



Photo of Remizov, late 1930s.

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**Reminiscences: Alexei
Remizov in Paris (1923-
1957)**

Translated by Susan Schilling

The Remizovs arrived in Paris in the autumn of 1923. While living in Berlin they had dreamed of the move to Paris, a city which they already knew as they had spent several weeks there in 1911. At that time my mother, Olga Eliseevna Chernova, had become acquainted with them and thus commenced a long friendship between our family and the Remizovs.

Alexei Mikhailovich and Serafima Pavlovna loved French culture. No matter where they were, they always tried to probe the spirit of the people of the country in which they found themselves by means of that country's culture. Through his love for folktales—through his folktale nature, as he himself would say—Remizov had felt especially close to the spirit of German culture as reflected in the works of the German Romantics. Goethe was for him the height of heights.

Having settled in France, Alexei Mikhailovich wanted to get to know that country better. He and S. P. studied France's past as it was reflected in art, in written works, and in architectural monuments. They also strove to become acquainted with its contemporary life and language. A. M. had known French from his youth, but only from books. He spoke it with difficulty, groping for words. S. P. with her love and gift for language study zealously took up the study of French grammar. Despite the fact that it was difficult for them to get around—A. M. because of his nearsightedness and S. P. because of her morbid obesity—they vi-

sited important buildings, museums, and churches during the first years of their life in Paris.

In his attitude toward Western culture A. M. differed from many Russian writers who continued to live with exclusively Russian interests while in emigration, thinking only of their "return" and barely becoming acquainted with the country in which they had to reside. Remizov was always in touch with contemporary trends of Western thought and art.

In his youth A. M. had belonged to the revolutionary intelligentsia, but during his more mature years he was apolitical:

All wars are the same. As are revolutions. But historically just as there are wars, so there are revolutions. At the start they are for "liberation" in the name of "mankind's good"; but they continue as a sport—who will outspit whom—and finally there is no making head or tail of them. Yet none of this changes the situation one bit. What remains is "in the name of" to wit "the other"—"mankind's good"—while "I" has nothing to do with it. And did anyone ever gain any improvement even once from this "good"? Among the flowers and the dawns, under a sky shedding stars, man goes on suffering.

(Remizov, "Fate Without Fate" ["Sud'ba bez sud'by"], *The Potsherd* [Iveren], 1955)

At the time he settled in Paris when he was forty-six years old Remizov had no political views which would have connected him with one particular group of emigres or another. He looked on the contemporary scene without the blindness of political passion, quietly trying to be objective.

A. M. at the end of his life said to me that he would never have left Russia had it not been for S. P., who could not live in "perpetual oppression" and "without civil rights." "If I had been alone, I would have found someone, say some Red Army man, who would have fed me." Having left Russia, Remizov tried, as much as was possible from the information and newspapers which reached him, to scrutinize contemporary life in Russia in the hope of finding the first signs of a new culture and literature. Such an attitude toward present-day Russia made many of Remizov's former friends indignant. Unable to reconcile themselves they began to call Remizov a Bolshevik and to treat him with enmity.

When speaking in Berlin about their possible move to Paris, S. P. had talked about her friendship with the Merezhkovskys and her relations with Zinaida Nikolaevna Gippius (Merezhkovskaya). Z. N. liked S. P. a great deal and wrote her this poem:

To Serafima Pavlovna Remizova

Now stormy, imperiously rebellious,
Now quieter than the day's evening;
A dawn fiery and tender
Arose in the heavens for me.

Simple, quietly severe,
Like truth, direct and clear,
Pure like spring water,
Deep as a pure spring.

Let people, judging and measuring,
Understand nothing about us.
It is you alone—not people—I trust,
On us is God's judgment.

Their life, fussily melancholy,
Slips by in the name of no one.
I, dear one, love you eternally,
And all that you love is mine.
Z. Gippius

However, the meeting in Paris deeply disappointed both families; their relations were immediately spoiled on account of political reasons and they ceased to meet.

Upon arrival in Paris the Remizovs stayed temporarily with a very old acquaintance of A. M.'s who had known him in his youth. I remember that the first months of their life in Paris were difficult because of S. P.'s health; she had a bad attack of a liver ailment. Friends helped them find an apartment, and they settled on Chardon-Lagache Street in the neighborhood of Auteuil, where they spent the autumn and winter. In the spring they moved to another more suitable place in the same area on Mozart Avenue. The building was located in a small recess called the "Villa Flore." The Remizovs lived in this apartment about three years.

I like to pause when reminiscing about this period of the Remizovs' life, a period which it seems to me best reflected them and the atmosphere they created. Their small apartment was furnished and consisted of three rooms. A piece of green paper was fastened to the outside of the front door, and on it was written: "Green is hanging and singing"; and on a piece of yarn was attached a small contemporary coin with a hole. "Why does it sing?" A. M. would be asked. "Because the color green cannot help but sing."

The apartment was light and cosy. From the foyer one entered a small room with a divan and a large desk at which A. M. worked. Glass doors opened on a dining room with a square dining table. In front of the window in the yard grew a magnificent chestnut which was wreathed in spring with fluffy, white, candle-like blossoms. In the rooms the furnishings were beautifully arranged with A. M.'s special ability which, in his own words, he had inherited from his father, Mikhail Alexandrovich Remizov, a Moscow merchant of the second guild who had owned a haberdashery. In the right corner hung the icons. The large one in a pearl frame, "The Three Joys," was from Remizov's home; it was the one traditionally inherited by

the youngest in the family. The icon of the Holy Virgin had been received as a maternal blessing from S. P.'s mother. And the icon, "The Intercession of the Virgin," was the one with which the Remizovs had been blessed after their wedding. On holiday eves they would light votive candles which gave off a rosy light; it would be solemn and still in the room. Next to the wall stood S. P.'s small table: on it was a small Gospel. On the wall over the table to the left and right were hung "beads," embroidery or crochet work. Most of the fine collection of beaded items, the handiwork of grandmothers, aunts, and serf girls, had come from S. P.'s family home and was cherished by her. From the corridor a door opened into a bedroom with two beds covered with knitted wool blankets, the work of S. P., and into a kitchen in which A. M. and S. P. prepared meals in turn; they each had their own culinary specialties.

After several months in Paris the Remizovs felt at home in their new apartment. The whole tone of their lives became happier.

Those visitors who came to see the Remizovs—and one had to come in the evening, beginning at five o'clock—usually found A. M. at his desk. The desk was longish, of plain wood and decorated with black and red India ink by A. M. himself. On it were pens, penholders, pencils, a round ink pot, some paper, and a few manuscripts. During the last years of his life Remizov used notebooks with black oilcloth bindings. He wrote only on the right side; on the left he made corrections or additions. Usually he wrote three redactions, and sometimes four, of each work. Near a lamp made from a large champagne bottle which D. S. Mirsky had brought Remizov on one occasion sat a cloth gnome, a little man in a black cap with a sad and tender expression on its face—a *Feuermännchen*, the fire spirit; light and warmth emanated from it. Above the table three strings were stretched all the way to a corner where a hairy spider sat. Small toys were hung on the strings: animals and figurines, a little house from Bohemia, a little red heart with an inscription from Germany, shells, a pine cone, transparent dried-up fish skeletons—shamans might summon storms with their help—and a big-beaked bird; all of them were on their way to the spider: he would eat them.

A. M. usually occupied himself with drawing and calligraphy during the evenings. His penmanship was well-known. His calligraphic art was based on the study of Old Russian texts with which S. P. helped him. Whether more or less intricate, A. M.'s handwriting was always even and pleasant to the eye. At the same time A. M. made delicate graphic drawings which are very distinctive and lead us into his fantastic world. Human faces and animal figures are done on a background of abstract geometric figures, patterns, and flourishes. For the most part these drawings are done in ink on white paper; sometimes they are painted and the colors and forms are always unexpected.

During his childhood A. M. had dreamed of becoming an artist. In his

autobiographical book, *With Clipped Eyes* [*Podstrizhennymi glazami*] (1951), he relates how because of his extreme nearsightedness he was not capable of drawing from "nature" no matter how hard he tried. In his pictures the shapes of objects would come out as they appeared to his weak vision. In Remizov's drawings there remains something of his "first-perceived world." Remizov's drawings and inscriptions of the twenties and thirties were miracles of delicate graphics. A. M. put together albums from these drawings which illustrated his own works, or were based on some theme from other literary works or events, or contained portraits of acquaintances and writers. A. M. would put these albums up for sale, and his friends would make the rounds of affluent people, art-lovers, or simply people who wanted to help the needy writer. The sale of albums at times helped the Remizovs survive difficult periods.

I often visited the Remizovs in the evening with my sister Olga or together with her and my younger sister Ariadna. Usually A. M. himself opened the door with a smile and a greeting, and looking through his round glasses, with the inevitable question: "What has happened since we last saw each other?" We would enter his room and he would seat us on a narrow sofa near the table where he worked. If Serafima Pavlovna were not at home we would await her return from church or from a visit. A. M. called this time we spent with him "evenings of advent" and wrote on a snapshot of himself: "A Berlin and Paris remembrance, days and nights of advent, and in the spring fruit dumplings with cherries—Mozart-24-Paris 8." A. M. would write or draw while continuing the conversation begun with us in the entryway. Sometimes he would break off and turn to something else, most frequently to joking questions. In his words and jokes there was so much affectionate playfulness, so much laughter and attentiveness, that we sat enchanted and loved these hours of "advent" very much. Only rarely did A. M. talk about his childhood. I remember his story about two little dogs, Rozik and Lisik; he had always been terribly sorry for them. Someone broke Lisik's paw with a stone and the dog had suffered greatly; all his life A. M. remembered the feeling of sadness and pain that comes when one is powerless to help. Then S. P. would arrive, take off her coat in the entry, and come in and kiss each of us very tenderly and for a long time. My sister Ariadna was still quite a child. S. P. liked her Russian face very much and asked Ariadna to let her "touch her nose because it was Russian." A. M. would go silently back into the kitchen and reappear with a teapot. We would then go to the table which was covered with a beautiful tablecloth; the silver—from S. P.'s home—would be set, and tea would be poured into the crystal teapot from the Remizov house. A. M. himself usually poured out the tea which was always served with something sweet.

S. P., large and plump, ruled the table like a queen, solicitously entertaining everyone. She would begin to tell where she had been, whom she had met, and so on. S. P. had a passionate nature; upon returning home

after meeting people she was not always in a peaceful frame of mind. Often she was upset, sometimes indignant, over some injustice about which she had heard. A. M. would try to distract her and cheer her up, and she would calm down. She would ask about us and then the conversation would turn to some theme of general interest, often the Remizovs' recollections of the past, about dear St. Petersburg, about Blok, or about others. In 1924 when there was a flood in St. Petersburg just as there had been a hundred years before, we talked about it and, on one of these evenings A. M. read "The Bronze Horseman." S. P. would reminisce about her home, her relatives, her childhood in the Ukraine, her student years and exile to the provinces, and A. M.'s mother. Her stories were written down by Remizov and became the basis for the books *On a Field Azure* [*V pole blakitnom*] (1922), *Olya* (1927), and *In a Rosy Glow* [*V rozovom bleske*] (1952); according to A. M. these books should constitute a single work under the title *Olya*. The last chapters of *In a Rosy Glow*, entitled "Through the Fire of Grief" ["Skvoz' ogon' skorbei"] contain the story of Serafima Pavlovna's final days during the war and occupation of Paris. These moving pages belong to the most burning passages not only of Remizov's works, but of all Russian literature. On those evenings when there were no outside guests S. P. gladly showed people who were "close to her in spirit" her beads and memorabilia. Often she also told stories. She had a knack for storytelling and reciting poetry by heart. Her memory was exceptional; she knew by heart all of *Eugene Onegin* and "The Demon." By the end of her life, according to A. M., she "knew by heart all of Blok, Andrei Bely, Kuzmin's poem 'Alexei, Man of God,' and many ancient texts and apocryphal legends." Her manner of reciting poetry was unusual; she herself said that she recited in imitation of Blok's manner: in a monotone, without stressed expression, slowly and very meaningfully. Her recitation was very impressive.

Morning at the Remizovs' were devoted to work; A. M. wrote and S. P. prepared for lectures. She taught Slavic and Russian paleography at the Ecole des Langues Orientales in Paris for fifteen years (1924-1939). "First among her students by his own admission was Alexei Remizov (by education a naturalist and mathematician)." She had books, albums, and material for this instruction by Shlyapkin, Tikhonravov, and Veselovsky that she loved to show and explain. Subsequently, after S. P.'s death, A. M. had to sell these books.

Usually there were no visitors before evening. I had occasion to drop in on the Remizovs on business in the mornings. A. M. feared everything, and it was necessary to accompany him when he had to go somewhere and make himself understood, for example, to police headquarters for renewing papers such as the foreigner's residence permit. On the street a feeling of fear would seize A. M., but, suddenly making up his mind, he would quickly cross the street with a brisk step and without conversing. He spoke French, but in conversation in an office he would become flustered,

search for words and not say what he had intended. When we had returned home safely S. P. would say to me: "Thank you, gray wolf."

During the years when he lived on Mozart Avenue A. M. wrote one of his most significant books: *Russia in the Whirlwind* [*Vzvikhrennaia Rus*], a chronicle of the first years of the revolution which he had begun while still in Russia. Remizov found a new form and language for this book, which is a story of the revolutionary period as perceived through everyday occurrences and small events, including conversations on the street, purchases in stores, street impressions, demonstrations, rumors, stories of friends, legends circulating around the city, and echoes from the villages. Dreams make up a large part of the text. Various people including soldiers pass through the stories; the image of a Russian woman is presented: an old woman with a "white" heart, a representative of the Russian people. Along with chance encounters there are those with literary friends: Prishvin, Ivanov-Razumnik, Blok, Berdyaev, and Andrei Bely. Included also are narratives about Blok—Blok's death coincided with the Remizovs' departure from Russia—and about Dostoevsky. Passages of great depth alternate with humorous stories of everyday life in this "time of the whirlwind." The revolution revived the memory of revolutionaries of previous years whom A. M. had known: Vera Figner, Kalyaev, and Savinkov. In the very last years of his life Remizov had wanted to write "about the Russian revolutionaries." He did not believe in the possibility of a revolution changing anything for the better in human life. But he knew the purity and heroism of the Russian revolutionaries, who had struggled against the autocracy, and he considered them a unique phenomenon in the world as far as sacrificial denial of self is concerned; they had sacrificed not only themselves and their own lives, but also their moral sense, turning to murder for the sake of serving the unfortunate.

In 1947 A. M. wrote on a copy of *Russia in the Whirlwind* given to my sister Olga Andreeva: "I wrote this book as a prayer, my confession to Russia. Before me was the legend, the image of Old Russia, and the living reality of Soviet Russia; I bid farewell to the past, praising it, and I have lived, am living and will live with the new. And there is revolution in this book: the storm, the whirlwind—it was necessary to defend oneself in order to secure one's place on earth and not be torn apart or crushed, and to be powerful and strong. Alexei Remizov 8/7/47." In those postwar years A. M. had hopes for a new dawn in Russia and in Russia culture.

Russia in the Whirlwind was published in 1927. The two daughters of composer Sergei Rachmaninov provided funds as the publisher "Tair"—Tatiana and Irina. In 1930 "Tair" published a new edition of the book *Sunwise* [*Posolon*], a collection of tales, songs and games, poetic works in prose, inspired by Russian folklore from ancient times—A. M.'s favorite

book.

During these same years Remizov wrote *Along the Eaves* [*Po karnizam*] which was published in 1929 in Tallinn. In it Remizov recalled his brothers' sleepwalking; they would get up in the night and walk along the eaves. "I am not a sleepwalker, but my fate was like sleepwalking," wrote A. M. All his life he lived in "other dimensions." In this book Remizov also discussed E. T. A. Hoffmann, whose magical world was both dear and close to him. The stories of this book are written on two planes: supernatural phenomena occur against a background of realistic events.

In a coal box under the kitchen stove Remizov found a dry branch which was similar in form to a human being with arms and legs. This was a materialized Spirit [*dukh-Esprit*]. A. M. hung it on the wall against a silver background and told stories about it. At about the same time a package arrived from Spain. One of the Remizovs' friends had sent them a cuckoo clock like the one they had had in St. Petersburg. Until the end of Alexei Mikhailovich's life the cuckoo clock hung in his various apartments. In his last apartment on Boileau Street a room even came to be called the "cuckoo room." Life passed by to the accompaniment of the ticking and cuckooing of the clock as the cuckoo came out of its little house to mark the hours.

All who were lucky enough to hear Alexei Mikhailovich Remizov's reading from a platform never forgot it. A. M. had a rather low, pleasant voice. The strength of this voice which filled the Lutèce Hotel's hall was startling in view of Remizov's slight stature and hunchbacked figure. A. M. read without a microphone. His skill at reading was incomparable. It was very expressive without external effects, extra stress or intensification. He resorted more frequently to lowering his voice and pausing. Remizov's reading created a great impression on his audience and caused those who were present to listen with bated breath. Even those for whom Remizov's art was incomprehensible, even inimical, listened with admiration. Excerpts from Russian classics that were well known to everyone were listened to as if for the first time. Every word came to life and was given its full resonance and a new meaning. A. M. loved Russian literature and joyfully "revealed" to his audience Pushkin ("The Tale of the Fisherman and the Fish," "The Gypsies"), Lermontov's prose, Tolstoi, Turgenev, Leskov, Pogorelsky's less well-known or forgotten works, Veltman, and Sleptsov. Also included were the most "penetrating" passages from Dostoevsky and Gogol—these were his favorites. In his autobiographical book *With Clipped Eyes* Remizov recalled how he, who was used to the pale northern sky and to restrained prose (in the "French" manner), had in his youth "embraced with delight Gogol's high-flown words in the silver of their ornate Polish finery," as well as the "terrible melancholy of their Ukrainian song." During the course of long years Remizov studied Gogol's work—"he had caught 'Gogolitus'." Near the end of his life he wrote *The*

Fire of Things: Dreams in Russian Literature [*Ogon' veshchei—Sny v russkoi literature*]. In it in addition to dreams there is commentary on this most enigmatic Russian writer and his strange fate.

Included among the pages devoted to Gogol in this book is a scene in which Remizov ostensibly sees himself present at the:

old, moss-covered church where the crazed philosopher Khoma Brut was not reading, but howling and screeching instead for three nights over the young-lady-turned-witch, his voice breaking as he tried to dispel his dread, but that dread bound him to the guilt that confronted him when she looked up with closed eyes. From beneath the lashes of her right eye there fell a tear and he discerned it clearly on her cheek . . . yet it was not a tear but a drop of blood.

During his reading A. M. emotionally relived "Vij" and his agitation was communicated to his listeners. A chill went down their spines when Remizov summoned with his voice the image of the old-woman-turned-witch. There is the philosopher flying by on her, and she no longer is an old hag. Everything is covered with mother-of-pearl moonlight; a silvery mermaid splashes in the water. They fly over the land; the grass bends, and in it the crickets chirp. Remizov with his voice and the rhythm of his reading communicated all of Gogol's poetry and the charm of its magic. I think no one ever read Gogol like Remizov—his audience was bewitched.

People listened greedily. A sea breeze, the hermits are running across the sea to ask a forgotten word from a prayer: "You are three, we are three . . ." ("The Three Hermits" by Leo Tolstoi). The deep bow of a mother before her son under the slow striking of a bell (*The Raw Youth* by Dostoevsky). From Turgenev Remizov selected Lukerya's dream in "The Living Relic": she dreams she is reaping, but in her hand in place of a sickle the moon gleams.

A. M. read aloud from his favorite works. He believed that it was not difficult to read loudly: it was not at all necessary to raise one's voice in an effort to force out a sound; one need only breathe in.

The second half of a literary evening would be devoted without fail to a reading of his own works. "Petushok" comes to mind: Petka and his grandmother go on a pilgrimage. Or Olya's arrival in Mezheninka: "Oh, how unfortunate that camel hair already has gone out of style. Soon the shawl and veil will be hidden in the closet," intoned Alexei Mikhailovich. From *Noises of the City* [*Shumy goroda*], *Russia in the Whirlwind*, "The Young Lady of the Cross" [*Krestovaia baryshnia*], and "The White Heart" [*Beloe serdtse*] there is the image of the Russian granny, from *Sunwise* the arrival of a monk in the spring with a green sprig. After noisy salutations and ovations the public went away touched and calmed, having forgotten the arguments and differences of opinion with which life in emigration in Paris was so full.

The Remizovs and their friends prepared a long time for these readings. They chose a program of readings and rented a hall, often in the

Lutèce Hotel. Tickets had to be printed up and, most importantly, distributed. Using lists selfless friends—for the most part women—made the rounds of the well-to-do, devotees of Russian literature, or simply people who wished to help a needy writer.

Usually everything was wonderfully organized and all went smoothly and successfully in all respects. However, I remember one occasion when there was a hitch. A. M., who gladly gave away free “apes’ tickets” [“*obez’yan’i bilety*”] to poor friends and indigent bohemians, had given out too many. The large hall at the Lutèce did not have enough seats for the members of the public who had paid for their own expensive tickets. The incident was quickly resolved: more chairs were brought in. For a long time after that evening the main organizers chided A. M. about his excessive generosity.

S. P. would sew a new dress especially for the evening; A. M. liked black wool best of all. Far in advance S. P. would begin to worry and get excited. All her time was spent in expectation of the evening. Their friends and acquaintances all helped in whatever way they could. The young, with white bows, were ushers for the evening and seated the public as it arrived. My role consisted of “protecting” S. P., of being her bodyguard, not leaving her for even a minute, and holding her hand during the reading.

In my correspondence I found an old letter from my friend Marya Isaakovna Barskaya in which a trip to an evening reading by Alexei Mikhailovich was recalled:

That moment arises clearly for me, the one when we, i.e., the Remizovs and the whole Chernov¹ family, were preparing to leave for the literary evening in the Gaveau Hall—the preparations more closely resembling those for a wedding. S. P. withdrew into her room, A. M. into his and with him the young men: Vadim Andreev, Daniil Reznikov, and Vladimir Sosinsky; they helped him dress. S. P. appeared in a dark blue dress with beautiful embroidery on the collar. With deft hands Natasha pinned on the carnations, a dark pink—her color. She looked like a large doll with her dark blue eyes and bewitching smile. We fussed around her. Someone asked her about something and she answered: “Don’t bother me—I’m upset!” On me, a new member of the group, this all had a special effect: it fascinated me. Then A. M. appeared in a dinner jacket and after him came his retinue (“all daring, handsome men” [“*vse krasavitsy udalye*”]). Someone called for two taxis and we finally were off. All this was unusual, because everyone was terribly poor, and I do not know to this day who paid for the flowers, the taxis... Then everything seemed to pass away, to disappear, and I heard his voice: “Right by the deep-blue sea...” [“*U samogo sinego moria...*”]. “A magician and sorcerer,” was heard around the hall.

After the literary evening life became easier for a while. The Remizovs quickly paid the rent on their apartment (due every three months), paid back loans, and bought books and specialty items at a Russian store. Such a store, Rami, was nearby. The owner’s two daughters—their nickname

was “The Birds”—used to come by the Remizovs’ apartment, and S. P. was very affectionate with them.

However the money quickly disappeared, and again the problem of survival would arise. M. I. Barskaya recalled:

Time passed, and the Remizovs invited me over. I was nervous and felt much like those people who found themselves before Leo Tolstoi. No one was visiting the Remizovs—it was not very festive because of hard times. They were without funds and the rent was due... With his arch smile A. M. showed me some albums of drawings all done by him. The drawings were “splendidly prepared”! They must be sold; everything depended on that... With these albums I started off to see rich acquaintances, and I succeeded in selling quite a few. I recall with what reluctance the philanthropists bought these most unusual drawings.

Literary fees were very low and could not possibly support the Remizovs materially. Alexei Mikhailovich worked on a great number of Russian journals and newspapers outside of Russia in Paris and other cities and countries where there were Russian emigre centers: *Contemporary Annals* [Sovremennye Zapiski], *The Will of Russia* [Volia Rossii], *The Link* [Zveno], *Days* [Dni], *The Latest News* [Poslednie Novosti], *Illustrated Russia* [Illustrirovannaia Rossiia], *Our Light* [Nash Ogonek], *The Chimes* [Perezvony], *The Russian Echo* [Russkoe Ekho], *Our Own Ways* [Svoimi Putiami], *Moscow*, and many other publications.

In 1925 Remizov became friendly with a group called the Eurasians, which was headed by Prince Dmitry Petrovich Svyatopolk-Mirsky and Pyotr Petrovich Suvchinsky (together with Prince N. Trubetskoi and P. Savitsky). Remizov had known Svyatopolk-Mirsky already in Russia. Subsequently A. M. thought highly of Mirsky’s history of Russian literature which was published in English. “Once fate brought his father, then the Penza governor, and me together. Something quite ordinary happened, an unexpected absurdity: his father asked me if I liked music, and for my ‘yes’ he let me live under surveillance in Penza rather than sending me off to some place like Chambary or Narovchat.” In the notebook where A. M. expressed his admiration for S. P., he says of D. P. Svyatopolk-Mirsky that:

[the prince] was very strange with a face like a wolf’s. He became a Bolshevik out of snobbery and went back to Russia. What else he might do is hard to say. Anything can be expected of him, right up to his entering a monastery. At one time he wrote poetry, then criticism. Like P. P. Suvchinsky he never turned me away (as a writer); on the contrary, he did a great deal of good for me, maybe out of “contrariness.”

The Remizovs had become acquainted with P. P. Suvchinsky in Berlin:

I liked P. P. on first sight in Berlin. It was nice to converse with him about church singing. He was completely immersed in it. And he was the soul of *Versty*; he never

pushed me aside as a writer. When he appeared, overflowing with Eurasianism, there was something out of Russian history in him. His ideas would flame up and sparkle. The followers of Schelling in the twenties were like that, and later the Hegelians; I would not say the same of the "Marxists" who were very precise and hopelessly "realistic": after all, there is ardor in an eternal idea.

In 1926 the splendidly printed first issue of the journal *Versty* appeared "under the editorship of Prince D. P. Svyatopolk-Mirsky, P. P. Suvchinsky, and S. Ia. Efron² with the close participation of Alexei Remizov, Marina Tsvetaeva, and Lev Shestov." The aim of the journal was to point out what was best and most lively in Russian literature in Russia and abroad. In the journal there were portraits of Boris Pasternak, Marina Tsvetaeva, Alexei Remizov, Lev Shestov, and Igor Stravinsky. Remizov's work was allotted a great deal of space ("they never turned me away at *Versty*"). There were legends (from the book *Nicholas the Miracle-Worker [Nikolai Chudotvoretz]*, published later by YMCA Press), literary texts from Russian chancery documents of the seventeenth century, a rewritten version of the *Life of the Archpriest Avvakum Written By Himself*, and a memorial to Vasily Vasilievich Rozanov, *Verily [Voistinu]*. There were interesting essays on literature, history, and music in the journal; Tsvetaeva's *Epic of the Mountain [Poema gory]* and Pasternak's *Potemkin* also appeared. Alexei Mikhailovich especially liked Selvinsky's poetry. He read his "Gypsies" ["Tsyganskie"] magnificently, scanning and singing in the gypsy manner. Soviet literature was represented by Artyom Vesoly and I. Babel.

In 1924 Remizov first came across Babel's story "Salt" which had been republished in some foreign newspaper. This was completely new in A. M.'s opinion, and he really liked it. I recall how at this time the four of us—my mother, my sisters, and I—went to visit the Remizovs. A. M. seated us on the sofa and read "Salt" with great animation and enthusiasm as if it were a Greek epic. This reading made a strong impression on us. In Remizov's opinion the tone of the story demanded such a reading. I have always regretted that when he visited Paris Babel did not meet Remizov or hear him read. Much later when Khrushchev was in power I met Vsevolod Ivanov on a tourist train. We spoke about Remizov whom Vsevolod Ivanov remembered and of whom he spoke very highly.

Translations of Remizov's writings began to appear more frequently in countless French literary journals and newspapers (the most famous: *Les Nouvelles Littéraires*), as well as in others (in Belgium and the USA). Several of Remizov's books were published in different languages. In France there were: *In a Field Azure [V pole blakitnom]* (1927) and *Sisters in the Cross [Krestovye sestry]* (1929). The latter book came out in another edition under the title *Burkov's House [Burkov dom]* with a preface by Romain Rolland. In England and America there appeared translations of *The Clock [Chasy]* and *The Fifth Pestilence [Piataia iazva]* (1924, 1927,

1929); in Czechoslovakia: *Sisters in the Cross* and *The Pond [Prud]*; in Italy: *Sisters in the Cross* (1930) and a book of tales (1927).

The Remizovs gradually got used to Paris. Their circle of acquaintances and friends grew, and Remizov attracted beginning writers. He was glad that a young generation of emigre writers was beginning to develop, and he willingly worked with them. However, on the subject of literature he could not be lenient. He criticized, taught, and most importantly corrected their works according to his own manner. There would be little of the original author left. For this reason a majority of the beginners, fearing too great an influence from Remizov and wishing to maintain their own voices, soon drew away from Remizov.

On the subject of Remizov's teaching I might name among the oldest of Remizov's students first of all A. N. Tolstoi. In his book of memoirs Iosif Georgievich Chapsky described how on meeting and talking with A. N. Tolstoi during the war years in Tashkent Tolstoi had told him directly that "if he knew anything about the craft of writing, then for that he was indebted to Remizov."

M. Prishvin was also one of Remizov's pupils, although in the post-Revolutionary years he avoided speaking about it. In a book of stories by Prishvin from his later years I came across a small note: "It happened that Remizov once asked me to take some books to A. N. Tolstoi." That was how Prishvin and Tolstoi came to meet. In these biographical notes ("Road to a Friend" ["Doroga k drugu"] in *The Young Guard [Molodaia Gvardiia]*, 1957) Prishvin does not mention Remizov further. In the margin of a book by Prishvin that belonged to Remizov there are some words dictated by A. M. (he was in bed not long before his death): "Shishkov, Pilnyak,³ Alexei Tolstoi—they were not afraid. M. M. was easily frightened." A. M. corresponded with Pilnyak. The Serapion Brothers group was organized with Remizov's blessing. He told me that he had christened the group the Serapion Brothers after E. T. A. Hoffmann whom he liked very much.

In 1924 the young writer Vladimir Vasilievich Dixon appeared on Mozart Avenue. He occupied a large place in the Remizovs' life during these years. Twenty-five years old with a pleasant appearance, he was Russian on his mother's side and American on his father's. Dixon worked at the Singer factory and had some means. He also wrote poetry and prose in Russian, loved everything Russian, often visited on Mozart Avenue, and soon became close to the Remizovs. S. P. impressed him with the depth of her knowledge of Russian culture. She had known Alexander Blok personally and talked about him. Little by little she came to wield a great spiritual influence over Dixon. He began to go with her to church, wishing to "believe as she did." Dixon admired Remizov's art; with his own funds he published *Olya* (this book consists of three parts: *In a Field Azure*,

Dolia, and *With a Fiery Maw* [*S ognennoi pastiu*]). This book came out under the imprint of the publisher Vol. The head of Vol was S. P. under the "supervision" of Alexei Mikhailovich. A collection of poetry and prose, *Leaves* [*List'ia*], by V. Dixon with a preface by Remizov was published in the same manner.

After about two years Dixon went to America and got married there. Upon returning from America in 1929 he fell ill with appendicitis and died from a pulmonary embolism. The Remizovs grieved for him a great deal. Some time after his death Dixon's widow arrived in Paris and began to demand money from Remizov for the books published by her husband. Not being well informed about Russian affairs, she imagined that the publications should have brought in some income, whereas in fact Dixon had given away and sent out his books for free to individuals and organizations as was the practice among the emigres. The Remizovs were in a very uncomfortable position. The tragic death of Mrs. Dixon's lawyer in charge of the matter—he missed his step in getting off a subway and was run over—put an end to that difficult affair.

During these same years the Remizovs were visited by another beginning writer, Ivan Andreevich Shkott. With great difficulty he had reached Western Europe and then Paris. In Soviet Russia he had been sent to the Narym Territory and then had escaped from there. He had published a book, *Boys and Girls* [*Mal'chiki i devushki*] (memoirs about a Moscow high school [*gimnaziia*]). A. M. considered him intelligent and talented, and he liked his stubborn "English" character. Shkott wrote prose using the pseudonym Boldyrev. Shkott had a very hard life; he earned a living by means of physical labor as a freight-handler at a train station. Perhaps as a result of a heart attack he started to lose his hearing and grew despondent. He committed suicide by taking an overdose of barbiturates. Alexei Mikhailovich wrote several moving pages about him "In Memory of Boldyrev-Shkott" ["Pamiati Boldyreva-Shkota"] (in the unpublished book *Petersburg Gully* [*Peterburgsky buerak*]).⁴

For some reason one evening my sister and I brought along our friend Prince Andrei Vladimirovich Obolensky. The Remizovs liked him and he began to visit them often. His nicknames were "The Wanderer" and "The Silent One of the Obolensky Doctrine." The features of his face were reminiscent of Ivan the Terrible. He remained a friend of the Remizovs until the end and visited them during the difficult moments of the German occupation when a majority of their friends had fled Paris.

I remember from those years the young poet, Dmitry Alexeevich Shakhovskoi, who often visited the Remizovs. They liked him, and he elicited a general fondness. Shakhovskoi went to Belgium and began to publish a journal, *The Loyalist* [*Blagonamerennyi*]. Remizov and other writers of the older generation willingly sent their works there. Unfortunately they did not take into account the "good intentions" of the

editorial board, and often introduced a spirit of inimical polemic into the journal. Marina Tsvetaeva attacked G. Adamovich, and the journalistic polemic became a personal matter. The heartily distressed editor had to cease publication of the journal. Later D. A. Shakhovskoi became a monk, taking the name Ioann, and was appointed bishop of San Francisco.

Konstantin Vasilievich Mochulsky, a young assistant professor at St. Petersburg University, was a frequent guest at the Mozart Avenue apartment. He often gave lectures on Russian literature. He was well-educated, always cordial, very interested in S. P.'s teaching, and attended her lectures.

Among the writers of the older generation A. M. had a longstanding friendship with Lev Isaakovich Shestov. A. M. valued him highly and liked him very much. Shestov was the only person with whom Remizov used the informal form of address in Russian [*ty*]. Shestov's philosophy was close to A. M.'s. He told how in their youth they had sought each other out as readers:

... In our "bitter" literary fate there were similarities: both of us were lacking a "refuge." There was the unvarying editorial reply "not suitable" or the delicately stated "we have no room".... Then Berdyaev, who was liked and wanted by all, introduced us.... At a literary meeting Berdyaev led me somewhere downstairs and suddenly I saw: behind a desk under a lamp... a person was sitting. Taking off his pince-nez he stood up, and he seemed to me to be very tall with very large hands—of course: "Lev Shestov!" Indeed it was Shestov. "Birds of a feather flock together," he said, and his deep blue eyes looked at me. "A person," I am speaking of the human world, "fails precisely because of his dull 'reasonableness' and his cold 'economicalness.'" To realize that this is so one need not look about in order to feel what is being done all around, what hopeless grief is being spread throughout the world, in this world where judgments are made by default, by theoretical programs, and where no one listens to real, quivering life. Shestov's "madness"—the "apotheosis of groundlessness"—was a challenge directed at that soulless machine quality in life.

At the Sorbonne in 1925 Shestov gave a series of lectures devoted to Pascal. My sister and I attended those lectures. The Remizovs were always glad when we managed to go to interesting lectures or literary evenings. My duty afterwards was to give the Remizovs a detailed account of the evening. They wanted to keep up with everything that was going on in the Russian community of Paris. I cannot forget one of Shestov's lectures. He gave a long paper on a topic that disturbed him: the conflict between reason and belief. When Shestov finished, F. A. Stepun came forward as an opponent. He approached the topic in a light-hearted manner: "Why create a dramatic conflict?" To Stepun reason appeared in the guise of a small, blue-eyed boy whom "one patted on the head as one passed by...." Stepun had a speech impediment: he pronounced "l" as "r". Shestov rose and we saw before us an enraged, fulminating Biblical prophet.

Lev Isaakevich was solicitous in his treatment of the Remizovs in their materially difficult circumstances. He tried to help them and every year

succeeded in securing the means for S. P. to take a course of treatments in Vichy—she suffered from a liver ailment. Shestov continually preached economy and advised them to find a less expensive apartment. The Remizovs childishly were angered by his advice: “The ‘Philosopher’ is a deep thinker, and while he can see into the distance very well, he sees poorly up close.” Several years later when Shestov died, A. M. wrote in his book of notes dedicated to S. P.: “He is dead, and I am very sad. He was a friend.”

A. M. had known Nikolai Alexandrovich Berdyaev since the time of their exile in Vologda. He had also become acquainted there with P. E. Shchyogolev, B. V. Savinkov, and A. Lunacharsky, with whom he was on friendly terms. A. M. would recall his exile in Vologda, the “northern Athens” (*Potsherd*). He told me about Berdyaev as a young man, about his appearance that “was similar to that of a ‘Suzdal prince’,” and about his nobleness and his “chivalrous treatment of women.” Berdyaev’s thinking was close to Remizov’s but he did not like Remizov’s literary language; for this reason Berdyaev was practically unable to read his books. Once after their exile, when A. M. and N. A. were both married, they had a falling out over a personal matter. Although that had already occurred a long time before, they seldom met in Paris, but they respected and admired one another.

Leonid Dobronravov, one of their old St. Petersburg friends, appeared on Boileau Street. He had worked at one time on the journal *Behests* [*Zavety*], under the editorship of Ivanov-Razumnik. In Paris he wrote a long novella about the life of the high-ranking clergy. He read excerpts from it when he visited Boileau Street. He was sick with tuberculosis, and the Remizovs mourned his death.

Evgeny Ivanovich Zamyatin came to Paris. He also had belonged to the Remizovs’ group of old St. Petersburg friends. In Paris, however, they seldom met:

... during his five years of living abroad he was always hurrying somewhere ... or did his “scripts” take up all his time? Movie scripts! What relation did that have to verbal art? Or was it the fussing about arrangements for his things in French, the translation? So little was said during those years. Only once on the Marche d’Auteuil at our bazaar, I on my way to get potatoes and he from the post office, for some reason recalling Petersburg things, I began to speak about his stories and how well he wrote: “When will you begin to speak with your own voice?” But I wanted to say, and he understood that I wanted to say, that for all his wonderful lines I felt no music and that something was necessary—but what was it?—to unlock his heart: “When?” And he answered me: “It will come,” and reminded me that I had already asked him that same question in Petersburg.
(Unpublished book: Petersburg Gully; “To Be: The Eternal Flame” [“Stoiat’—negasimuii svechu”] in memory of Zamyatin).⁴

In Paris the Remizovs visited with Savinkov whom A. M. had long known intimately since Vologda (A. M. wrote about him in “Northern Athens” in *Potsherd*). A. M. narrated a story of how Savinkov was preparing to leave Vologda when his exile ended in 1902, and before he left he summoned S. P. to join with him in order to continue revolutionary activities. She waivered in indecision and Savinkov left. It was agreed that S. P. would send him a telegram about her decision. If she was ready to come she would send a telegram with the message “the livestock is sold.” If she was postponing her arrival the telegram would say “the livestock are expensive.” Serafima Pavlovna entrusted Alexei Mikhailovich to send the latter message. A. M. willfully and decisively telegraphed “the livestock are not for sale.” Indeed, S. P. left revolutionary activity behind and followed a different path.

In 1925 the newspapers reported that Savinkov had ended his life in prison in Russia. Deceived by provocateurs Savinkov had believed that Russia was ready to be overturned. He slipped into Russia and was caught in a trap set by the Cheka. The judgment of the Military Tribunal was arranged by the authorities. Savinkov comprehended the hopelessness of his position and did away with himself (according to a different version he was killed in prison). I recall with what trepidation the Remizovs read D. F. Filosofov’s article in a Warsaw newspaper. A. M. dedicated to Savinkov many spots in his notebook entries in addition to his writing.

Like most Russians in the twenties Remizov had little contact with the French. L. Shestov introduced him to several writers and translators (R. Vivier and J. Fontenois), and he met the Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain. S. P. studied French with Madame I. Rivière, the sister of the writer Alain Fournier and the wife of Jacques Rivière, who was head of *Nouvelle Revue Française* for some time. Some of Remizov’s stories, for the most part those of a religious nature, appeared in leading French journals and were appreciated by the literary avant-garde. Thus Alexei Remizov’s name became known to the French elite.

Once during the last years of his life A. M. told me how shortly after he had moved to Paris he had been invited through friends to attend a large reception given by a lady who was a patron of the arts (after forty years Remizov did not remember her name). In inviting Remizov she did not understand what kind of “Russian writer” he was, i.e., from what political group. Remizov arrived at the cocktail party and was presented to the hostess. After a five minute conversation it became clear to her that the writer was a Russian emigre. She quickly turned away from him and without a word walked off. A. M. was so taken aback that without knowing how he did it he found the coat room and left. On the way home he decided not to say anything about this incident, and S. P. was never to know how the patron of the arts, who had obviously expected to meet a Soviet writer, had greeted Remizov.

In 1925 Remizov met through acquaintances the young French writer Joseph Kessel, who was just then beginning a brilliant literary career (he received the Femina prize for his first novel *L' équipage*). He was of Russian descent and spoke Russian well. Being very responsive to everything Russian, he was charmed by the Remizovs' surroundings and particularly by Alexei Mikhailovich himself. After several months there appeared in print a new novel by Kessel that was an evocation of the "Russian Montmartre." During the 1920s the first wave of Russian emigres in searching for ways to make a living had begun to open cafes, restaurants, and evening cabarets. Many Russian emigres found employment there as cooks, waitresses, maître d's and so on. Those who had artistic talents performed. These nighttime restaurants for the most part were built on the hill Montmartre, where in the last century artistic bohemians had huddled together. In the twenties Montmartre became a center for evening entertainment. Russian cabarets with programs of Russian and gypsy songs and dances, as well as Caucasian *lezghinkas*, were in style and very successful. The Russians who worked there created their own special world, very picturesque and in its own way a Russian Montmartre.

For his novel *Les Nuits des Princes* Joseph Kessel used this unique world as the setting. Among the characters he depicted a Russian writer with facial characteristics drawn from Alexei Mikhailovich Remizov. He described rather accurately the unique environment of A. M.'s apartment, in particular, the toys that hung from the ceiling over his desk. The author included these details in a fictional story that had nothing in particular to do with Russian literature.

A. M. received a copy of the book and looked through it, but he did not read it thoroughly. He placed it on a shelf. After a time the Remizovs' friends and acquaintances began to come to them and express their indignation: "How could Kessel have given a character in his novel the actual features of a well-known Russian writer? Probably because Remizov was an emigre without rights and so anything could be done with him." S. P. felt deeply insulted on her husband's account and was beside herself. Several of their friends, wishing to show their devotion to the Remizovs, aroused these feelings even more strongly in S. P. My family's position was a difficult one. We were connected with the Kessel family by a friendship spanning two generations. Kessel himself despite his thoughtless action was a most noble person. "A well-known French writer comes to see a Russian writer in exile who does not have any means nor any protection and willfully brings out to show the public his person and his surroundings." S. P. demanded of me that I do something about this matter, although their acquaintance with Kessel had taken place quite apart from me and my family. I refused. A. M. wrote a letter to Kessel using very strong language: "Like a robber a French writer came to a poor foreigner and robbed him of his sole possession." The letter was sharp and insulting.

Kessel received it on the day that his wife died. It was terrible. S. P. remained in an angry mood for a long time. She was even angry with me—for some time we did not visit. A. M. wrote a story about a person named Budylnikov who visits him, and after that the toys hanging over his table disappear. A. M. actually took down the string with the toys, and for several years they were not to be seen. Then with the passage of time the toys returned and again hung in their place.

This was a very difficult affair which I could not forget. It seems that A. M. also did not forget the "affair with Kessel." About a month before his death A. M. for some reason said to me:

Natasha, in life do not join with anyone for any kind of activity; act always on your own only, according to your feelings and your will. Each time in life when I acted under the influence of someone else, listening to others and not to myself, I always bitterly regretted it. You think I do not remember the "affair with Kessel"? You know, the letter which I wrote then was not "my own." I could not write like that! . . .

He paused:

But you cannot imagine how it was then! Do you remember in *Tristan* the scene where Isolde is angry with Brangäne?.. You know, that is copied from S. P.! She could be like that when she was angered.

Obviously this unfortunate affair had cost A. M. dearly for him to have remembered it after all those years.

In 1925 my sister Olga married the poet Vadim Leonidovich Andreev, the oldest son of Leonid Andreev. Remizov had met Leonid Andreev several times and he considered him his godfather in literature. Remizov's first work, "Epithalamium" ["Epitalama"] (the lament of a girl before her marriage, which was later put into the book *Sunwise*), was published in the newspaper *Courier* thanks to an arrangement made by Leonid Andreev at Gorky's request. In his book *Potsherd* Remizov recalled his meeting with Leonid Andreev in Moscow when he had been allowed to leave his Vologda exile for several days in 1902 soon after the publication of the "Epithalamium." Andreev's whole appearance produced a great impression on Remizov. Andreev's appearance struck him as well as his resounding literary success. A. M. recognized Andreev's enormous talent, but inwardly he did not feel close to him. Of Andreev's works A. M. singled out the story "The Thief" as being "completely based on music." In other things he reproached Andreev for the rhetoric of his abstract constructions, and also for his careless attitude toward language.

Both my sister Olga and Vadim Andreev were "Cavaliers in the Federation of Apes," so their wedding was an event for the Obezvelvolpal group. The Great and Free Federation of Apes [*Obeziania Velikaia i Volnaia Palata* or *Obezvelvolpa*] was created by Remizov in 1908 at the time when his play *The Tragedy of Judas, Prince of Iskariot* [*Tragediia o*

Iude, printse Iskariotskom] was being written. Among the characters in the play is the Tsar of the Apes, Asyka, who rewards the worthy with ape tokens [*obezianie znaki*]. Tsar Asyka, who directs the Federation, was invisible, but his portrait was well known, as was his own special tail ["sobstvennokhvostno"] signature on the charters of the members of Obezvelvolpal. Remizov himself was the chancellor ["kantselarius"] of the Federation and he gave out the charters to the cavaliers and princes.

For A. M. apes were symbols of freedom, self-will, and nonsubmission to human rules. The Federation of Apes was first of all an "escape from the limitations of the three-dimensional," i.e., the nonacceptance of the standard "norms" required of a human being. This revealed a basic characteristic of Remizov's spiritual mentality: insubordination, his protest against a reality that binds people, his rejection of general truths and an established scale of values. The Federation of Apes was open to people who were capable of deeply and disinterestedly giving themselves up to a passion and creatively loving something that does not serve everyday interests, affairs, and normal activities that lead to expected goals. Remizov accepted people into Obezvelvolpal on the basis of a liking for something unusual or original, no matter if it were useless. Included in Obezvelvolpal were artists, writers, poets, and musicians, as well as those others who liked their own interests more than anything in the world, no matter what they were: music, literature, theater or even that which to most people would seem simply eccentric. A newly accepted cavalier would be given a charter with some kind of token: a cuckoo's egg or a marten's paw. The charter was written with great care by A. M. On it was the name of the cavalier and his title. A fee would be indicated: colored paper, a book, salmon, the placement of a work by Remizov in some journal or newspaper, or deeds and diligence. The charter was authenticated by a stamp—a fine-lined graphic drawing usually depicting the cavalier and princes with their ranks and titles listed: ape musician and prince through bishop and emir. Among the oldest princes were Alexander Blok, Andrei Bely, P. E. Shchyogolev, R. I. Ivanov-Razumnik, L. Shestov, M. Prishvin, and E. I. Zamyatin (Zamutii). Gorky was very happy to receive his charter: the Peshkovs had become princes! On the occasion of his eightieth birthday shortly before his death A. M. wrote: "Obezvelvolpal', in which Remizov for half a century since the creation of the federation has held the position of chancellor . . ." (March 26, 1957. *Anniversary Book of Letters [Iubileinaia kniga pisem]*).

At the end of the twenties the Remizovs began to think of changing apartments as the place on Mozart Avenue had become too expensive. They were sad to part with their former surroundings which had become part of their way of life. They rented an unfurnished apartment in the Latin Quarter on Port Royal Boulevard and bought some furniture on an installment plan. Downstairs in the building there was a movie theater,

which A. M. considered a fire hazard. He wrote about this in detail in a chapter in *With Clipped Eyes* ("Knots and Twists" ["Uzly i zakruty"]). A. M. was very afraid of fires: he told me about the fire in Kiev in 1903 when he rescued in his own arms his small daughter Natasha and the family icon, "The Three Joys." Recalling Remizov Alexander Blok noted: "Remizov rescued his little Natasha in his arms. It was twenty degrees below zero, and he had on only a shirt. A seamstress neighbor threw a silk blouse over his shoulders."

The apartment on Port Royal Boulevard was new and not as cosy as that on Mozart Avenue. It took a long time for life there to settle into a new routine. During that time I visited the Remizovs comparatively little. I had married and given birth to a son.

The Remizovs moved into their new apartment in 1928. After six months there was a scandal with the concierge of their building, and the harmony of their lives was completely upset. Late one evening one of the Remizovs' acquaintances had brought them a book and given it to the concierge. She brought it up to them in the morning all angry and, losing control of herself, began to scream. A. M. tried to talk it over with her:

And then she suddenly attacked me. I saw only her clenched fists and her eyes, ready to spit out fire—such was her frenzy. She screamed that when she gave me the book I had supposedly said "zut" to her. She no longer just screamed but screeched, and it was such a scream that if she had had a dust pan or some other thing in her hands she would have swung it. ("Industrial Gear" ["Industrialnaia podkova"], from the unpublished book *The Music Teacher [Uchitel' muzyki]*).⁵

A. M. did not even know the meaning of the word "zut" ("go to hell!").

For several days the Remizovs lived as if under siege. After some time two respected friends of the Remizovs who spoke French well went to speak with the concierge. She told them the reason for her dissatisfaction: the Remizovs often had guests come by, at times late at night, and, most of all, Madame Remizov never smiled when she greeted her. A. M. and S. P. said that in Russia no one smiled on command; "he is not capable of smiling like that: in Russia, thank heavens, they did not teach that artifice, and God willing, they never will." ("Industrial Gear," *The Music Teacher*). Somehow the incident was smoothed over, but the Remizovs found it hard to live under the constant strain and they began to look for another apartment. In 1931 they moved to an apartment outside the city in Boulogne near the Boulogne Forest.

During those years A. M. worked on *With Clipped Eyes*. The chapters of that book appeared in a newspaper, *The Latest News*. He also wrote his reminiscences which appear in the books mentioned below; there are three autobiographical books by Remizov: (1) *With Clipped Eyes*, childhood and youth (YMCA Press, 1951); (2) *Poisherd*, prison and exile (unpublished); (3) *The Music Teacher*, reminiscences about the last soirées in St.

Petersburg and life in emigration (unpublished). At the end of the twenties and the beginning of the thirties several translations of Remizov's works appeared in various languages: French, Czech, English, Italian, Serbian, Hungarian, and German. The first German translations had appeared in 1913 and 1917. The books by Remizov that were published during these years are: *Russia in the Whirlwind* (Tair, 1927), *Olya* (Tair, 1927), *Star Above All Stars* [*Zvezda nadzvezdnaia*] (YMCA Press, 1928), *Sunwise* (Tair, 1930), and *The Image of Nicholas the Miracle-Worker* [*Obraz Nikolaia Chudotvortsa*] (YMCA Press, 1931). In a copy of a book given to me A. M. wrote:

This green book was published in 1931. And then I found myself in the crab's claw: from 1931 until 1941 you will not find any books by me. That year marks the beginning of my labor on albums. With handwritten albums I continued my trade—for eighteen years. Each album, and I have lost count of them—400?—is a dream about a book. March 21, 1954.

The book *Star Above All Stars* (*Stella Maria Maris*) occupies a special place among Remizov's works. In his life and works the most burning and continually returning theme is suffering. For A. M. all human pain is embodied in the image of the Holy Virgin at the cross:

The Holy Virgin stands by the cross. She sees her Son as He hangs on the cross; she sees His pain and cannot help Him. Is there a grief darker or more hopeless than your powerlessness: "You cannot do anything!"

Remizov recalled the Dove Book [*Golubinaia kniga*] of the Russian peasant folk: "Pilgrims, wandering minstrels, brought the Dove Book to earth. Dove [*golubinaia*] means deep [*glubinnaia*] and, as a symbol for the Holy Ghost [*Golub-duk*], mysterious." Remizov was especially fond of *The Visitation to the Torments by the Mother of God* [*Khozhdenie Bogoroditsy po mukam*], which depicts the feeling of pity characteristic of the Russian people:

The Holy Virgin visited the torments, the most terrible places, visited the damned and the outcast, and she grieved and suffered with the damned and outcast: an image of the supreme mercy of a fiery, conscientious heart. "I want to suffer with the sinners!" She arrived in that world—where nothing is expected or hoped for!—and like a star, the Star Above All Stars, lit up the darkness. Holy Virgin, Mother of the World, we shall glorify you in song!

The Remizovs did not stay long in Boulogne: in 1935 they moved to their last apartment which was on Boileau Street. During the pre-World War II period the Remizovs' material circumstances were as difficult as ever; as before Remizov gave readings. In 1938 I had my second son, and now it was not I but S. P. who came to visit.

Right before the war the Remizovs succeeded one more time in

traveling to Brittany, to the ocean, which A. M. so loved: "For me the ocean has become my corner in a foreign land, and I feel it is my own, not for any particular reason, i.e., I just love it." The Remizovs became friendly with the family of the mayor of the town where they stayed. Their companion was a boy named Bicou. Remizov wrote about this in the chapter "On an Aerial Ocean" ["*Na vozdushnom okeane*"] in *The Music Teacher*.

The years passed and S. P. began to get sick more often. War was approaching. When on leaving Paris in 1939 I said good-bye to the Remizovs, I did not know that we would be separated for a long time.

Right before the war in 1939 the Remizovs and I did not see each other very often. We merely wrote one another during that troubled summer. In August I was supposed to go with my family—my sister Olga, our children, and Mama—to the oceanside, to the island Oléron, where we had rented a cottage. At that time events came to a head very quickly. The threat of war became more real with each hour. On the day that we left mobilization had already been announced. My husband, although not yet a French citizen, had been drafted; foreigners who were "stateless" and who were not yet twenty years old when they had entered France were called up on an equal basis with the French. My husband had to be in Quimper on the following day. He went with us to the train station. Paris was already blacked out. Panic was beginning and people were trying to get out of the city.

The dark train station was full of people. They were attempting to force their way somewhere, not knowing themselves where they were going. They thronged and shoved where there was no exit. By some miracle we managed to get out of that mad crush—the porter apparently took pity on us as I had a small baby in my arms and helped us to find our way to our seats on the train.

We reached the island Oléron where we lived during the war years. We did not start exchanging letters with the Remizovs right away. S. P. from time to time sent a short letter or post card to her "dear godchild." In actuality we knew almost nothing about the Remizovs.

The winter passed in this way, a time that received the nickname the "Strange War" (*drôle de guerre*). But events moved forward. At the beginning of the summer we read in the Russian newspaper *The Latest News*, which was still being published then, that on June 3, 1940, there had been an air attack and bombardment of Paris by German planes during which the Remizovs had been injured by broken glass. A. M. described this in the book *In a Rosy Glow*:

Two bombs exploded in the building next door, No. 9 . . . The fragments . . . with a screech cut into the wall that projected out by the window where we had been caught by the siren. Shaking off the splinters we went into the corridor where glass already was

falling from another room across the way. It was impossible to go out on the stairway. The door was locked and the key was gone, thrown out by this whirlwind. Well, we could not get out. There was nowhere to go and suddenly our space narrowed as if we were in a mousetrap, and everything was rushing past us. Thought was drowned out by the din; all words were cut into pieces, and there was only feeling, the explosion of feelings—horror, that twirling, challenging whirlwind and that white flame leaping through one's blood.

A. M. recalled further how Serafima Pavlovna became sick from the fright, and that that was the beginning of her final illness. Life proceeded further with the windows broken. At first A. M. boarded up the windows with cardboard which he decorated with abstract collages. The drawing was a reworking of the theme of the broken glass.

Official help was not quick in coming, but friends succeeded in obtaining glass: a Russian who worked at a warehouse stole the glass for the Remizovs' apartment. A. V. Obolensky, one of their few friends who had stayed in Paris and who visited them, told me this. The pieces of cardboard with the "constructions," as A. M. came to call them, moved to the walls of the cuckoo room; they decorated the walls and made the room magical.

In *A Flute for Mice* Remizov described his terrible life with ailing S. P. in Paris during the occupation. Her nerve centers were destroyed and little by little her consciousness became dulled. Her notes are preserved for these years and in them are recorded the names of the friends and acquaintances who visited. S. P. kept a diary, and towards the end of her life it was filled mostly with prayers directed to the Holy Virgin. An entry for 1941:

November 23. I went out and sat on a bench. Stopped by the Italian's. Kovalevskaya, the "Duckling," and Iv. Pavlovich visited us. We read. God save us, preserve us, have mercy on us, protect us, give me health, let me get completely well, let my liver not hurt, let my legs not ache, let me be well so that I do not catch cold, give me health, save me, save me! Lord send us money, aid us, send us monetary help, clothing, save us, save us, save us!!

It is painful to read these thick notebooks with their entries, their "agenda" for 1941 or 1942. The diaries are completely filled with prayers. Among the many pages covered with writing are the names of friends who remained in Paris and came to visit them. News reached them of Tsvetaeva's suicide and of Meyerhold's death. S. P. mentioned them and added: "Holy Virgin, take us under your protection; keep us from accidents."

Life on the island was difficult and we did not know how the Remizovs were doing in Paris nor how S. P. was feeling. A. M. did not write us before S. P. died, and she sent us friendly letters from which it was impossible to guess her true condition. I remember one letter with lines of poetry by Kuzmin about an unheated house in St. Petersburg during the revolution:

"In a rosy sunset the house glows without heat, and we, like Menshikov in Berezovo, read the Bible and wait . . ." The letter continues, speaking of broken shoes. Now and then S. P. sent her godchild small packages—pink fabric obtained with coupons or marmelade "from Lifar." During that time A. M. went about all pinned together. Later S. M. Lifar told me how A. M. wore a long overcoat with a bag over his shoulder. All his energy was directed towards securing the necessary remedies and foodstuffs for Serafima Pavlovna. The pages written by him about this time belong to some of the most powerful and burning ones in Russian literature ("Through the Fire of Grief," in *In A Rosy Glow*).

In February 1941, I made a short visit to Paris. I arrived late in the evening; the city was dark and there was snow on the streets. In the subway movie posters with a sharp anti-Semitic bias were prominent. There were red posters pasted up with the photographs of executed terrorists who had foreign names. The houses were not heated and periodically the electricity was turned off. People lived in the cold, often sitting in the dark. I arrived at the Remizovs at dusk. They were not expecting me. After the first exclamations and embraces, I looked around, and it seemed to me that the apartment was not the same one I had known. Their belongings and the whole setting seemed unfamiliar. Everything seemed covered with a touch of gray, the walls and the objects, the clothing and the inhabitants' faces. It had been impossible to imagine from their letters the poverty in which they lived. Formerly A. M. had always emphasized the difficulty of their financial circumstances, but there during their greatest misfortune they did not complain. S. P. asked me about the children and held my hand. A. M. went in and out of the room, and looked at me more than he spoke. There was no electricity, so A. M. brought a small oil lamp. They brewed something in place of tea. Sugar was offered. I refused. "That's a good thing to do." I looked at A. M. His face was swollen. They spoke about Ivanov-Razumnik; at one time in St. Petersburg they had been close. Now I.-R. was in Germany; they exchanged letters. A. M. described I.-R.'s difficult lot. Life had been hard for him after the revolution. During the war he had found himself in a part of Russia occupied by the Germans and had moved to Germany. There he worked on a newspaper that was published in Russian. I.-R. published his memoirs and spoke about the horror of life in Soviet Russia. A person lost himself there and lived not his own life but one that was foisted upon him. He compared his existence with the life of a man from the *Tale of a Thousand and One Nights* who by the power of magic lowered his face into a bowl of water and was turned into a woman no longer young and pregnant for the twelfth time. A. M. was very sorry for Ivanov-Razumnik and spoke about what a remarkable person he was. The fact that I.-R. worked on a German newspaper did not cause A. M. to condemn him. We find this theme in "The Quill" ("Voron'e pero") (in *Dancing Demon [Pliashushchii demon]*). Russia's first printer Ivan

Fedorov turned up in the "enemy's camp" at the end of his life. He worked but firmly refused to take part in the preparation of guns.

Two poems by Sologub were published in that German newspaper. One of them in particular affected S. P. deeply, and she learned it by heart. It was connected with her final days. "Breathe a while longer the heavy air of earth . . ." The other was about a grain field and a tower that stood in the middle of the field.

A. M. mentioned that L. Shestov had died in 1938 in a clinic on rue Boileau across from the building where the Remizovs lived. Ravel had died in 1937 in the same clinic. Subsequently that private clinic had been turned into a hospital. In 1943 S. P. was taken to that hospital, and there she died.

Well before the war the Remizovs had been horrified by the actions of the Nazis in Germany. They described the violence and the beatings of elderly Jewish professors. I remember with what agitation A. M. spoke of the burning of libraries. We did not speak then of the Germans. A. M. only talked about what he saw through his window: an old person was running down the street, obviously escaping from someone. "You understand, an old man was running down the street . . ." That showed a Remizovian characteristic: the recreation of a great, significant happening with a single detail. Thus the horror of German violence arose all the more vividly from the image of the fleeing old person.

I remained until very late on that one evening that I spent with the Remizovs during the war. That was my last meeting with Serafima Pavlovna in life—in that dark and gray apartment lit with night light. We said a long farewell standing in the foyer. On the table was A. M.'s beret—old, worn, and dusty.

During these years Remizov associated with French writers of the NRF group and often stopped by the editorial office, where he was known and some of his work was published in their journal.

Of the Russian friends around the Remizovs, most had been knocked about in life. In *A Flute for Mice* A. M. often spoke of the "Duckling," Olga Vladimirovna von Derviz. The "Duckling's" appearance really reminded one of a toy duck. She was a Muscovite—"born on Lialiny Lane," and she had been married to a rich Russified German. In Paris she married someone who worked in cinematography. After his death she remained single, went to seed, and started drinking. During the Remizovs' "hard times" the "Duckling" often visited them, but after S. P.'s death when she wanted to move into Remizov's apartment, A. M. firmly refused. She took offense and for several years did not visit on rue Boileau. In 1947 a Theosophist acquaintance, wishing to "save" her, brought her to Remizov and she again began to visit. On N. Kodryanskaya's initiative she moved in with A. M. in 1954 to look after him and remained until his death.

Olga Nikolaevna Mozhaikskaya, a relative of the Berdyaevs, also came to visit. She washed floors somewhere and brought the Remizovs potatoes.

In *A Flute for Mice* A. M. mentioned "The Big Leaf" ["Listina"], an artist named Olga Fedorovna Kovalevskaya. She attended the opera and was an admirer of Lifar, whom she painted. From time to time S. M. Lifar and his brother Leonid dropped in—they helped A. M.

On an upper floor of the building on rue Boileau lived "The Supreme One" ["Verkhovnaya"], a Polovetsian—E. D. Unbegaun, the stepmother of the Slavic professor. She helped Remizov with apartment matters and talks with the building manager and the concierge. She sometimes typed A. M.'s manuscripts.

In 1943 our whole family lived on the island "Doleron," as A. M. called it. The mood had begun to change. Hope for victory over Germany began to glimmer. One day in May I went to the nearest village to look for food. I succeeded in getting some fish and I imagined to myself how happy everyone would be over this. At home, however, I found my mother and sisters in tears. They had received a little note from A. M. informing us of S. P.'s death:

May 13, 1943, night. Dear Olga Eliseevna, Olya, Natasha, Auka, Vadim. This evening Serafima Pavlovna died in the hospital across from us. They took her there yesterday. She was eagerly awaiting you, expecting you to come, and if you had been there it would not have been so terrible for her. But she could not wait any longer.
A. Remizov

We set up a frequent and regular correspondence. A. M. answered each of our letters. At that time he still lived under the influence of those days he had just lived through. He wrote to us about how S. P. had become meek during her illness. She loved our whole family and dreamed aloud that we would come and live with her. We were very concerned about A. M.'s own condition. We were afraid that he did not have enough strength and desire to fend for himself, and we began to send him all that we could: onions, a few potatoes, and selected beans of real coffee from a mixture received in exchange for coupons. My husband lived and worked in Paris after being demobilized. He began to stop by rue Boileau often. A. M. turned over to him S. P.'s "cherished possessions": icons, an antique shawl, amber, her grandmother's violet *talma*, and her collection of beadwork. Then he gave my husband the chapters he had just written about the misfortunes he had lived through. That was the first version of the chapters which later became part of the book *In a Rosy Glow* (the Chekhov Publishing Co. edition). During this period of time A. M. apparently was preparing for death (but he outlived S. P. by fourteen years). He slept a lot, making up for the months he had spent almost without sleep. He also wrote a great deal. He wrote *A Flute for Mice* which is about all the toil and drudgery of the war period. In his letters A. M. wrote that the electricity often was turned off, and he sat in the cold. A. M. used an electric radiator

in order to get some heat. He wrote about the frequent "alerts" (air-raid alarms). During a period at the end of the war the Allies bombed Paris from high overhead and often mistakenly missed their target. The civilian population was very unlucky, but already it was possible to hope for a victorious end to the war.

In 1944 I moved with my children to the small town of Niort. My husband could no longer travel to visit us—the island was cut off and had become part of the "Atlantic wall." Access to it was not free. In Niort it was easier to get food, and I was able to send packages more often. In his letters A. M. would thank me for the cheese and eggs he received. He also described S. P.'s funeral to me. Quite a few people began gathering around Remizov.

The war ended, and we began to think of returning to Paris. The first of our family to return were the Andreevs. My sister Olga went to rue Boileau. Later she told me about her unforgettable meeting with A. M., about how overjoyed he had been, and about how lovingly he had greeted her and her son Sasha (then seven).

Soon I too moved to Paris. Before that I thought all the time about our meeting, and kept dreaming of A. M. sitting on the small sofa in S. P.'s old room. Finally we met—how much sorrow he had born! We looked at each other a long time. A. M. had aged, but otherwise showed little change. By that time he was a little stronger and looked as before, with the same expression and smile. "Well, then," he said. He could not express himself otherwise when he was overcome with emotion.

A. M.'s life now followed a certain special rhythm. He worked a great deal, writing parts of *Potsherd* ("Nomad" ["Kochevnik"]) and "In Damp Mists" ("V syrykh tumanakh"). A lot of his time was spent in copying for his archives S. P.'s letters and extracts from her old diaries covering events from their life together. All of that was put into books of the type accountants use (of which there are fourteen). This all took a lot of time and was hard on his eyes. During this time and up until his death A. M. took a great interest in working on language. He read the published judicial protocols of the seventeenth century, looking for interesting phrases, expressions, and words in the language of the clerks and the scribe Bormosov. "All this is the real Russian language." In 1947 Remizov gave thought to "what precisely other than religious books educated people read" during the seventeenth century. In this way he came to the legends which had penetrated into Russia from various countries at that time, including "The Tale of the Two Animals" ["Povest' o dvukh zveriyakh"], a Sanskrit tale from the *Panchatantra* ("Ikhnelat and Stefanit"), which is a tragedy of the conflict of human passions played out by animals. Subsequently A. M. wrote other legends "in his own manner." He read to us, a small circle of friends who valued his talent. We were amazed at the strength and expressiveness of that exceptional prose.

During this time A. M. was surrounded by people. They gladly visited

him, and the atmosphere was cheerful and full of hope, a true rebirth after the most difficult years of the war. The number of friends who had died was beyond count. Some by a miracle had survived and returned from concentration camp: Doctor Aitov and Professor Unbegaun. Several of the old friends moved to America, but from time to time came to visit in Europe, as did the representatives of the second emigration. A. M. became acquainted and made friends with some of them through correspondence. There was also the old group of friends who often visited rue Boileau. Of the old friends the Orientalist V. P. Nikitin would come down from the sixth floor of the very same building (he translated Persian Sufi texts for A. M.). Once he brought his friend, a Persian poet, and the three of them went to a photographer to have their picture taken together. The poet later wrote to Remizov he was amazed that A. M. had not locked his apartment when he went out, but had left it open "like a dervish's cell" in case friends should come.

The former "ape dragonfly," later "Noni," N. Grigorievna Lvova (the wife of the writer L. Lvov who had left her and gone to live in Germany), dropped in continually (A. M. mentioned her in a story, "Sunny Chick" ["Solnechnyi tsyplenok"] in *A Flute for Mice*). Emelyanova also visited (née O. N. Mozhaiskaya, she had met Viktor Nikolaevich Emelyanov, the author of *Jim's Rendezvous* [*Svidanie Dzhima*] in Remizov's apartment; they were married shortly afterwards). P. P. Suvchinsky (who was once head of the Eurasian Movement, along with several others), an expert on music and a fine judge of literature, the lawyer Grigory Gavrilovich Shklyaver, Ekaterina Panilovna Unbegaun (the stepmother of Professor Unbegaun—he had returned from Buchenwald), and Gleb Chizhov (the ape hairdresser, author of Russian romances under the pseudonym G. Kholmisky) visited as did Lyudmila Nikolaevna Zamyatina, the widow of the writer, who also helped A. M. There was also the unchanging "African Doctor" (V. M. Unkovsky, who had practiced medicine at one time in Africa, was a man of letters whom A. M. had known since 1911). The Polish writer and artist Iosif Georgievich Chapsky appeared after the war and became a great friend of Remizov's. Viktor Andreevich Mamchenko, "the poet with the most tender of souls," often came. Uncle Komarov—Evgeny Bronislavovich Sosinsky (a chauffeur and artist, the brother of B. Sosinsky), A. V. and A. N. Obolensky, and many others came to visit. Everyone liked A. M., and each tried to do something for him to brighten up his life a bit: bringing him things, helping him with something, or reading a little.

On the anniversary of Serafima Pavlovna's death, about the thirteenth of May every year, there was a requiem for her. During those years (the forties and fifties) many friends came. After the requiem in the Znamenie Church (at that time on Molitor Street) a large group would go back to rue Boileau. I usually took A. M. by the arm—he walked briskly. A bottle of

sparkling Asti, which A. M. liked, would be uncorked. We drank out of goblets from the opera sent by Lifar. A. M. would read something he had recently written. The atmosphere was lively and friendly.

Beginning in 1947 old and new friends, usually those belonging to the literary world, began coming to visit from America. The poet Sofya Yulevna Pregel published the journal *New Home* [*Novosel'e*] in New York, and she gladly printed Remizov. Bunin and many other Parisian writers participated in the journal. During this period Bunin stopped by now and then to see Remizov. Something about Alexei Mikhailovich's personality attracted him. He regarded with curiosity both the various verbal experiments and the "corrections" of his own texts that Remizov made. It must be said that from a literary point of view they did not exist for one another. I remember seeing Ivan Alexeevich's figure at one of Remizov's literary evenings before the war.

The appearance of the journal *The Russian Collection* [*Russkii sbornik*], published by Boris Grigorievich Panteleimonov, was an occasion for the federation of apes. In it appeared the story "St. Vladimir" ["Sviatyi Vladimir"] by Pantaleimonov himself. A. M. considered him talented. Pantaleimonov (his nickname was "The Glasscutter ["stekol'shchik"], often visited Remizov and listened to his advice: for example, to avoid "verbals," i.e., to pay attention that verbs not rhyme, and not to use pronouns and diminutives to excess. This literary life that was opening up for A. M. made him cheerful. New people appeared, and as a joke he arranged something like a school for young writers.

In 1947 the Kodryanskys, whom Remizov had known during the war years, arrived in Paris. Natalya Vladimirovna wrote fairy tales, and A. M. held a favorable opinion of them. The Kodryanskys helped Remizov materially: they paid for his apartment and took care of his gas and electricity. For A. M. life became easier.

The poet Irina Yassen (Rakhil Samoilovna Chekver), who lived in New York, financed the publication of a small book by Parisian poets. The publishing house was named Rifma. Works by the following were published: V. Andreev, V. Bulich, T. Velichkovskaya, A. Velichkovsky, A. Ginger, V. Zlobin, G. Ivanov, Yu. Ivask, V. Korvin-Piotrovsky, A. Ladinsky, Sergei Makovsky, V. Mamchenko, Yu. Mandelshtam, V. Nabokov, I. Odoevtseva, G. Raevsky, I. Chinnov, S. Pregel, A. Shiman-skaya, A. Shteiger, E. Shcherbakov, and I. Yassen. Alexei Mikhailovich hoped that his newly written book (*The Tale of the Two Animals*) would be published by them. Unfortunately he was refused because they were only publishing poetry. My mother was at rue Boileau at the very time when the refusal came. She witnessed how disappointed A. M. was. He was completely upset and became despondent. My mother (O. E. Kolbasina-Chernova) was a great admirer of Remizov's work—in the heat of the moment she announced that if Rifma would not publish Remizov's book,

then "we must publish the book with our own resources." However there were no resources. Still as A. M. later said at the end of his life:

Without fail I want to write a preface to my last Opleshnik book in order to tell how the publishing house came to exist. There were no resources other than fervor and flaming desire. But the ardent declaration by O. E. Chernova summoned forth a miracle: the books began to appear.

Opleshnik, which published Remizov's books, was a publishing house run by friends. My husband, D. Reznikov, was in charge of a press and took care of the printing. The name Opleshnik (from the word *opletat'*, to twist) means magician or sorcerer. A. M. set up the books and chose the covers. Toward the end of his life his vision was poor and I helped him. A. M.'s small royalties went to Opleshnik. Modest American friends would include dollars in their letters to support publication.

Eight books were published in this fashion: *The Tale of the Two Animals*, *The Possessed* [*Besnovatye*], *Melyuzina*, *A Flute for Mice*, *Martyn Zadeka*, *A Fire of Things*, *Tristan and Isolda*, and *The Parables of King Solomon* [*Pritchi Tsarya Solomona*]. One book, *With a Peacock Quill* [*Pavym perom*], was ready for publication, but because of lack of funds it was not published.

At the end of the forties A. M. was almost seventy years old. He was still healthy, at the height of his talent, and full of creative strength. As he was writing the legends he wanted to express his philosophy of life and the results of his experiences. *The Tale of Two Animals* was the first book in this series to be published. Derived from the Sanskrit *Panchatantra*, the tale tells of the conflict of human passions: friendship and trust, on the one hand, and on the other, envy, suspicion, and malice. The second book was *The Possessed*—"my only demonic stories"—Russian tales of the seventeenth century. Its theme: love's passion and its raging blood give power to the Evil Spirit. The cover was crimson, the color of blood.

Then came *Melyuzina*, a French legend of the twelfth century concerning love and trust. It asks if one who loves can trust to the very end. Or must there be evidence? A. M. studied the materials for a long time. During that period he drew a lot and well—not in his former manner of delicate graphics but with large and sure strokes (he used an old stylographic pen). He depicted *Melyuzina*'s sons and other characters. A. M. said that he wrote *Melyuzina* in the manner of a Greek tragedy with the sounds of a chorus.

Then followed *A Flute for Mice*, on the cover of which are three witches, the three sisters who appear in Macbeth. *A Flute for Mice* was devoted to the hard time of the war period and to stories about the events at No. 7 Boileau Street. Even in its translated version French criticism paid attention to the style of narration created by Remizov.

After that *Martyn Zadeka: Dreambook* appeared. In a short preface

A. M. talked about dreams and cited his own which he had written down.

A Fire of Things came out in 1954. Its theme was dreams in Russian literature: in Gogol, Pushkin, Lermontov and Dostoevsky. On the cover appeared a reproduction of a drawing by A. M. of Nozdrev "telling lies." Nozdrev is surrounded by the objects about which he talks: "Clicquot-Matradura," French *Bon-Bon*, dogs and women. On the copy given to my husband was written: "To Daniil Georgievich Reznikov in gratitude for the best edition of my books. November 3, 1954." The main part of *A Fire of Things* is concerned with Gogol, about whom A. M. had thought his whole life. The chapters on Gogol's fate and death are profoundly stirring. A. M. analyzed *Dead Souls* which he reread anew. He looked at the main characters through his own eyes and saw them in another light than that customary for Realist critics. Some readers even from Remizov's close circle of friends did not accept A. M.'s approach to characters with long-established interpretations. Also in the book are several drawings by Remizov: "The Fire of Things," "The Troika," and a portrait of Gogol.

During different periods in his life A. M. changed his opinion about Gogol. Thus in the twenties he noticed the "gaiety of spirit" (as he said, applying this expression to Chekhov) in "Gogol's infernal laughter": "His laughter was that of a Gogolian horse trampling the whole world" (*The Fire of Things*). I remember my conversation with A. M. about Gogol and his *Correspondence*. In "Knots and Twists" [from *With Clipped Eyes*] A. M. wrote the following about *Correspondence*: "Gogol at the hour of his death understood the whole arrogance of his 'truth' in *Correspondence*. In evaluating it he clearly saw the complete callousness and the lack of enlightenment of his imaginary 'righteous people,' those privileged, high-ranking gardeners headed by the governor-general."

In *Russia in the Whirlwind* the following passage appears in a chapter dedicated to Blok: "'I hear the music,' repeated Blok, and one of the most musical of Russian books, Gogol's *Correspondence*, was on his table." I asked A. M. what he thought of *Correspondence*, and A. M. answered that the nature of the correspondence is its arrogance and hypocrisy. "Then why did you write in *Russia in the Whirlwind* that this is one of the most musical of books?" "I myself do not know why I wrote that," was his answer.

During the last year of A. M.'s life in the spring of 1957 *Tristan and Isolda* was published by Oplshnik. In the summer for Remizov's eightieth birthday *The Circle of Happiness: Legends About King Solomon* appeared with the help of funds collected by his friends. "The legends came from the age-old voice of the Russian land," A. M. had said.

NOTES

1. My family [Reznikova].
2. Sergei Yakovlevich Efron, the husband of poet Marina Tsvetaeva.
3. Pilnyak's letters are preserved in Thomas Whitney's archive in Connecticut.
4. *Vstrechi. Peterburgskii buerak*. Paris: Lev, 1981 [Editor's note, S. A.].
5. *Uchitel' muzyki*. Paris: La Presse Libre, 1983 [Editor's note, S. A.].