ labels опивать archaic and defines it as “давать пить лишнее, или вредное …,” giving someone too much to drink, or something harmful. In this instance it means poisoned so that her growth would be stunted.

146 (3) Скучают! страшно скучают! In this context, скучать means more than to be bored: he is suggesting that the boyarinya fell into an angry depression. Therefore, we need an expression different from the “bored” that Hapgood uses. Mongault translates it “Le chagrin la rongeait,” and Luther, “Sie war immer traurig und gelangweilt.” I would suggest: “She was distraught, downright miserable!”

каракатица

Literally meaning “cuttlefish,” каракатица was also employed in derogatory slang for a short-legged or bow-legged person.

Hapgood misses this, translating it simply “dwarf.” Mongault chose “moricaude,” which seems, inappropriately, to have racial overtones, since it means “dark-skinned.”

Luther translated it “Qualle” I would suggest something like “your runt,” or “your freak.”

вынь да положь

A colloquial expression for “right here and now,” or “without further ado.” Hapgood omits the idiom, while both Mongault and Luther translate its meaning without the idiomatic coloration: “à tout instant,” and “sofort.” Maybe “then and there” would convey the flavor.

насолило ... беда ожидает неминучая

As Nikolai’s narrative proceeds and becomes more emotional, his choice of words becomes less formal and stately and more colloquial. Both насолило (in this context) and неминучая are просторечие. While насолить means literally “to salt” something, its figurative meaning is to annoy or to cause harm. Неминучая means “unavoidable,” or “inevitable.”

Furthermore, the structure of this sentence, like others in the latter portion of Nikolai’s narration, suggests excited speech with tangential clauses separating the subject of the sentence from its conclusion.

The entire sentence reads:

Тут-то Алексей Никитич, дай им Бог здоровья, уж и им это дело насолило, видят, что беда ожидает неминучая, вдруг надумались или с кем там в полку из умных офицеров посоветовались, и доложили маменьке, что будто бы Вихоршина карлица пропала.

Hapgood translates it as follows:
And then Alexyei Nikititch,—may God give him health—who was already greatly vexed over this affair, suddenly had an idea, or took counsel with some of the clever officers of his regiment, and announced to his mama that Madame Vikhioroff’s dwarf had disappeared. [Note that she omitted the phrase что беда ожидает неминучая.]

Mongault translates the phrase Hapgood omitted, but adds nuances that are missing in the original text:

C’est alors que, craignant un malheur et fort ennuyé de toute cette affaire, Alexis Nikititch—que Dieu veuille lui accorder de longs jours!—se décida après mûres réflexions ou peut-être suivant les conseils de quelque malin camarade, à déclarer à sa mère que la naine avait disparu. [Note that вдруг надумались does not imply “mûres réflexions” but rather a sudden idea; also, by translating с кем там в полку из умных офицеров with “de quelque malin camarade” Mongault misses the irony and prolixity of the original.]

As has often been true in this study, Luther, of the three translators we examine, makes the most accurate rendition of this sentence:

Da kam Alexej Nikititsch—Gott schenke ihm Gesundheit und langes Leben, ihm selbst war die Sache schon lang ein Dorn im Auge, und er sah, daß sie böös auslaufen würde—er kam also auf den Gedanken oder irgendein kluger Offizier von seinem Regiment hatte ihm den Rat gegeben, der Frau Mutter mitzuteilen, die Wichiorowsche Zwergin sei verschwunden.

I would suggest the following: “But then, Alexei Nikitich, may God grant him health—being fed up with the whole affair and seeing that it was headed for a bad ending--either came up with the idea himself or else got it from one of those smart officers in his regiment, and so he reported to his dear mother that the Vihiorova dwarf had disappeared.”

148 (9) ненароком Colloquial for “accidentally” or “unintentionally.”

Hapgood omitted the word in translating the clause, “Но тут Алексей Никитич вдруг ненароком маленькую ошибку дал, или, пожалуй сказать, перехитрил: …” (Her translation reads: “But just then, Alexyei Nikititch suddenly made a little mistake, or, I may say, overdid his guilefulness.”) Indeed, ненароком is not necessary for the
meaning, but its function seems to make Nikolai’s speech more idiomatic at this point. Other translators used a colloquial phrase rather than the straightforward “made a little mistake.” Thus, Mongault has: “… fit un pas de clerc ou pour mieux dire mit une pincée de sel de trop dans la sauce.” Luther’s version is: “Aber da machte Alexej Nikititsch versehendlich einen kleinen Fehler, oder richtiger, er wollte es zu schlau anfangen.”

I believe the following would preserve the colloquial tone: “But then Alexei Nikitich suddenly slipped up with a small mistake, or one might say he was too clever by half.”

148 (20) подрядили Colloquial for “to hire” (for some special task—not regular work). In this context, “bribe” would not be inappropriate but since this is not the term Leskov uses, a more neutral word is probably best. Hapgood has: “…we arranged with a policeman to help us lie,” which seems entirely too anodyne. The translation should make clear that they paid the policeman. Mongault, like Hapgood, avoids direct mention of payment, but Luther has “einen Polizisten anstellen,” which is very close to “квартального … подрядили.” I would translate the passage: “we paid a policeman to join us in the lie …”

148 (21-22) она ему всякий день синенькую А синенькая was, in the colloquial of the day, a five-ruble note. “Every day she slipped him a fiver.”
“Well, ladies and gentlemen, it was shortly after we made peace with the French that I conversed with His Majesty the late Emperor, God rest his soul.”

“You talked with His Majesty?” several voices interrupted the narrator.

“Well, what did you suppose I meant?” the dwarf replied with the hint of a smile.

“Yes, indeed, I spoke with Emperor Alexander Pavlovich himself, and had the presence of mind to address him properly.”

“Ha, ha, ha! The Lord strike me dead, what a scamp we have in our Nicky boy here!” Deacon Achilla burst out in a roar of pleasure and, striking his chest with his hands, added, “Look at him, so tiny, just a bug, but he talked to His Majesty.”

“Calm down, Deacon, and sit quietly,” Tuberozov commanded.

Achilla waved his hand to indicate that he had nothing more so say and sat down.

The story began once more.

“It happens that the whole thing commenced with my conversation with His Majesty, the Emperor,” Nikolai Afanasiyevich said calmly. “My owner, Marfa Andrevna, had decided to visit Moscow when the city was expecting the Emperor following his world-renowned victory over Napoleon Bonaparte. I, of course—as was Madame’s wish—accompanied her on this journey. My late owner had already reached her advanced years and, as a result of her infirmity, had become quite querulous and
sensitive. For this reason it was dull in our house for the young ladies and gentlemen and my late owner saw this and it vexed her greatly. She vented her anger on her son, Alexei Nikitich, most of all because she thought that the household was not run in a way that attracted visitors and that it was because of this that folks neglected to call on her. So Alexei Nikitich obtained for my owner an invitation to a ball to which His Majesty was expected. Marfa Andrevna did not conceal from me the fact that this gave her great pleasure. She purchased expensive attire for herself for this ball and for me she ordered a blue tailcoat of English woolen from a French tailor, and gold buttons, and trousers—forgive me, ladies—a vest, and tie, all white, then a pleated shirt front and buckles for my shoes. She paid forty-two rubles for it all. “To please Madame, Alexei Nikitich prevailed on the hosts to allow her to bring me. The butler was instructed to take me to the winter garden in the mansion, opposite the ballroom which the Emperor was to enter, and to have me stand in the corner somewhere among the plants. And so, ladies and gentlemen, it was all done that way, but not quite. The butler placed me, you see, in a corner near a tree called a Chinese palm, and said for me to wait there and watch since I could see from there. But what could I see from there? Nothing. So, like Zacchaeus the Publican, y’know, I up and crawled to the top of this artificial stone, crawled up and stood under the palm tree. There was noise and glitter and music in the ballroom, but even though I was standing on the boulder under the palm, I couldn’t see anything except tops of heads and tufts of hair. Only suddenly, all these heads started moving, made a path, and His Majesty and Prince Golitsyn came straight into the winter garden out of the heat. And imagine, they were not only coming into the winter garden, but were walking
right over to that cool corner where I had been hidden. And, ladies, I froze stock still. I froze on that boulder and did not climb down.”

“Were you afraid?” asked Tuberozov.

“How can I explain? Not really afraid, but I was excited.”

“I would have run away,” said the deacon, unable to restrain himself.

“Why run away, sir? I cannot say that I felt no trace of anxiety, but I did not flee. Well, His Majesty kept coming closer and closer. I could even hear the way his boots went ‘reap, reap, reap,’ and I saw his calm visage, his kind countenance, and, y’know, I was so confused that it didn’t cross my mind that it would seem audacious for me to be standing there in His Majesty’s plain sight. Then His Majesty suddenly turned his head my way and I saw that he deigned direct his vision my way, and his eyes stopped right on me.”

“Well, well,” the deacon exclaimed, pale.

“I up and bowed to His Majesty.”

The deacon sighed, squeezed the dwarf’s hand, and whispered, “Well, go on. Out with it, please. Don’t stop now!”

“His Majesty looked at me and deigned to say in French to Prince Golitsyn, ‘Oh, what a miniature specimen! I wonder who owns him.”

“I saw that Prince Golitsyn was not able to provide an answer, and since I can understand the French language, I supplied the answer myself. ‘Madame Plodomasova, Your Imperial Highness.’

“His Majesty turned to me and deigned inquire, ‘What is your nationality?’

“ ‘A faithful subject of your Imperial Majesty,’ I say.
“The Emperor burst out laughing. ‘Bravo!’ he deigned to jest. ‘Bravo, mon petit sujet fidèle.’ And, he put his hand behind my head this way and pressed me to him.”

Nikolai Afanasiyevich lowered his voice and, smiling calmly, added, as if it were the greatest political secret, “He hugged me with his arm, you see, and here—he didn’t realize it, but his cuff link really hurt when it squeezed against my nose.”

“And you didn’t do anything—you didn’t cry out?” asked the deacon.

“No, sir. How could you think that? How could you think it? How could anybody object to His Majesty’s embrace? Well, “ Nikolai Afanasiyevich concluded, “as soon as His Majesty released me, I kissed his hand. … I was fortunate to have been honored, and so that’s all there was to my conversation with the Emperor. But afterwards, of course, when they took me down from under the palm and carried me home in the carriage, I wept the whole time.”

“Why in the world did you cry?’ asked Achilla.

“What a question! Can’t you understand? You cry when your emotions are aroused.”

“He’s a little one, but what feelings!” exclaimed Achilla in delight.

“Well, if you please,” the narrator resumed, “as soon as the story of that accidental encounter with the Emperor made the rounds of Moscow homes, the late Marfa Andrevna began to take me around and show me off everywhere and—I’m not lying, I’m telling the honest truth—I was the smallest dwarf in all of Moscow at that time. But that didn’t last long, just one winter …”

But at that point the deacon suddenly emitted a suppressed chuckle for no apparent reason and, hanging his head over the back of the chair, shook with muffled
laughter. When he noticed that his laughter had interrupted the narrative, he straightened up and said, “Oh, never mind! Do go on, Nicky boy. I was just laughing at something I thought of, the way Count Klenyhin once spoke to me.”

“Well, Sir, perhaps it will be better for you to tell us about it, or else you’ll interrupt again,” the dwarf countered.

“It’s really nothing. Not much of anything,” Achilla protested. “Count Klenyhin was inspecting us seminary students and I bowed to him and he said, “Clear out, you fool!” And that was the whole conversation I was laughing at.”

“You’re right, it really is amusing,” Nikolai Afanasiyevich remarked and continued with a smile. “The next winter, Madame Vihiorova, the general’s wife, brought Metta, a Finnish girl, from Petersburg, and she was a dwarf a finger shorter than I was. The late Marfa Andrevna could not bear to hear talk of it. At first, Madame kept saying that Metta was not a natural dwarf, but that she had been poisoned with lead, but then Madame paid a visit and saw Metta Ivanovna herself, and she was enraged that Metta was so fair skinned and perfectly proportioned. She began to dream about how we could buy Metta Ivanovna for ourselves. But this Vihiorova woman would not hear of selling her. And then Maarfa Andrevna told her, ‘My Nikolai,’ she says, ‘is a clever one who knows how to talk to the Emperor, but your girl,’ she says, ‘is just pretty to look at. So the two ladies began to quarrel over us. Marfa Andrevna would say, ‘Sell her!’ and Vihiorova would say that Marfa Andrevna should sell me. Marfa Andrevna would flare up with ‘I’m not bargaining with you for a toy,’ she deigned to say. ‘I’m buying her for a bride, to marry her to Nikolai. “But Madame Vihiorova would say, ‘I can just as easily marry him off in my household!’ And Marfa Andrevna would say, ‘I’ll give you their
children, if there are any.” But the other would say that she would give up the children if there were any. Marfa Andrevna would get angry and bid me to say farewell to Metta Ivanovna. But then Marfa Andrevna couldn’t stand it and would try again; we would call on them again and as soon as she entered their house, would announce, ‘Now, listen, my dear. Let’s not beat around the bush. I’ll save my breath and offer you a thousand rubles for your freak.’ But the other lady, like to spite her, didn’t throw off on me but just offered Marfa Andrevna two thousand for me. They kept bidding higher and higher and Marfa Andrevna would get mad again and shout, ‘I do not sell my people, my dear!’ and once again would order me to take leave of Metta Ivanovna forever. “Well, ladies and gentlemen, they bid us up to ten thousand rubles, but the stalemate continued because when my owner offered ten thousand for Metta, the other lady offered eleven for me. And it dragged on this way right up to spring, ladies and gentlemen, and I can report to you that even though Marfa Andrevna was a person of great and indestructible spirit who even held her own with Pugachev and danced with three emperors, Mme. Vihiorova utterly demolished Marfa Andrevna’s spirit. She was distraught. Downright miserable! And she even began to turn her anger on me! ‘This is all because you don’t have what it takes to win a gal’s affection. You should inspire her to beg for you herself.’ “‘Madame,’ I say, ‘Marfa Andrevna, my benefactor, how can I,’ I say, ‘make her dream of me? Please,’ I say, ‘let me kiss your hand, fool that I am.’ But that just riled her up, ‘Stupid!’ she says. ‘Stupid! He only thinks about kissing hands!’ And so I just shut up.”

“The poor little fellow! He sure couldn’t do anything about that!” the deacon blurted out to someone sitting near him.

The dwarf glanced at him and continued:
“Well, that’s not all; spring was coming and it was time to leave Moscow for Plodomasovo. Marfa Andrevna ordered me to dress up again, this time in a Spaniard costume. We went to Vihiorova’s and once more they couldn’t agree on a trade. So Marfa Andrevna told her, ‘Well, at least let your dwarf take a walk with Nikolai in front of the house.’ The general’s widow agreed to that, and Metta Ivanovna and I strolled on the sidewalk in view of the windows. Marfa Andrevna, God rest her soul, was pleased with this and had all sorts of costumes tailored for both of us. We would come to visit and Madame would give instructions: ‘Now Nikolai and Metta, you put on these French peasant costumes!’ And we would both appear in wooden shoes, I in a camisole and hat and Metta Ivanovna in a tall bonnet, and we would walk that way in front of the house and the people would stand and stare at us. Another time Madame would have us dressed as Turks and we would stroll about that way, or in sailor suits, and we would walk around that way. We also had some bear suits made out of brown flannel, sewed up like upholstery. They would stick us into them like you stick a hand into a glove or a foot into a stocking—nothing except our eyes would show—and they sewed some pieces of cloth on the top to flap around like ears. But they didn’t send us out in the street on these suits but would have us put them on when both ladies were served coffee, so we could wrestle on the carpet in front of their table as they drank it. Metta Ivanovna was very strong, never mind she was a woman, but I found out that if I tripped her she would always fall sprawling, but still I always gave way to her because I pitied her being of the feminine sex and besides the general’s widow would sick her lapdog on me to protect Metta Ivanovna and he would bite my shins and then Marfa Andrevna would get upset…I’d had enough of this competition between the two of them! But then my late owner ordered the
best costumes of all for us. I still have mine, good as new. They dressed me like a French grenadier and Metta Ivanovna like a marquise. I had a tall, bearskin hat, and a full uniform, a rifle with a bayonet and a sword, and Metta Ivanovna had a gown and a large fan and I would salute her and Marfa Andrevna and the general’s widow would start haggling over us again so we could get married. But I should explain to you that all these costumes and outfits for Metta Ivanovna and me were paid for by my owner because Madame truly hoped to buy Metta Ivanovna and even thought that the more she dressed the two of us up in costumes the more likely Metta Ivanovna would be hers. But it didn’t turn out that way. Madame Vihiorova, Karolina Karlovna, was of German stock and she never stood in the way of anything to her benefit and accepted everything, but would never give way on anything. Just before spring, Marfa Andrevna told her firmly, ‘So what are we doing, my dear? We’re getting nowhere. This really has to end somehow.’ And it was about to end with her being carted off to Vagankovo Cemetery. She withered away, her skin turned yellow with bile, and she began to snap at everybody: she didn’t want to wait a minute, we should just up and grab Metta Ivanovna right then and there so she could have us married straight off! In some houses people were celebrating Easter, the Sunday of our Resurrected Christ, but in ours, all was tense with dread. We expected the final answer the next week and had no idea how to convey it to her. But then, Alexei Nikitich, may God grant him health—being fed up with the whole affair and seeing that it was headed for a bad ending—either came up with the idea himself or else got it from one of those smart officers in his regiment, and so he reported to his dear mother that the Vihiorova dwarf had disappeared. Marfa Andrevna felt a little better, y’know, since nobody had Metta, but she began to talk about it non-stop. ‘How is it she disappeared?’
she would ask, and Aklexei Nikitich would say that a Jew had kidnapped her. “What! What Jew?” she would persist with her questions. He would spin a tale about her disappearance: ‘A Jew,’ he said, ‘swarthy, with a beard—everybody saw him—took her and carried her away.’ ‘Well, why didn’t they stop him?’ she would ask. And he claimed that the Jew ran from street to street, from alleyway to alleyway, and so got away with her. ‘And what a stupid thing she was,’ she would say, ‘to let herself be dragged away without even shouting. My Nikolai would never give in that way,’ she’d say. ‘Madame, how can one give in to a Jew?’ I’d say. And Madame began to believe all this like a child. But then Alexei Nikitich suddenly slipped up with a small mistake, or one might say he was too clever by half. His intention, of course, was to send Marfa Andrevna and me off to the country as soon as possible so that all this would be forgotten, and so he told his mother, ‘Don’t worry, mama,’ he deigned to say, ‘they’ll find that dwarf girl because they are searching for her, and I’ll send word to you in the country as soon as they find her.’ But my late owner seized on this. ‘No,’ she says, ‘if they’re looking for her it’s better I wait because more than anything I want to have a look at that Jew who carried her off.’ And then, ladies and gentlemen, we paid a policeman to join us in the lie and to come by every day and say that they were searching for her but hadn’t found her. Every day Madame would slip him a fiver and would send me to the early service at church to pray to John the Warrior for the return of a runaway slave. …”

“John the Warrior? Did you say you went to pray to John the Warrior?” the deacon interrupted.

“Yessir, to John the Warrior.”

“Well, brother, I congratulate you. You prayed to the wrong saint!”
“Deacon! Do us the kindness of sitting quietly,” Father Savely ordered, “and you, Nikolai, do go on.”

“There’s not much to go on with, sir, since my tale is almost told. Marfa Andrevna and I were coming back one time from the Chapel of the Virgin Mother of Iversk and there came Madame Vihiorova toward us in her carriage, smack on Petrovka Street, with Metta Ivanova there with her. Marfa Andrevna suddenly understood everything and … believe it our not, ladies and gentlemen, she broke down weeping, quietly, but bitterly.”

The dwarf fell silent.

“Well, Nikola, what then?” Archpriest Savely urged him on,

“So, what’s left? As soon as we got home, Madame said to Alexei Nikitich, ‘My dear son,’ she says, ‘you’ve really outdone yourself this time. Imagine, deceiving your own mother and suborning a policeman to boot!’ And with that she had our things packed and we left for her estate.”
CHAPTER EIGHT
HOW MUCH IS LOST?

No translation can convey all the nuances of an original literary text since no two languages contain words that provide precise equivalents of meaning and sound in every instance. As noted at the outset of this study, Vladimir Nabokov’s attempt to render Pushkin’s *Eugene Onegin* with semantic precision fails to convey the poetic quality of the poem. One would never guess from reading Nabokov’s translation that *Eugene Onegin* is a great work of art. And while prose confronts the translator with challenges different from poetry, it should be obvious from the excerpts quoted above that Isabel Hapgood failed to convey to the English-speaking reader what is special and most interesting about *Cathedral Folks*: Leskov’s use of non-standard language to bring alive and characterize the persons in his story.

William Edgerton, one of America’s preeminent Leskov scholars, once did a survey of fourteen translations of Leskov’s famous *Левша* (“Lefty,” or more often, “The Steel Flea,”) including seven in English, two in Franch, two in German, and one each in Croatian, Italian and Polish. He found many of these not to deserve close attention, being written in “standard literary prose.” As he explained, “I will omit them from discussion here for the same reason that I believe it is not worth while to discuss lyric poetry on the basis of prose translations, or the paintings of Monet on the basis of black

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and white reproductions.” He also explained that he selected Левша for his study “because this story presents in concentrated form all the main problems that confront the translator in all the other works of Leskov.” He then concentrates on Leskov’s use of “word deformations” in oral narrative, or skaz. Not surprisingly, he finds the best translations to be those in Slavic languages, since it is easier to imitate invented words in a closely related language than in one more distant from the original.

Edgerton concentrated attention on the translations of three such invented words: буретр (formed by replacing the first two syllables of барометр (barometer, which was stressed on the final syllable in Leskov’s time) with буре-, derived from буря (storm); мелкоскоп (formed by replacing микро- in микроскоп (microscope) with мелко- (small); клеветон (formed by replacing фелье- in фельетон (newspaper article) with the first part of клевета (slander). In Edgerton’s opinion, translations of such invented words “should correspond to the general sound pattern and grammatical structure of the words or phrases they echo,” with alliteration and rhyme playing an important role, but with “the one indispensable element … a parallel in the rhythmic pattern.” In his judgments, he also pays attention to whether the meaning is transparent in terms of folk etymology.

Using these criteria, Edgerton judged Julian Tuwim’s translation of The Steel Flea into Polish to be the best of the lot, but while Tuwim could use Polish roots to translate буретр (as burzometr), and мелкоскоп (as nikloskop), he had to find other means with клеветон, since no form of kleveta is used in Polish. (In this case, he settled for martwykul, a combination of the root of martwić (to annoy) with artykuł (newspaper
article). Except for the Croatian translator, Roman Šovary, who could also use Slavic roots to mimic the Russian, the other translators had much more difficulty. None translated all three terms as satisfactorily as Tuwim and Šovary. Many did not even try, but merely transliterated the distorted word or made up a word that lacked resemblance with Leskov’s either in sound or in meaning. Examples would be “Sturmnesser” as a German translation of буренетр (which renders the root meanings but cannot be confused with Barometer, as the story demands) and “stormometer” in English (used by Bernard Guerney and Walter Morison), with the same handicap. Edgerton professed to be embarrassed by his own translation, whether-meter, but considered Johannes von Günther’s Fahrometer an acceptable German translation since it rhymes with Barometer and one would check the weather before traveling.

Клеветон is an even greater challenge. The best solution Edgerton could find in English was to shift the emphasis from the article to the author and to combine columnist with calumny to make “calumnist.” In this fashion, he translated “…сейчас в публичейские ведомости описание, чтобы завтра же на всеобщее известие клеветон вышел” as “sent a description off to a calumnist in the Daily Telegraft so that he could tell everybody about it the very next day.” Note also that Leskov’s публичейские is a combination of публицистический (publicistic) and полицейский (police); Edgerton converted the general публичейские ведомости into the distorted title of a newspaper to give it an unsavory connotation. These solutions illustrate the possibility of finding ways other than the accurate rendition of a specific word to convey a similar overall impression in the target language.
Leskov himself had some doubt that stories like *The Steel Flea* could be rendered effectively in another language. In December, 1888, he advised his German translator not to attempt a translation of *Левша* since, “the general tone of a piece like that cannot be conveyed in another language.” However, Edgerton’s work and that of some of the other talented translators indicate that, while it is true that no translation can capture absolutely everything in a *skaz* like *Левша*, its general tone can be reproduced. In fact, *The Steel Flea* has turned out to be one of Leskov’s most popular stories outside Russia, even in faulty translations.

Many of the devices Leskov employed in *The Steel Flea* were foreshadowed in *Cathedral Folks*, but repeated use of invented forms such as буретр and мелкоскоп by the same person, so important in *The Steel Flea*, occurs seldom if at all in the earlier work. In *Cathedral Folks*, one is more often confronted with malapropisms (misuse of a standard word), mispronunciation (such as Deacon’s Achilla’s квакт), dialectical terms, archaic and specialized words, often combined in unusual ways. There are examples of all of these in the preceding discussion; normally, if one cannot find an approximation of the word or expression in question, other means can be found to convey the “general tone.”

Nevertheless, there is unquestionably a loss, no matter how talented and imaginative the translator. For example, dialectical terms: the native reader will automatically associate dialectical terms with a specific locale; this is impossible in a foreign language. The best that can be done in another language is to place the person in a corresponding social context—a peasant should use language common in rural areas, for

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99 Letter to Karl A. Greve (Grewe?), in Н.С. Лесков, Собрание сочинений., Москва: ГИХЛ, 1958, т. 11, стр. 405
example, but dialects of the target language must be avoided since they are associated with different localities.

A second area where it is impossible to convey the subtlety of Russian in English is in the Russian use of various forms of personal names. This problem was discussed at the outset of this study; the reader must judge whether suggestions made in translating the excerpts are effective. Most of the time the Russian forms were used when they would not confuse a reader, in the hope that even a reader who does not know Russian will in time grasp the most salient implications the various forms of proper names carry, but inevitably some nuances are lost. And, of course, when there seemed good reason, I made an exception, as when translating Varnava Prepotensky’s given name “Barnaby.”

Another, related, area is the use of diminutives in Russian, which is much more widespread than in English. It is often difficult to find a balance between ignoring the diminutive and giving it too much emphasis when the target language is one that has fewer words with naturally-sounding diminutive forms and makes more limited use of those that do exist.

There are some grammatical differences between Russian and English that are difficult or impossible to translate directly. For example, in Leskov’s story about Kotin Pizonsky, Pizonsky uses verbs in their feminine form, having grown up in a convent disguised as a girl. This inevitably has a comical effect which cannot be reproduced in English. (I personally witnessed a similar phenomenon when assigned to the American embassy in Moscow in the 1970s. Our chef was a tall, heavy-set Finnish man who picked up his Russian from the Russian maids. As a consequence, he normally used feminine forms of the verb (“Я сказала ей ...”) and used the diminutive forms of words
for foods and kitchen utensils. Russians would find this hilarious, but never interpreted the chef’s speech as a suggestion of homosexuality, which it was not.)

As discussed previously, there is no good way in English to translate the use of plural pronouns or verbs in the third person plural to refer to a person of higher social status than the speaker. When the speaker switches back and forth between the singular and plural for no apparent reason other than the author’s desire to make the speech sound spontaneous, this nuance is inevitably lost in translation.

Ultimately, these specific incongruities between English and Russian need not stand in the way of translations that convey the most important features of a work of literature. In many cases, there are “work-arounds” that compensate, at least partially, for the inexact fits that any two languages will exhibit when compared one to another word for word.

Up to now, we have concentrated our attention largely on the details of translation, examining how excerpts from Соборняне have been rendered in translations published in English, French, and German. It is now time to move from particulars to a general assessment. As for Hapgood’s English translation, no further elaboration of its deficiencies should be necessary. It is the least adequate of the three published translations we examined: clumsy in style, often inaccurate, it conveys very little of what Соборняне really is (to use John Nims’ term). Though occasionally Hapgood found a felicitous counterpart to one of Leskov’s expressions, these are exceptions buried in an avalanche of tone-deaf prose.

Mongault’s French, in contrast, reads very well. Too well, in fact, to display Leskov at his most characteristic. From the French translation one might take Leskov’s
style for an imitation of Turgenev’s. Mongault smoothed out the rough edges, ignored some of the most challenging features of Leskov’s prose, and leveled much of the individuality of the characters. Nevertheless, his translation can be read with pleasure and, while the reader may miss some of the most characteristic and appealing features of Leskov’s writing, he or she will gain a reasonably accurate feel for the mentality and life of the provincial Russian clergy in mid-nineteenth century and of some of the weaknesses of ecclesiastical and secular administration.

Arthur Luther’s German translation is the best of the three, on all counts. Though not without an occasional blemish (some noted above), Luther conveys to the German reader, on the whole, something very close to what Соборняне is. Luther is usually ingenious in imitating Leskov’s word play, and German allows him to reproduce some specifics of Russian grammar (such as the ты/вы contrast and the use of the “respectful plural”) denied the translator into English. In addition, his translation reads as smoothly in German as Mongault’s does in French. Like any translation, it could be improved here and there, but probably would not benefit from a complete re-write.

Whether the suggestions I have made for an English translation are appropriate and adequate is not for me to say; certainly they improve on Hapgood’s version, but that is not saying much. Having started thinking about ways to translate Соборняне more than thirty years ago, I find that every time I return to the text I want to revise what I have written previously. This translation, like—I believe—any translation—is a work in progress. Each new examination of Leskov’s prose, even familiar passages, is a voyage of discovery, with new treasures, previously unnoted, lying in wait. Leskov pushed the many resources of the Russian language to the limit—some have said past the limit—and
finding ways to impart his insights and his charm to persons who do not read Russian remains both a challenge and the source of great pleasure.
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