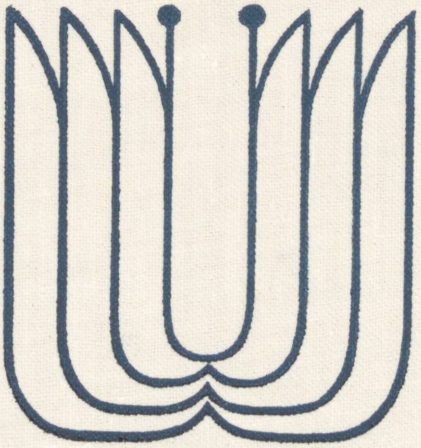
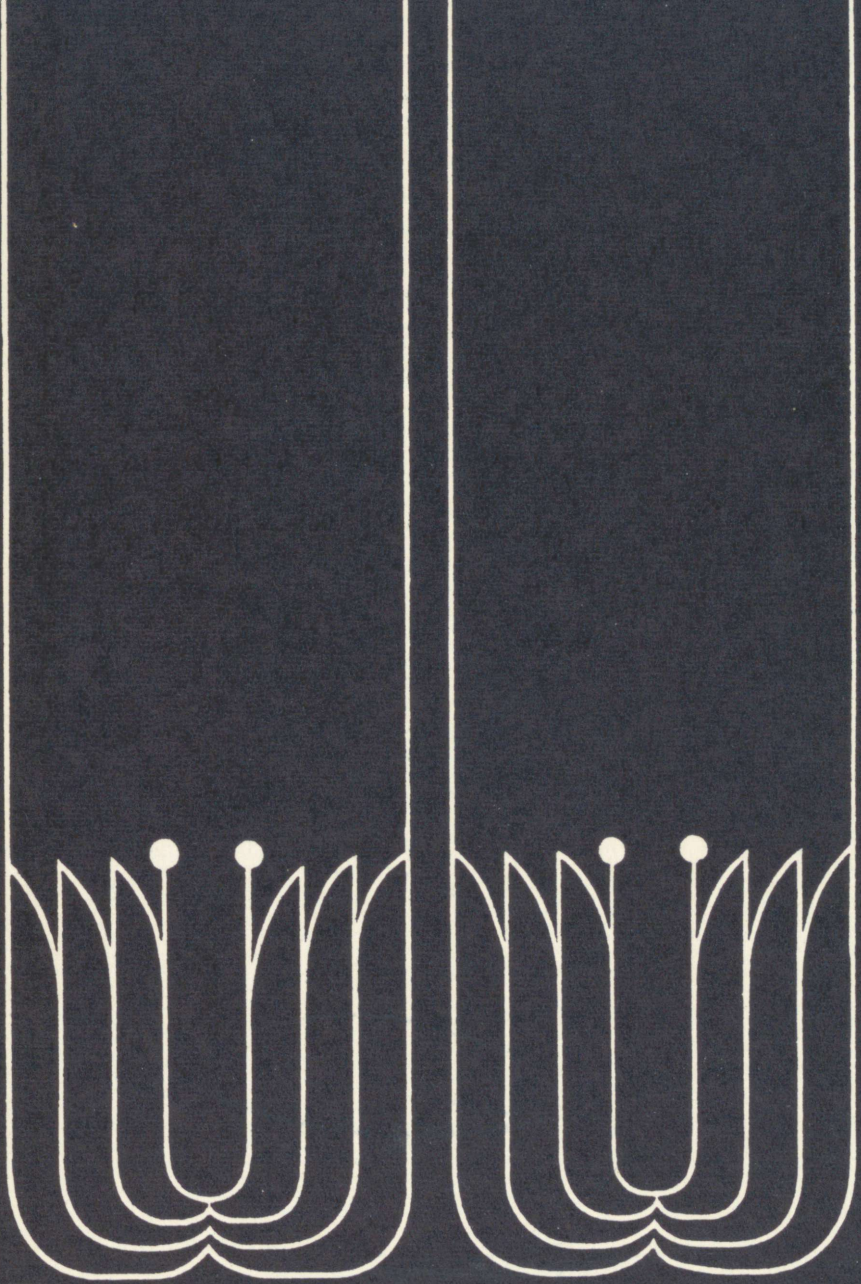
ESTONIAN LITERATURE











ESTONIAN LITERATURE

Historical Survey

with

Bibliographical

Appendix

by

ENDEL NIRK

INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGE
AND LITERATURE
ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
OF THE ESTONIAN S.S.R.

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Translated from the Estonian
by
V. Hain, A. R. Hone and O. Mutt

Tartu Riikliku Ülikooli
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FOREWORD

It is the object of this book to present a brief survey of the development of Estonian literature and the output of its most prominent representatives. It is primarily addressed to the foreign reader who may be expected to have little or no preliminary knowledge of the subject. Our materials have been mainly drawn from the "History of Estonian Literature" *(Eesti kirjanduse ajalugu,* I 1965, II 1966, III 1969), compiled by the staff of the Institute of Language and Literature attached to the Academy of Sciences of the Estonian S.S.R., and apart from a few minor deviations the periodisation and disposition of the materials follow the arrangement adopted in the original source.

We have attempted to provide a condensed account of the formation and growth of Estonian literature, bringing out its specific features and indicating the social and cultural factors by which they were conditioned. At the same time we have endeavoured to draw attention to those elements which are of distinctive national interest or outstanding literary value. The amount of space devoted to a given author corresponds roughly to the importance of the place he occupies in the history of Estonian literature and the general vitality of his works; also his claims, both real and potential, to an international reputation. Lack of space has permitted us to include only the most outstanding works, and even these have been treated only in the broadest outline. As the inclusion of biographical materials would have interrupted the thread of the narrative and so hindered the reader from following the evolution of Estonian literature as a continuous process, these have been relegated to the back of the book, where they have been gathered together in the form of a special appendix.

In cases where an author's career has extended over a long period of time embracing a number of different phases or epochs, it is often difficult to assign him a definitive place in the history of literature. In all such instances we have placed the writer — together with the whole of his production — in the period when he exerted his greatest influence and made his chief contribution to the process of literary evolution. But we should always bear in mind that he may have continued to work long after the end of the period under which he is mentioned. Such discrepancies are inevitable and are to be found in every survey of the present type.

With an eye to the particular type of reader to whom this book is primarily addressed we have attempted, so far as possible, to show the genesis and historical development of Estonian literature in relation to the literatures of other European peoples with whom it has been in contact from the earliest times and with whom it possesses certain typological characteristics in common. In this way the reader should be able to form a general idea of the delicate interplay of external influences that has left its mark on the development of Estonian literature.

In order to encourage the reader to study the works of Estonian writers at first hand, we have added a list of the chief English, French and German translations that have appeared in book form from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards.

CONTENTS

THE ORIGINS OF ESTONIAN LITERATURE AND ITS INITIAL PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT *(Translated by A. R. Hone)*

From primeval times to the dawn of history 11
The country and its inhabitants — 11. The Estonian language and the traditional folk culture — 13. The conquest of Estonia and the feudal period in the light of the Baltic chronicles — 15.

Folklore — the unwritten literature of the Estonian people 20
Folk poetry — 23. The narrative and miniature genres of folklore — 29.

The earliest records of the Estonian language 34
The first books and principal manuscripts — 35. Religious literature under Swedish rule — 37. School-books, administrative and legal texts — 39. Occasional poetry — 40.

Estonian literature during the first half of the 18th century 42
The "Lamentation for the Destruction of Tartu" — 42. Religious publications — 43. The first almanacs and the beginning of narrative literature — 46. Literature of the Herrnhut movement — 47.

The appearance and early development of secular literature among the peasantry 49
Social roots and general characteristics — 49. Didactic narrative literature and poetry — 51. Narrative literature and poetry at the beginning of the 19th century — 53. Otto Wilhelm Masing — 55. Count Mannteuffel — 58.

FORMATION OF THE ESTONIAN NATIONAL LITERATURE *(Translated by A. R. Hone)*

The germination of a new epoch 60
Kristjan Jaak Peterson — 61. Friedrich Robert Faehlmann — 64.

Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald 68
The epic *"Kalevipoeg"* — 71. Kreutzwald's "Fairy Tales" and other works — 75.

Popular miscellanies in the middle of the 19th century 77
Johann Voldemar Jannsen — 80. Poetry and popular song collections — 83.

Literature of the initial phase of the national movement 84
The national awakening of the Estonian people — 84. The transformation of literary life — 87. Lydia Koidula — 90. Other writers of the early awakening — 95.

Literature during the decline of the national movement 102
Deepening social contradictions — 102. General characteristics of the literature of the period — 106. Historical prose fiction — 108. Stories of contemporary life and the drama — 110. Poetry — 113. Literary criticism — 115.

CRITICAL REALISM AND THE NEW CURRENTS IN ESTONIAN LITERATURE *(Translated by A. R. Hone)*

The preconditions for the triumph of realism 117
The struggle for realism — 120.

Eduard Vilde 122

Other early realists and their followers 131
August Kitzberg — 132. Ernst Peterson-Särgava — 135. Juhan Liiv — 137. Karl Eduard Sööt — 140. Anna Haava — 141.

Estonian literature and the revolution of 1905 144
Social trends at the beginning of the century — 144. Cultural and literary life before and during the revolution — 147. The beginnings of Estonian proletarian literature — 149.

Noor-Eesti 153
The general cultural background to the *Noor-Eesti* group — 153. Gustav Suits — 159. Friedebert Tuglas — 164. Other followers of *Noor-Eesti* — 169.

The further development of critical realism 173

FROM THE REVOLUTIONS OF 1917 TO 1940 *(Translated by O. Mutt)*

Literature in the period of revolutions and civil war 179
Proletarian literature and publicistic writings — 181. The *Siuru* group — 182.

Literature in bourgeois Estonia in the 1920s 185
Illusions and reality — 185. Organisational forms of literary life — 188. General trends in the development of literature — 190.

Revolutionary literature 193

Literature in the 1930s 197
Social and political conditions — 197. The condition of writers and literature — 199. Internal trends in the development of literature — 202.

Prose fiction and its principal representatives 204
Anton Hansen Tammsaare — 208. Mait Metsanurk — 218. Oskar Luts — 221. August Gailit — 225. Peet Vallak — 227. August Jakobson — 229. August Mälk — 234. Other prose writers — 236.

The development of poetry and principal authors 240
Marie Under — 243. Henrik Visnapuu — 248. Johannes Barbarus — 251. Johannes Semper — 253. Jaan Kärner — 257. Juhan Sütiste — 259. Betti Alver — 262. Other poets — 264.

The drama 267
Hugo Raudsepp — 268. Other playwrights — 272.

Literary criticism 273

FROM THE REVOLUTION OF 1940 TO THE PRESENT DAY *(Translated by V. Hain)*

Literary life in 1940—1945 277
The beginnings of Estonian Soviet literature — 277. Estonian Soviet literature in the years of the Great Patriotic War — 280. Literary life in occupied Estonia — 283.

Estonian Soviet literature in the first decade after the war 284

Contemporary Estonian Soviet literature 288

Prose and the leading prosaists 293
General trends of development — 293. Rudolf Sirge — 297. Erni Krusten — 300. Aadu Hint — 303. Hans Leberecht — 307. Juhan Smuul — 310. Paul Kuusberg — 314. Lilli Promet — 317. Other prose writers — 320. The younger generation of prose writers — 325.

Poetry and poets 330
Main trends of development — 330. Debora Vaarandi — 333. Mart Raud — 336. August Sang — 339. Kersti Merilaas — 340. Ralf Parve — 342. Uno Laht — 344. Jaan Kross — 345. Vladimir Beekman — 347. Other poets — 349. The younger generation of poets — 351.

The drama 354
Egon Rannet — 357. Ardi Liives — 359. Other playwrights — 361.

Estonian writers abroad 362
Karl Ristikivi — 364. Bernard Kangro — 368. Valev Uibopuu — 370. Kalju Lepik — 371. Other Estonian authors abroad — 373.

Literary criticism 375

Conclusion 378

Appendix:

Biographical notes *(Translated by A. R. Hone and O. Mutt)* 380

A selected bibliography of Estonian literature in English, French and German translations 406

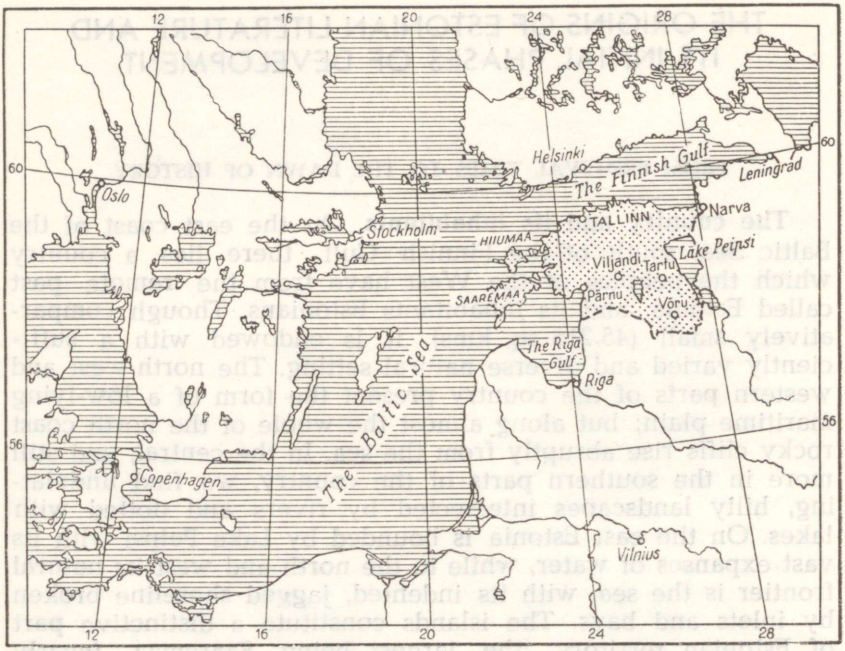
Index 410

THE ORIGINS OF ESTONIAN LITERATURE AND ITS INITIAL PHASES OF DEVELOPMENT

FROM PRIMEVAL TIMES TO THE DAWN OF HISTORY

The country and its inhabitants. On the east coast of the Baltic Sea, south of the Finnish Gulf, there lies a country which the peoples of the West have from the remote past called Estonia, and its inhabitants Estonians. Though comparatively small (45,215 sq. kms), it is endowed with a sufficiently varied and diverse natural setting. The north-west and western parts of the country present the form of a low-lying maritime plain; but along almost the whole of the north coast rocky cliffs rise abruptly from the sea. In the central, and still more in the southern parts of the country, we find undulating, hilly landscapes intersected by rivers and dotted with lakes. On the east Estonia is bounded by Lake Peipsi with its vast expanses of water, while to the north and west its natural frontier is the sea, with its indented, jagged shoreline broken by inlets and bays. The islands constitute a distinctive part of Estonian territory, the largest being Saaremaa (nearly 2700 sq. kms) and Hiiumaa (nearly 1000 sq. kms), both of which are adjacent to the west coast. Here could be found all the essential prerequisites for human habitation: game-filled forests; rivers, lakes and the sea rich in fish; and — still more important — a surface that attained, here and there, a high degree of fertility.

Archaeological research has enabled us to reconstruct in broad outline the main facts concerning the ethnic origins and the formation of the Estonian people. In the distant past, thousands of years ago, some of the hunting and fishing tribes of the Finno-Ugric group abandoned their homes in the region of the Ural mountains and began to move slowly towards the west. At some point in the third millennium of the pre-Christian era they reached the shores of the Baltic Sea. Somewhat later, about the beginning of the second millennium, the forerunners of the cattle-raising Baltic tribes, proceeding from the south, are believed to have moved into the same area. The two tribal systems intermingled and the next thousand years



Estonia on the map of North Europe

were a period of fusion and assimilation at the end of which the Baltic type of speech remained dominant in the south (the present territories of Lithuania and Latvia), while the Baltic-Finnic type of speech predominated in the north. Thus the basic ethnic groups that existed in the Baltic area in the 11th and 12th centuries A.D., which complete the transition to historic times, had already more or less taken shape about the middle of the last millennium B.C. In addition to the Baltic peoples proper, the Baltic-Finnic tribes early came into contact with Germanic (particularly Scandinavian) tribes, and with the Western Slavs. These relations exercised a considerable influence on their social habits and means of subsistence.

During the first four centuries of the modern era agriculture became the basic means of production of the Estonian

tribes. At the same time the inhabited areas were steadily expanding and the old tribal order began to disintegrate. Between the 5th and 9th centuries the former tribal unit based on blood relationship was gradually displaced by a new type of territorial community, and the foundations were laid for the appearance of class society. The first centuries of the present millennium were a period of rapid development. The cultivation of crops combined with cattle-breeding now supported a rapidly growing population (the total number of Estonians at the beginning of the 13th century has been estimated at 150,000—180,000). Handicraft manufacture had reached a comparatively high level of development, navigation was intense and there was lively trading with neighbouring countries. Early feudal relations were already taking shape, though the Estonian tribes had not yet succeeded in creating a centralised administration at the time of the invasion of the Teutonic Order. The territorial communities (later parishes) were grouped into districts *(maakonnad)*, eight of which stood out among the rest as the largest and most powerful. There was little attempt to knit the districts more closely together until it became necessary to organise a united resistance to the German invasion in the 13th century; but it was then no longer possible to set up an independent state.

The Estonian language and the traditional folk culture. The Estonian language belongs to the Baltic-Finnic branch of the Finno-Ugric family, of which, together with the Livonian and Vote languages, it forms the southern group. The other languages most closely related to it belong to the northern group, which includes the Finnish, Karelian, Izhorian and Vepsian languages. The affinity between all of these languages may be traced back to a hypothetical parent speech which split up into a number of independent languages in the course of time as a result of the territorial dispersion of the tribes. There are also many common elements in the folklore of the Baltic-Finnic peoples, some of which are derived from the same stock, while others have been transmitted from one people to another by virtue of the strong similarities of language and social habits.

In spite of the fact that Estonian was confined to a rather small area, it early broke up into a number of dialects and local varieties. There are marked differences between them, in the main of a phonetical or lexical character, but also

partly affecting the syntax and morphology. These differences may be ascribed to the fact that the basic Estonian tribal groups had already emerged by the opening centuries of the modern era. The dialectal divergencies between the north, the south and the west (together with the archipelago) continued to exist throughout the whole of the feudal period and eventually even gave rise to the appearance of two quite distinct written languages. It was not until the formation of the Estonian nation in the 19th century that an imperative need was felt for a common written language. Since then the adoption of the standard literary language has had, in the course of time, the effect of reducing the number of local dialectal variations in the spoken language.

Before the Estonians possessed a written language of their own there may have been educated persons among them who were acquainted with other languages. This is indicated, for example, by the very word *raamat* (a book), which is an early Russian loan (a corruption of *грамота*). Indeed, it was through their eastern neighbours that the Estonians first came into contact with Christianity in the 10th and 11th centuries. But this non-violent missionary activity of the Orthodox Church does not seem to have been particularly effective. The ancient Estonians remained true to their former beliefs and experienced little need for a literacy that was dependent on conversion to the Christian faith.

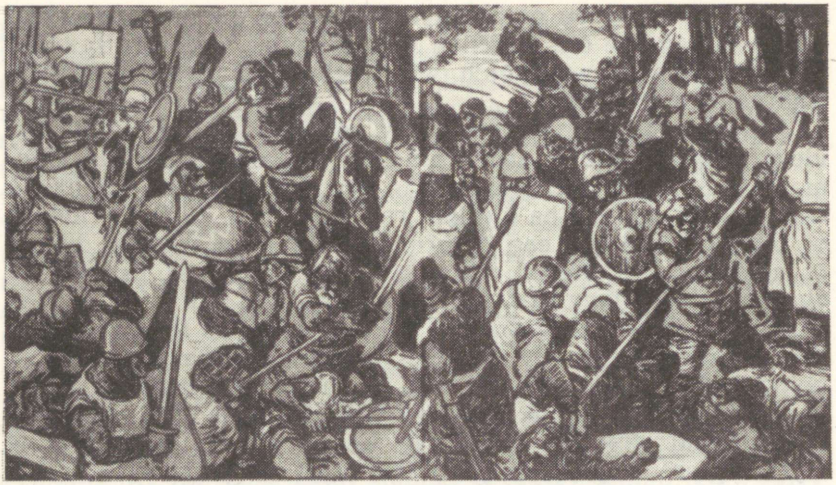
From the very earliest times the attitude to life and religious ideas of the Estonian tribes had been animistic in character. Later on magical or protective properties were attributed to certain phenomena (such as the thunder, the wind, the forest; or a river, lake or spring etc.), and they were invested with anthropomorphic qualities. Special reverence was paid to the god of thunder, one of whose names — *Taara* — is an obvious modification of the Scandinavian *Thor*. The human soul was believed to exist in various forms. It might even temporarily detach itself from the body, thus inspiring conceptions of a shamanistic nature and credence in magic or witchcraft. The dead were believed to continue their existence in the nether world in much the same way as they had lived on earth — so far as we can judge from the objects deposited with them in the burial mounds. They were even thought to remain in contact with their descendants and to revisit their homes at the

so-called *hingedeaeg* or 'spirit time' in late autumn. The chief landmarks in the old Estonian folk calendar were the summer and winter solstices, which were celebrated with elaborate traditional ceremonies.

Estonian folklore is inseparably bound up with the religious ideas, habits, customs and attitude to life of the ancient Estonians. It is no longer possible to reconstruct anything like a complete survey of the original repertory. But on the evidence of indirect data we can determine with a reasonable degree of accuracy the period when it took shape and its general character. The fact that the oldest type of folk song — the alliterative verse (*regivärss*) — is common to all the peoples of the Baltic-Finnic family suggests that it must have come into being before they split up into a number of distinct ethnic groups, i.e. well before the beginning of the modern era. This fundamental stratum must have been mainly composed of mythological songs, ritual or ceremonial songs (such as bridal songs, etc.), domestic ballads, labour songs and a few of the oldest lyric songs. In all probability there were also heroic chants, though none of these have come down to us. The oldest types of folk tale are legendary narratives which attempt to explain the character or origin of natural phenomena. Particularly striking are the stories about giants, in which Scandinavian influences have been detected.

The material living conditions of the ancient Estonians bear the same peasant stamp as their folk culture, and archaeological findings reveal a level of prosperity at least equal to that of their neighbours. The people lived in large and thriving villages. In order to protect themselves against the inroads of hostile tribes they erected fortified stockades on suitable natural elevations, round the most important of which urban-type settlements sprang up. The Estonians carried on intensive trading with their neighbours, were expert craftsmen and bold seafarers who frequently raided foreign lands. In fact the Estonian tribes had at that time every opportunity of advancing to a more peaceful stage of development, of multiplying their external contacts and, in so doing, of progressing gradually to a higher cultural level.

The conquest of Estonia and the feudal period in the light of the Baltic chronicles. At the end of the 12th century, with the benediction of the Pope, the Teutonic Order launched its



Estonians in battle with the crusaders. Illustration to the historical novel "On the River Ümera" by M. Metsanurk *(E. Maisaar, 1961)*

invasion of the Baltic countries with the object of imposing Christianity and the feudal order on them by force. The first clashes between the crusaders and the Estonians took place in 1208. The invading forces were better organised and better equipped, and were reinforced by the Latgalians and Livonians, whom they had already subdued. Nevertheless the conquest of Estonia proved a long and arduous undertaking. The war dragged on for years, causing terrible destruction of property and loss of life. Time and again districts that had been defeated and forced to accept Christianity cast off the yoke of the conqueror at the first opportunity and resumed the struggle. However, in a large-scale pitched battle that took place in the autumn of 1217, the united forces of the Estonians suffered a crushing defeat, and Lembitu, the Sakala chieftain, who had come to be regarded as the leader of the Estonian resistance, fell in the engagement. The position of the Estonians became desperate in 1219, when they were attacked in the rear by the Danish king Valdemar II, who landed in the vicinity of Tallinn. In the campaign of 1223 and 1224 the Esto-

nians, aided by the grand dukes of Novgorod and Pskov, succeeded in liberating the whole country, but only for a brief interval. In 1227, after twenty years of stubborn resistance, Estonia finally yielded to the overwhelming forces of the Livonian Order, the Bishop of Tartu and the Danish king. A new epoch began in which the Estonian people was oppressed by alien feudal overlords, an epoch that was to last for centuries in spite of frequent uprisings and fierce outbreaks of insubordination.

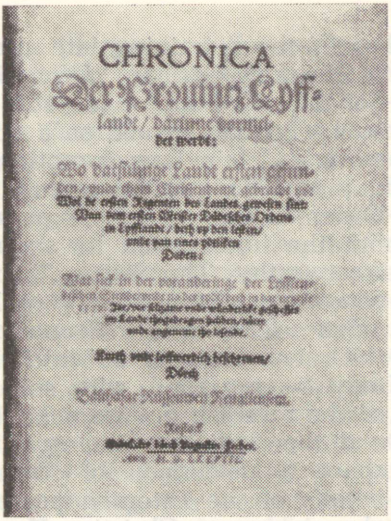
The Baltic chronicles, which are written in Latin, Middle German or Low German, clearly express the views of the ruling classes, but nevertheless give us an interesting picture of the conquest of the Baltic countries and the ensuing feudal period. As they were regarded to a certain extent as works of literature, their compilers were not content to register the mere facts, but took pains to expound them; and their commentaries are moralising in tone. Occasionally they tried to impart an additional artistic value to their work by breaking into verse. The earlier Baltic chroniclers, as was only to be expected from their social status, represented an ideology that was inimical to the Estonian people. Their main object was to justify the aggressive policy of the Livonian Order and the Catholic church, and the ruthless suppression of the native population. But try as they may, they cannot avoid expressing certain aspects of the reverse of the picture: the indomitable courage of the Estonians, the tenacity of their resistance, the brutal inhumanity of the military campaign that was carried out under the pretext of propagating Christianity, and the repeated outbreaks of insubordination through which the people expressed their implacable hatred for their alien feudal oppressors. The chronicles also contain interesting scraps of information concerning the everyday life and social habits of the Estonians, their technical skills and methods of production. Though shown through a distorting prism the picture which finally emerges is more than a bald record of historical events: it is a unique and indispensable source of information concerning the past life of the Estonian people and it has been utilised to a greater or lesser extent by all Estonian writers who have been inspired by this period in their country's history.

The story of the conversion of the Baltic peoples — and especially the Estonians — "by fire and the sword" is told by

Henrik of Latvia (Henricus de Lettis), whose Latin chronicle covers a period from about 1180 to 1227. Henrik, who served as a priest in Northern Latvia, knew in addition to Latin and German several of the local languages of the Baltic region. He frequently accompanied the crusaders on their campaigns against the Estonians and assisted in the compulsory baptism of the natives. He was a fanatical Catholic, devoutly supported the invasion and believed that all means were justified in the holy war against the heathens. But many of the scenes he recorded he saw with his own eyes, or through those of a first-hand witness; and to his routine descriptions of raids, sieges and battles, etc., he added curious details of the every-day life, customs and habits of thought of the Estonians. His chronicle contains numerous Estonian personal and place names, and even a few Estonian words and phrases — the oldest known memorials of the Estonian language. In its way the Chronicle may bear comparison with any of the outstanding mediaeval annals. First printed in 1740 under the title of "*Origines Livoniae sacrae et civilis*", it has since been repeatedly issued and has been translated into German, Russian, Lettish, Estonian and English.

The so-called "Old Livonian Rhymed Chronicle" (not printed till 1876) was written in Middle German towards the end of the 13th century, and brings us up to 1290. It deals with events mainly from a military point of view and is never weary of exalting the courage and piety of the knights, vogts and masters of the Livonian Order. It is anonymous, but springs directly from the chevaleresque poetry of the Middle Ages, much in the same way as the other monastic rhymed chronicles of the Knight Orders. Similar in tone is the "Late Livonian Rhymed Chronicle", written in Low German about the end of the thirteen-forties by Bartholomäus Hoeneke, chaplain to the Master of the Order. The events described belong to the first half of the 14th century, one of the most important of them being the great Estonian uprising of 1343 and the ensuing clashes. The original text has been lost, but prose paraphrases have been preserved in the later chronicles.

The most important of the later Baltic chronicles date from the 16th and the 17th centuries. During the Livonian War of 1558—1583 the East Baltic area became once again an arena of conflict involving powerful external forces. As a result a


CHRONICA
Der Prouintz Lyff-
landt / darinne vormel-
det werdt:
Wo datsulinge Landt ersten gefun-
den / vnde thom Christendome gebracht vnd
Wol de ersten Regenten des Landes gewesen sint:
Vnn dem ersten Meister Düdesches Ordens
in Lyfflandt / beth up den lesten /
vnde van eines ydtlicken
Daden:
Wat sick in der vorandringe der Lyfflan-
deschen Stendenrede nu dat eyde / beth in dat vorwerde
Ite / vor schlagen vnde wunderlicke geschesses
im Lande thogedragen hebben / nüer
vnde angenome thu lesende.
Kurth vnde lofwerdich beschreuen /
Dörch
Bolthasar Russowen Neuallensem.
Rostock
Gedruckt durch Augustin Ferber.
Anno M. D. LXXVIII.

Title page of the chronicle by Balthasar Russow

new interest was felt in the past history of the region. This interest is vividly reflected in the famous Low-German "*Chronica der Prouintz Lyfflandt*", written by Balthasar Russow (ca 1542—1600) and first published at Rostock in 1578, followed by a second, augmented edition at Bart in 1584. Russow was of Estonian extraction and pastor of the Estonian congregation at Tallinn, and his work differs markedly from the earlier chronicles listed above. He may be regarded primarily as the spokesman of the townspeople and he stoutly defends the policy of the municipal authorities. A stern Lutheran in religion, he bitterly criticises the Catholic church, the bishops and the Order, and takes little pains to conceal his dislike for the nobility. Russow came from a family of natives and fully entered into the feelings of the oppressed peasantry; but he also gives a lively account of the everyday life of the other estates on the eve of the war. The greater part of his work is devoted to the war itself, and he describes in great detail the events at Tallinn and its immediate vicinity. His chronicle is written with an eye for effect and is remarkable for his vivid and energetic style. It has been freely drawn upon by all the subsequent Baltic chroniclers and has been translated into High German, Russian, Lettish and Estonian.

Of the remaining late chronicles mention should be made of the Low-German "*Liflendischer historien negen boker*" by Johannes Renner (ca 1525—1583), a contemporary of Russow who had served as a scribe in the Livonian Order. This work had lain long forgotten before it partly saw the light of day in 1876 (printed in full in 1953). As a functionary of the Order Renner mainly expresses the views of his superiors, but the information he supplies is reasonably accurate and trustworthy. The Swede Thomas Hjärne (1638—1678), who served as a functionary in Estonia, was the author of an "*Ehst-, Lyf- und Lettlaendische Geschichte*" (printed 1835), the seven volumes of which bring us up to 1639. Although he may be regarded with some reservations as the spokesman of the Swedish government (by which Estonia was then ruled) and the Baltic-German nobility, Hjärne devoted considerable space to discussion of the manners, traditions and religious beliefs of the Estonian peasantry. The last important Baltic chronicler was Christian Kelch (1657—1710), a country parson in North Estonia, where he produced his "*Liefländische Historia*" (1695) and its sequel "*Continuation*" (not printed till 1875). Kelch, who was also deeply interested in contemporary social life, evidently lived in close contact with the Estonian peasants, with whom he warmly sympathised, pinning his hopes for improvement chiefly on the Swedish monarchy.

By the time these last-mentioned chronicles were completed, the first books in the Estonian language were beginning to appear. But before we pass on to discuss them we must insert a brief survey of Estonian folk poetry, of which the deepest strata are older than any chronicles. Folk poetry is therefore both the prelude to Estonian literature, and at the same time one of its chief integral components.

FOLKLORE — THE UNWRITTEN LITERATURE OF THE ESTONIAN PEOPLE

Beginning from the remotest pre-historic times and extending throughout the feudal period, the rich and varied folk traditions of the Estonian people, which were handed down orally from generation to generation, served as the poetical embodiment of their attitude to life and the chief form of their artistic self-expression. Estonian folk poetry is also a kind of

chronicle, in which the people has perpetuated the essential facts of its existence. By this we mean the recording not of historical events, but of the characteristic situations and happenings of the everyday life of the Estonian peasantry. At the same time these are seen through the prism of imagination which transmutes the stuff of experience into the vision of poetry. Folklore may be regarded as the *fons et origo* of Estonian literature, and has continued to influence the latter throughout the whole process of its evolution. At the same time, as the final expression of generations of human experience it is itself of inestimable historical and artistic value.

The conquest of Estonia in the 13th century inevitably introduced fundamental changes not only in the material and cultural conditions of the people, but also in their beliefs, customs and poetic traditions. The general outlook on life of Estonian folk literature was naturally deeply affected by the succession of defeats they suffered during the war of resistance to the invader and the ensuing repeated uprisings, by their subjection to an oppressive feudalism based on an alien military power, by their state of subjection and their lack of human rights. The age of heroic songs had passed and was now succeeded by the bitter complaint of the serf, cursing his oppressor. True, the Christianity that had been imposed by force did not at first penetrate very deeply into the national consciousness. The masses of the people were obliged to conform to the outward gestures of the Catholic ritual, but the Latin formulas of the church service meant little to them and at bottom they persisted for centuries in their former pagan ideas and habits of thought. It not infrequently happened that the traditions of the old belief became associated with the names of Catholic saints; but basically they remained unchanged. The most that can be said is that Christianity "enriched" the old folk religion of the Estonian people with various symbols of cruelty and evil, such as the devil or the wicked spirits of the dead, while at the same time it tended to intensify the widespread belief in magic and witchcraft to which the oppressed people became increasingly susceptible. It is a significant fact that as late as the 16th and the 17th centuries the church authorities continued to complain of the peasants' ignorance in matters of religion and the tenacity with which they still clung to their heathen beliefs. And something of this "heathen" character

persisted among the masses of the people right up to the 19th century.

The very fact that so many of the old beliefs, customs and traditional folk songs have not only been preserved but have retained their vitality through the centuries testifies eloquently to the inward determination of the Estonian people never to submit to the imposition of a foreign yoke. This is undoubtedly one of the main factors that helped them to survive the catastrophes of history and brought them subsequently, in the more promising conditions of the modern age, to a higher stage of social and cultural development.

The mentality of the ancient Estonians and their attitude to the surrounding world find in many ways a unique reflection in the traditional folklore, where they are expressed both in the authenticity of the concrete details taken from everyday life, in the untrammelled imagination common to all primitive



A peasant wedding. Attiring the bride to the accompaniment of songs
(T. Gehlhaar, 1840s)

peoples living in close contact with nature, and in the frequent occurrence of symbolism of a mythical order. In creating a highly stylised picture of the material world, Estonian folklore attempts, in its way, to bring out the most essential and typical elements; for only these were of general interest, and therefore capable of persisting and creating a national tradition. One of the most striking features of folk poetry is the highly stereotyped nature of the motives and images it employs, of its characters, even of its versification and narrative technique. It is here that we must seek the so-called element of collective experience and generalisation, the quintessence of the poetical discoveries of the innumerable folk singers and reciters of successive generations.

Folk poetry. The oldest Estonian folk songs, those using the alliterative *regivärss,* are also those which are of the highest artistic value and the most distinctive original quality. These ancient poems, with their characteristic structure, are believed to date back two thousand years in the past. Thanks to the persistent and systematic work of collection, we have now over 170,000 texts reflecting the stage of development attained in the 18th or 19th century. A large proportion of these naturally consist of local variants or fusions, but more than 3000 basic types can be distinguished. Only a tiny fraction of this formidable quantity has as yet appeared in print, mainly in anthologies or regional collections. Some translations have been published in German, Russian and other languages.

As we have already pointed out, the largest number of elements deriving from the oldest, prehistoric stratum, are to be found in the labour songs and ritual songs, which are connected with traditional customs of great antiquity. But they are also to be found in the domestic songs, that are devoted to family relationships and various aspects of home life. Most of the ballads and narrative songs evidently belong to the same group, as their general treatment and background appear to reflect elements of the ancient peasant community.

However, the majority of the traditional folk songs now extant belong to the feudal period, reflecting its typical living conditions and expressing the mentality and the attitude to life of a peasantry oppressed by the yoke of serfdom. They seize upon special features or episodes from the everyday existence of the Estonian serf, following his life from the cradle

to the grave. The picture they present is mainly perceived through the eyes or the emotions of the women folk since most of the folk singers were women, at least in the later centuries. The songs cover the most varied situations and happenings of peasant life, reflecting their daily work, their domestic tasks and their rare moments of pleasure and happiness:

Those who hear us singing songs,
singing songs and making poems,
think our lives are full of beauty,
full of joyfulness and pleasure,
singing songs of happiness.
But I sing in spite of sorrow,
through the pain that fills my heart.
My lips sing, but my heart is bitter
and my eyes are filled with tears...
My heart is full of burning embers,
flames of anguish burn my brow,
a red fire consumes my breast.

Kes meid kuuleb laulevada,
laulevada, luulevada,
see ütleb ilul olevat,
rõõmupäevi meid pidavat,
lustilaulu laulevada.
Ma laulan läbi murede,
läbi leinase südame.
Suu laulab, süda muretseb,
silmad vetta veeretavad...
Südames on sütevakka,
pealael lõke laia,
põues on tuli punane.

The social injustice that embittered the life of the serf imparted to Estonian folk song an undercurrent of wistful longing. But for all his weary drudgery and grinding poverty he never lost his ability to appreciate beauty and joy, and the songs he created record his impressions and experiences with admirable sensibility. In their appreciation of the basic values of life and their ability to express them in words many of the anonymous folk songs need not shrink from comparison with the work of the greatest poets in world literature.

Yet, however close were the organic ties by which folk poetry was bound to the way of life that nourished it, it was far more than the mere photographic reproduction of its environment. Like all true poetry, indeed like all genuine art always and everywhere, it created, in its finest achievements, a specific and unique poetic world, existing side by side with the material world of which it was the artistic projection. The poetic image is derived from reality and is deeply rooted in the soil of everyday life. But this does not mean that the poems may be regarded merely as rudimentary sketches of the environment to which they belong. The Estonian folk songs are rather a spontaneous outburst of poetic self-expression. They do not so much attempt to depict objects or events, as to express lyrical feeling. Their expressive power is not derived from any logical sequence of argument or thought, but from the

evocation of isolated moods, attitudes and intuitive perceptions. And behind them all we guess rather than discern desires, urges and premonitions of which the singer himself is perhaps not fully conscious. These images of subconscious longing are sometimes transformed into mythical visions, like the oak in one of the ancient ballads which grows until it fills the sky and traps the sun and moon in the network of its branches. There was no other means of escape from the prostration and anxiety of real life into a freer world of self-expression, and for this very reason folk poetry frequently strays into a land of illusion, oblivion or wistful longing, seeking its means of expression in indirect suggestions, ambiguous motives, or even the phantasmagorical symbols of a sort of dream world. Here all the contradictions of reality are softened by a veil of melancholy; and the eternal opposition between joy and sorrow, longing and fulfilment, pleasure and suffering, life and death is viewed serenely *sub specie aeternitatis.*

But for all that, the unrelieved dreariness of everyday life and the heavy burden of oppression inevitably remain the basic themes of the songs. The dreary round of unceasing toil was hateful precisely because it was forced. The serf enjoyed none of the fruits of his own labour: everything went to the lord of the manor — the very man who oppressed and humiliated him. Thus the manor appears in folk song as the haunt of evil, and is compared with hell or the den of a wild beast:

When I escape out of the manor
I leave behind the gates of hell,
from the wolf's mouth free myself,
from the fangs of the grey wolf,
from between the lion's jaws.

Kui mina pääsen mõisa'asta,
siis mina pääsen põrgu'usta,
pääsen kui soe suusta,
halli hundi hamba'asta,
lõvi lõugade vahelta.

Especially bitter are the reproaches levelled against the overseers of Estonian nationality, who apart from everything else were hated as renegades, the henchmen of an alien ruler. Lastly, many of the songs denounce the social injustice that sprang up in the course of time within the village community itself — the relations between farmer and labourer, the hard lot of the cotter, and especially the grim fate of the widow and orphan.

As is only to be expected, many of these songs are dejected, even hopeless in tone. The folk singer often contrasts his own

life with that of others, and his misfortunes seem to symbolise the tragic destiny of the whole people:

Others sit on beauty's heights,	Muud istuvad ilumäella,
the pipe of beauty in their grasp,	ilupilli neil peossa,
beauty's table spread before them,	ilulauda neil eessa,
the cup of beauty in their hand,	ilukarikad käessa,
the flowers of beauty in their bosom.	iluõied hõlma alla.
But I sit on the hill of sorrow,	Ma istun muremäella,
the pipe of sorrow in my grasp,	murepilli mul peossa,
sorrow's table spread before me,	murelauda mul eessa,
the cup of sorrow in my hand,	murekarikas käessa,
the flowers of sorrow in my bosom.	mureõied hõlma alla.

But as a general rule we can detect, either in the direct meaning of the words employed or vaguely suggested by them, a sort of instinctive faith in the vitality of the people, an irrepressible will to live, undaunted by the blows of adversity. Singing the songs associated with its immemorial customs, rites and pastimes, the people stubbornly preserved its own way of life, often giving open expression to its opposition to the prevailing ideology, the church and the feudal nobility. This attitude formed a tradition of its own, which extended far back into the remote past. It served as a counterpoise to the ideas which the alien overlords of the Estonians tried to impose on them by force, and it lived on in spite of the danger, the fierce reprisals and the persecution of the church. Songs formed an integral part of the traditional folk dances and festivities. The marriage ritual was interwoven with songs from beginning to end. Songs echo the deep sense of family loyalty characteristic of the patriarchal peasant community, especially the gratitude and love of the child for its mother. The love songs are extremely delicate and reserved and the relations between lovers are suggested, rather than expressed, only in the most modest and indirect terms. Everywhere we feel the poet's sensitive but profound and unreserved appreciation of nature. To him nature in all its aspects is something living, something close and intimate; and in the self-identification of the singer with nature we may trace the touchingly simple, child-like mentality of the primitive animistic folk religion.

Many Estonian folk songs are devoted to the need for song itself, to the sense of beauty and the peasant's innate love of music and poetry:

Dull is life with nothing fair,	Igav on olla iluta,
sad to live and never sing,	hale olla laulemata,
or to miss the cuckoo's song,	kole käo kukkumata,
hard to live deprived of joy.	raske rõõmuta elada.
I make my beauty by myself	Ma ise ilutegija,
bringing joy to everyone.	rõõmu kalli kandija.

These words bear eloquent testimony to the importance of folk song in the people's life. The darker existence seemed, the greater became the need for poetry, for beauty created by the singer himself, from which he could draw fresh strength and courage to face the future. In their songs the people gave artistic expression to their feelings and experience, sublimating into poetry the pain and drudgery of their everyday life and leaving behind them a heritage that transmitted their experience to generations yet unborn.

The fact that initial rhyming predominates in the oldest folk poetry should be correlated with one of the salient features of the Estonian phonetic system: all native words are stressed on the first syllable. This helps to explain why alliteration is so widespread in Estonian folk literature that it occurs not only in songs, but also in proverbs, saws, riddles etc., and often even appears in modern poetry as an adjunct to the end-rhyming. The need for alliteration is so imperative that at times it may even dictate the choice of words, thus affecting or even deforming the sequence of ideas and producing combinations that are not only unexpected but also at times quite nonsensical. In other words we are faced with a deliberate willingness to sacrifice realism of content to the mechanical requirements of form. Such expressions have their own charm based on the fanciful or uncertain nature of the meaning they are intended to convey.

Another, perhaps still more distinctive feature of Estonian folk song is the use of parallelism of idea as a basic structural element. As a general rule each line embodies a single idea, a certain unit of thought. But this idea is subjected to immediate variation, that is to say, is repeated in other words in the following line, or even a whole series of so-called 'parallel lines'. This succession of stylised but closely related images serves to bring out the desired idea or emotion with greater force, intensifies the poetic mood and, taken as a whole, has the effect of suggesting a certain generalisation. As a result

the whole song is built up on the principle of parallelism and the lines fall into distinctly felt groups which are linked together not by any regular stanza pattern, but by the idea they express. Thus the final impression is reminiscent, in some ways, of a mosaic picture composed of a multitude of differently hued fragments (i.e. of separate lines), which are pieced together in such a way as to form an artistic whole that is often astonishingly varied in its combinations of tones and shades of colour. It is not without reason to describe the texture of Estonian folk poetry as impressionistic.

In addition to parallelism various other devices are used (particularly repetition and gradation), while the images created as a result of collective stylisation are characterised by such distinctive features as the frequent use of stereotyped comparisons, synecdoche, euphemism, and prosopopoeia.

The varied moods and images of Estonian folk song are expressed in a regular trochaic rhythm which may appear rather monotonous at first sight but which, in view of the peculiarities of the Estonian language, is actually subtle and flexible enough. We should remember that Estonian is characterised by certain distinctive and complicated quantitative relations of sounds and syllables that are not to be found in the Indo-European languages. The factors of dynamic stress and quantity, which coincide in the latter, are often separate in Estonian. Folk poetry is based primarily on quantity, and the stress is not called upon to perform any particular semantic function.

Thus the line of four trochaic feet, deliberately varied with a dactyl here and there, turns out to be far more supple and varied than the formal scheme of its rhythm might seem to suggest. In essence it may be considered to constitute an original poetic medium which differs sharply from the metrical structure of European classical poetry. End-rhyming folk poetry made its way into Estonia at a later stage, round about the end of the 18th century. This new type of folk song was due partly to the example of German poetry and partly to literary influences, but can hardly be said to have become widely popular before the 19th century.

The basically lyric quality of Estonian folk poetry is also present in songs of epic type in which a certain lack of action or dearth of events enables the lyric element to rise to the

fore. In fact they might be more accurately defined as lyrico-epic songs. The subject-matter of the ballads is often of a brutal or horrible nature, but the tragic narrative is muted by the hushed tone and the shocking details are toned down or only indirectly suggested beneath the iridescent veil of parallel variations. This trait has perhaps something to do with the national character with its typical northern reticence. Nevertheless some trace remains of the actual conditions in which these songs took shape and of which they constitute a kind of reflection.

Estonian folk song has the determination to endure, the grim tenacity of the people which created them in spite of all difficulties, — a people for whom persistence was for centuries synonymous with resistance.

The narrative and miniature genres of folklore. As compared with folk poetry, the prose forms of Estonian folklore, particularly the fairy tales and traditional jests, are distinctly international in character. Nevertheless these subjects and themes have been modified in the course of a long process of assimilation and in their final adapted form may be equally regarded as an expression of the habits of thought and attitude to life of the Estonian people. Here, too, intensive study has resulted in the collection of a rich stock of authentic materials and more than 100,000 items have been recorded and classified.

It is not always easy to draw a clear-cut distinction between the main genres of Estonian folk narrative. Legends, fairy tales and jests frequently overlap, producing a large number of intermediate forms. Especially uncertain are the boundaries between legend and fairy tale, on the one hand, and fairy tale and folk jest on the other. The legend *(muistend),* which springs from the ancient popular beliefs and primitive cosmogony of the Estonian people, is of an informative or descriptive (though extremely bare and laconic) character, and scarcely pretends to a sustained narrative or an artistic style. On the other hand, the folk story or fairy tale *(muinasjutt),* with its complicated plot, vivid characters and tense development, is a product of the imagination in which the element of conscious artistry is always well to the fore.

The legend belongs to the earliest stratum of folklore, and most of the examples gathered evidently belong to the pre-



Kalevipoeg in sleep *(Kr. Raud, 1933)*

Christian era, and their materials are drawn from the ancient folk beliefs of the remotest past. The genetic and exegetical legends constitute a characteristic attempt to explain the salient features of the external world, the appearance of living creatures and the origin of the most striking natural phenomena. The mythological legends introduce us to a world of spirits, demons, fairies, hobgoblins and other supernatural beings derived from personified conceptions of nature and natural phenomena. The characteristic hero and giant legends of Estonian folklore are mainly centred around Kalevipoeg and the island figure of Suur Tõll (Big Tõll). Most of the giant legends are associated with attempts to explain the origin of certain landscape elements, although they have also been somewhat influenced by Scandinavian motives. The local or topographical legends describe various fantastic events related to certain hills, lakes, buildings, villages etc. Last of all come the historical legends, which are mainly concerned with the wars that have so frequently ravaged Estonian territory; others contain stories about outbreaks of the plague or times of famine. The very fact that so many of the legends are associated with certain places or natural objects has ensured their persistence,

and many of them have provided Estonian literature with materials in the modern period. Most remarkable of all is the extensive network of legends concerning the giant Kalevipoeg, which after passing through various phases of development in the more distant past, was eventually chosen as the basis for the creation of an Estonian national epic in the 19th century.

The folk tales* bear a distinctly more literary character than the legends. They may be described as an attempt to escape from the dull world of everyday life into a romantic fairy land where all our longings are fulfilled and our dreams come true, where right triumphs over wrong and kindness over cruelty. They are invariably based upon some kind of supernatural element, an object with magic properties, some kind of magic power or quality which helps the hero to overcome his troubles and brings him to final victory. Another type consists of the animal stories, which are often strongly moralising in tone and which usually contain no supernatural elements apart from the basic device of attributing to animals the speech and personality of human beings. There are also more realistic stories of everyday life, quite free from supernatural effects, in which a poor lad or character of humble origin wins through to success by virtue of his skill or cunning. This last type of story — which is of later, mainly feudal, origin — is full of satire against the ruling strata and reveals a ready wit and peasant humour that brings it close to the traditional jest.

The folk tales have their own compositional and stylistic devices, their own traditional methods and stereotyped figures. They are characterised by the strongest unity of action, following the fate of only a single protagonist from beginning to end. One of the commonest devices is that of repetition (usually threefold and gradational in effect). The chief characters are placed in sharp opposition to each other, their personalities are similarly contrasted and the ending is always optimistic. With these simple means the traditional folk story reflects, in its own way, the social conditions from which it springs. Even the fairy tales and stories with a preponderating supernatural element are full of realistic details of peasant life. The king

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* The word *muinasjutt* is usually translated as 'fairy tale', but here must be taken to include all the different types of traditional folk story.

appears as the patriarchal master of a huge farm, who hires his own herdsmen and keeps a strict eye on the work in the fields, while the queen is busy in the kitchen and her daughter milks the cows. It is precisely in this peasant element, where motives borrowed from both east and west are assimilated, that the local colour is concentrated and the native quality is most evident. Unlike the folk poetry, the Estonian folk story is appreciably masculine in tone and treatment, as the traditional story-tellers were mostly men.

The folk jests are frequently similar to the realistic stories and, like them, belong to a relatively late stage in the development of folk culture. The chief compositional device is that of contrast and narrative is conducted in dialogue form. These stories are extremely varied in content and cover a wide range of situations. Social criticism is well to the fore in the large number of stories in which the German lord of the manor (corresponding roughly in the late feudal period to the English squire) and the local parson or Lutheran pastor are held up to ridicule. In the latter case we also find a strong vein of anti-clerical satire. A favourite type is the regional jest in which the humour is directed against the inhabitants of a certain locality and is largely derived from the use of



Peasants engaged in a talk *(A. Daugell, 1860s)*

dialect. Some stories poke fun at married life; others at old maids and bachelors. A relatively high proportion of the situations can be traced back to errant themes of international folklore. On the whole this branch of folklore becomes more closely related to professional literature as we approach the modern age.

The miniature genres of folk literature are of great interest, above all for their vivid evocation of popular life. The proverbs may be regarded as a condensed, aphoristic generalisation of peasant experience and, for all their universality, they retain the language of everyday rural life:

With his neighbour's horse and his own whip a man can travel a hundred versts in a single night.
A long scythe cuts a broad swath.
You must row for the boat you are sitting in.
A good housewife can make a tasty pudding from the spokes of a cartwheel.
Don't throw your old shirt away while the flax is still growing in the field.
An empty barrel makes a big noise.
There's no need to teach an old cripple how to limp.
A little pebble may upset a great cartload.

As for the folk riddles, they were intended, with their metaphorical inventiveness, to sharpen people's wits and develop their powers of observation, as well as to encourage a certain propensity for poetic paraphrase. In both proverbs and riddles ancient traditional motives are often combined with added literary elements of later origin. Taken together they may be said without exaggeration to embrace the whole peasant world. The idioms, saws, and picturesque sayings in which popular speech abounds sparkle with the sheer joy of repartee and imaginative expression. Of all the different types of Estonian folk literature the proverbs and folk idioms are those which were later to be most extensively utilised in professional literature.

As this brief survey of Estonian folklore should make clear, the ancient Estonians possessed a rich and varied unwritten literature which satisfied the spiritual needs of the peasantry long before the formation of the literary language and the appearance of the first printed texts. Indeed, it continued to flourish after them, preserving its vitality right up to the

birth of an independent national literature in the middle of the 19th century. From then on folk literature began to decline, but even today it can by no means be regarded as extinct and it still occupies a place of honour in the cultural heritage of the people. Its fascination for the modern generation may be attributed to a variety of factors. It helps us to appreciate and understand the ideas and aspirations of our distant forefathers. Still more, it is an inexhaustible source of poetic experience and inspiration.

THE EARLIEST RECORDS OF THE ESTONIAN LANGUAGE

The conquest of Estonia and the forcible Christianisation of the Estonian people created an alien ruling class composed of German and Danish feudal overlords, both of whom spoke foreign languages. The clergy and the town authorities were also of alien origin. In these conditions the normal development of Estonian society together with the inner differentiation that it would inevitably have brought in its train, was frustrated, and feudal exploitation acquired a certain colonial character. Step by step the whole of the native population was forced into the status of a peasant serfdom. Thus the Estonians were deprived of the possibility of achieving more developed forms of culture, including that of creating their own national literature. The Catholic doctrine itself called at that time for little more than the mechanical repetition of a few Latin prayers, and even these were forbidden to be translated into Estonian right up to the end of the 15th century for fear of encouraging an outbreak of heresy. Latin was also at first an auxiliary official language of the feudal ruling class, though it began to lose ground to Low German from the 14th century onwards, and to High German from the middle of the 16th century.

As we have stated above, the Chronicle of Henrik, which dates from the beginning of the 13th century, already contained a certain number of Estonian personal and place names, together with Estonian words and expressions. A still larger number of Estonian proper nouns (approximately 500 place names related to North Estonia) is to be found in the lists

contained in the "*Liber Census Daniae*", dating from the forties of the 13th century. By the end of the 15th century the Catholic church was beginning to realise the necessity of encouraging the use of the vernacular in order to increase its prestige, and about this time we find the first mention of priests of Estonian origin. The first consecutive Estonian text that has been preserved dates from the beginning of the 16th century. This is the so-called Kullamaa manuscript, which contains clumsy translations of the *paternoster*, *ave* and *credo*, and is interesting evidence of the fact that the Catholic church itself, before the Reformation, attempted to exploit the language of the people in its own interests.

The first books and principal manuscripts. The beginnings of the Estonian book date back to the struggle of the Reformation. The Lutheran church, which proclaimed as one of its main principles the conducting of the service in the language spoken by the congregation, urgently needed Estonian texts that could be used for this purpose, the more so since the vast majority of its ministers were of foreign extraction. The use of printing, which was then beginning to gain ground, served as a further stimulus. We know from indirect evidence that a collection of Lutheran texts in Estonian, Livonian and Lettish was printed at Lübeck in 1525, only to be promptly confiscated and destroyed by the local authorities. In 1535 a Lutheran catechism with parallel Low-German and Estonian texts was published at Wittenberg by two clergymen from Tallinn — Simon W a n r a d t, who came from the Rhine country, and Johann K o e l l (Kool), who was probably an Estonian. Two years later this book was also removed from circulation and apparently destroyed. Only a few fragments have survived and these were not discovered till 1929. There are records of other sixteenth-century Estonian books and manuscripts that have been lost in the religious struggles or the wars by which they were followed. They include among other things a South-Estonian catechism compiled by the Tartu pastor F. Witten and printed at Lübeck in 1554; and some manuscript translations of hymns and extracts from the Bible made at Tallinn about the middle of the 16th century.

The long-drawn-out Livonian War that broke out in 1558 desolated the whole country. As a result of the war the Livonian Order collapsed and Estonian territory was partitioned

between Poland, Sweden and Denmark. The ensuing struggle for supremacy between these three powers was further complicated by Russia's determination to find an outlet to the sea. It has been calculated that nearly two-thirds of the population were destroyed during the military campaigns or the outbreaks of famine and plague that followed in their wake. The Estonian people was now in danger of complete extinction and by the beginning of the 17th century there were only 60,000—70,000 Estonians left.

The clerical literature of the period was split into two currents by the fact that the Lutheran church remained supreme in the north, which had been annexed to Sweden, whereas the Polish authorities in the south made every effort to restore the Catholic faith. In the protestant north religious texts, mainly collections of homilies, circulated among clergymen in manuscript form from hand to hand. One such collection, which is at the same time one of the most extensive early Estonian texts, is a manuscript of 341 pages containing 39 sermons, compiled by Georg Müller (Jurgen Muller) in the years 1600—1606. The latter, who had been educated abroad, was a well-read man with a wide range of interests and his sermons are studded with allusions to the writers and philosophers of antiquity. His theological disquisitions are full of references to contemporary problems and contain interesting descriptions of events that took place in the neighbourhood of Tallinn during the first years of the 17th century.

The centre of Catholic propaganda in South Estonia was Tartu, where the Jesuits used every means to attain their ends, including the use of the local language. A *gymnasium* or grammar school was founded at Tartu in 1583, followed one or two years later by a seminary for translators and a priests' training college which included a number of Estonians among its pupils. The church authorities even went so far as to organise spectacular religious theatrical performances for the entertainment of the townspeople. J. A. Weltherus, who is known to have delivered sermons in the Estonian language at Tartu, also translated a few religious works into Estonian between 1605 and 1610; but these have been lost. The only surviving publication of the Catholic period that contains religious texts in the South-Estonian dialect is the "*Agenda Parva*", a handbook for the use of priests printed at Braunsberg in 1622. Mention

is made of several other Estonian handbooks and catechisms, some of which are said to have contained rhymed hymns, but none of them have come down to us.

The Estonian books and manuscripts that came into being as a result of the struggle between the Catholic and the Lutheran churches naturally served the interests of religious propaganda. Their authors and the men who made use of them in the course of their professional activities were for the most part priests or clergymen of foreign extraction. The same religious struggle which had caused them to be written brought about the destruction of most of them, and there is little evidence to suggest that they enjoyed any wide circulation among the people. But at least they set an example in their use of the Estonian language. From this point of view they may be said to have introduced a tradition that was to be taken up by the religious writings of the succeeding period. And these in their turn, notwithstanding their undisputed functional one-sidedness, contributed indirectly to the work of creating the preliminary conditions for the formation of a genuine Estonian literature at a later date.

Religious literature under Swedish rule. With the truce of Altmark in 1629 the whole of continental Estonia passed to Sweden, followed in 1645 by the island of Saaremaa. The Swedish government set itself the aim of establishing the Lutheran church in all the East-Baltic provinces, as was the case in Sweden itself, and with this in view took steps to encourage the propagation of religious instruction. New grammar schools *(gymnasiums)* were founded at Tallinn and Tartu, the latter being converted into a university *(Academia Gustaviana)* in 1632, though for all practical purposes it was not open to Estonians. Both towns were also equipped with printing presses, and the one at Tallinn, which was brought into operation in 1633, was destined to play a preponderant role in the history of Estonian printing.

As most of the clergymen had only the most rudimentary acquaintance with the Estonian language, they were forced to rely to a large extent on manuscript texts which passed from hand to hand. In the course of time, these were collected, adapted, and published in the form of church handbooks. In this connection one of the most active figures was Heinrich S t a h l, an influential divine from North Estonia who astutely

procured the support of the authorities both in publishing his own works and engineering the rejection of those of his rivals. His chief works are the "*Hand- und Hauszbuch für das Fürstenthumb Esthen in Liffland*" (1632—38), a manual in four volumes with parallel texts in German and Estonian, and the "*Leyen Spiegel*", a collection of homilies in two volumes (I 1641, II 1649), which is also bilingual. About the same time (1632) Joachim Rossihnius published a catechism together with the Gospels and Epistles from the New Testament in the South-Estonian dialect. The publication of these religious works in two different dialects was due to the division of Estonia between the bishoprics of Tallinn and Riga, a circumstance that long hindered the formation of a common written language. The handbooks themselves were mainly intended for the use of the clergy; their language is crude and unidiomatic, and their orthography is mechanically transferred from the German. The first grammars and primers by H. Stahl (1637), J. Gutslaff (1648), and H. Göseken (1660) also forcibly attempt to remould Estonian according to the rules of the German language.

A new, emended and augmented edition of the above-mentioned four-volume handbook was published at Tallinn in 1655 and 1656. The main changes concerned the hymnal, which in the old edition published by Stahl had taken the form of a literal prose translation of the commonest Lutheran chorales. The new hymnal ("*Neu Ehstnisches Gesangbuch*", 1656), was prepared by G. Saleman and contained tentative verse translations of 241 hymns. The most successful of these were willingly accepted and long retained their popularity among the masses of the people. The prayer book included in the manual also contained a selection of religious and didactic poetry.

Towards the middle of the 17th century the question was raised of producing a complete translation of the Bible, parts of which (the Gospels and Epistles) had already been published by Stahl and Rossihnius. A manuscript North-Estonian translation of the New Testament was compiled in the years 1640—60, but failed to reach the press. On the other hand the South-Estonian translation by Andreas and Adrian Virginius was published in 1686 at Riga. Here, too, were published other works in the South-Estonian dialect, including a catechism, a hymnal and the three-volume church handbook of 1690—91.

As a result of all this activity the southern dialect gained a temporary advantage over the northern. A further stimulus was supplied in the shape of the new, corrected and standardised orthography put forward by B. G. Forselius and others, which was adopted by the Riga publishers, and eventually established by the authority of J. Hornung's North-Estonian primer "*Grammatica Esthonica*", published at Riga in 1693, and followed shortly after by a new North-Estonian handbook in 1694—95.

The fact that Riga had begun to publish religious literature in the North-Estonian dialect, and even in an improved form, based on an orthography that differed from that employed by Stahl, roused the fierce resentment of the Tallinn Consistory and gave rise to a prolonged conflict between the two dioceses that had the effect of retarding the publication of books in the Estonian language. As a result of the complaints of the North-Estonian clergy, the books published in Riga — though markedly superior from the linguistic point of view — were sequestered and removed from circulation. Both bishoprics subsequently applied their attention to the task of translating the Bible, but here, too, they failed to reach an agreement on the orthography to be used. True, complete translations were eventually forthcoming in both dialects, but thanks to the intrigues of the Tallinn Consistory, neither of them was printed. Before long the outbreak of the Northern War and the new situation to which it gave rise made publication impossible, and it was not till half a century later that the Estonian Bible was finally to see the light of day.

School-books, administrative and legal texts. The Swedish authorities did much to encourage the spread of literacy among the Estonian peasantry. In 1641 we already hear of attempts to produce an Estonian hornbook. Unfortunately, as we may see from an Estonian primer which appeared in 1662, the teaching in the peasant schools aimed at little more than making the children learn by heart the basic dogmas of religion and scarcely approached the problem of teaching them to read. It was not until the closing decades of the 17th century that the native schools achieved a certain degree of success, and this was mainly due to the efforts of the young and energetic teacher Bengt Gottfried F o r s e l i u s (ca 1660—1688). It was on his initiative that the first Estonian schoolmasters' seminary was

founded at Tartu in 1684, and here in the course of the next few years more than 150 teachers passed through his hands. Forselius, too, published an Estonian hornbook in 1686, which later ran into several editions. In this way, in the teeth of the opposition of the Baltic-German nobility, schools were opened in many parishes and the first steps were taken to put an end to illiteracy among the Estonian population. The teaching was naturally of a highly rudimentary nature: Bible lessons, hymn-singing and the reading of religious texts absorbed most of the time, and only in a few exceptional cases were the children taught writing or elementary arithmetic. To judge from the titles of some of the school-books published at the end of the century the reading matter consisted for the most part of catechisms taken from the church handbooks. A new, abridged hymnal was also published specially for use in the schools. Unfortunately the publication of educational materials also suffered as a result of the conflict between the two bishoprics, and as Forselius was associated with Riga, his innovations met with bitter opposition at Tallinn, where every possible obstacle was placed in his path and his text-books were banned.

Nevertheless, in spite of all the forces ranged against them, the very existence of books in the Estonian language and the halting progress of the Estonian schools towards the end of the 17th century could not but make themselves felt. The German titles and subtitles of earlier days began to give place to Estonian ones; and the books themselves were no longer used exclusively by the clergy, but also by the Estonian peasants. This growing level of literacy is reflected in many of the official documents of the time. The Swedish authorities published government decrees and proclamations in the Estonian language, containing warnings, official statements, commands and regulations. A special book of instructions containing rules of conduct, punishments etc. was issued in 1697 for the use of Estonian soldiers. We should add that it was precisely at this time that the first periodical newspaper made its appearance in Estonia: the German-language "*Revalsche Post-Zeitung*" (1689—1710).

Occasional poetry. The Estonian occasional verses of the 17th century differ substantially from the texts that were compiled for the benefit of the peasantry. With few exceptions they were produced by wealthy amateurs for whom the composition

of verses in German, Latin, Greek and other languages was a favourite diversion. They were modelled on the German *Gelegenheitsgedichte* that formed so characteristic a feature of the aristocratic baroque literature of the times, and may be regarded as a direct offshoot of the same. One of its chief sources of inspiration was the activity of the well-known German poet Paul Fleming, who in the sixteen-thirties repeatedly visited Tallinn in the company of his friend Adam Olearius and produced a considerable quantity of verse in commemoration of the birthdays and other anniversaries of his acquaintances there. His example was taken up by the local poetasters, some of whom were professors of the Tallinn grammar school, or *gymnasium*, and together they founded a literary pastoral circle. The most talented member of this group, apart from Fleming himself, was Reiner Brocmann (1609—1647), a former student of the universities of Hamburg and Rostock, who wrote society verse in several different languages, including Estonian, and translated a large number of Lutheran chorales for inclusion in the Estonian hymnal. It was also largely through Fleming that the poetic principles of Martin Opitz, the German literary theorist, found their way into the first tentative examples of Estonian secular poetry.

Of the Estonian occasional poems of the 17th century more than a score have survived, but these evidently represent a tiny fraction of the original number, and new discoveries have been made up to quite recent times. Nuptial poems, threnodies and verse dedications account for the vast majority of them. Most of them are to be found together with occasional verses in other languages in the small booklets or printed sheets etc. that were distributed to the wedding guests, or to the mourners at funerals. Some of them have been preserved in manuscript form. Perhaps the most characteristic of the period — certainly the most numerous of those that have come down to us, — are the nuptial poems, three of which were written by Brocmann. These songs often combine religious ideas with frivolous witticisms and even spicy allusions in the most curious way. But as a general rule the poems are frigid and clumsy, partly no doubt on account of the author's inadequate knowledge of the Estonian language, but also because of his obvious lack of poetic skill. One of the best of them is the anonymous poem beginning "*Armasz kallisz kuldene Wend*" ("Dearest brother, heart

of gold"), the style of which is distinctly more colourful and idiomatic. There is reason to believe that several of these Estonian songs, publicly recited by some distinguished guest in the festive hall, may have enjoyed a certain popularity among the Estonian population through the medium of the servants. These experiments left their mark on the later development of Estonian poetry, and incidentally did much to improve the Estonian hymnal. Some religious songs were also published in the form of occasional poetry. Only a few of the funeral dirges have survived, and these are hardly to be distinguished from the traditional chorales. The four songs dedicated to the Swedish king Charles XI on the occasion of his death in 1697 constitute an exception in so far as they were addressed directly to the Estonian peasantry. The verse dedications are somewhat more numerous, mainly as a result of the custom, then widespread, to preface each new book with congratulations in verse composed by the author's friends. This custom applied not only to religious literary works, but also to some academic publications, university dissertations, etc. Nor did the tradition of occasional poetry come to an end with the 17th century: examples of all the genres mentioned above have survived from the beginning of the following period.

ESTONIAN LITERATURE DURING THE FIRST HALF OF THE 18TH CENTURY

The "Lamentation for the Destruction of Tartu". The Northern War, which broke out in 1700, converted Estonia into an arena for the hostilities between Sweden and Russia, in the course of which the countryside was devastated and the Estonian peasants suffered untold misery and privation. Agriculture was brought to a standstill, famine and the plague stalked through the land, exterminating nearly 70 per cent of the population. All attempts to bring education within the reach of the masses of the people were cut short, and the publication of books in the Estonian language came to an end. One of the most dramatic episodes of the war was the utter destruction of Tartu — one of the chief trading centres and seats of learning in the country — in 1708.

With the capitulation of Pärnu and Tallinn in 1710 the whole of Estonian territory was incorporated in the Russian Empire and

a new epoch began in the history of the Estonian people. One positive result of this situation was the fact that Estonia was now freed from the nightmare of war for the next two centuries, and during this long period of peace the population began to increase once again. On the other hand, however, the Baltic-German nobility succeeded in winning extensive privileges from the Czarist government, as the result of which the system of serfdom was intensified and the conditions of the peasantry steadily deteriorated. All this left its mark on the cultural life and educational facilities of the masses of the people, which for a long period remained considerably beneath the level attained at the end of the 17th century.

The events of the Northern War form the subject of the famous "Lament" which deplores the tragic fate of Tartu. The poem is dated 1708, but the original manuscript has not survived and the present text is based on a copy made in 1714 by J. H. Grotjan, who identifies the author as Käsu Hans (Käszo Hansz), the Estonian clerk of a rural parish in the environs of Tartu. The poem contains 32 stanzas and is written in the South-Estonian dialect. It contrasts the former prosperity of the town with its present state of utter desolation, and is written in the form of a monologue delivered by the personified town itself, which deplores its tragic lot, attributing it to an act of divine punishment for the sins of its former life. The events are described from the Swedish standpoint. It gives vivid pictures of the atrocities and suffering caused by the war, described with passionate intensity. The very contents and attitudes of this jeremiad prevented it from being published, but fragments of it circulated orally in South Estonia. The style is that of a typical religious ode, but the complicated structure and metre of the poem suggest that the author must have been influenced by certain concrete literary examples. In this connection attention has been drawn to the affinities of the poem with a prose account of the destruction of Jerusalem (actually the translation of a précis of the corresponding part of Flavius Josephus' "Jewish War"), which was appended to the church handbooks published at Riga, whereas the stanza pattern is paralleled in the hymnal.

Religious publications. Long before the wounds left by the war had begun to heal in the countryside, the clergy once again mobilised its forces for the publication of religious works in the

Estonian language. They had at their disposal a number of manuscripts compiled during the pre-war period. These were now edited and enlarged, most of the work being carried out by young theologians with pronounced Pietistic leanings from the University of Halle. Quite soon after the cessation of hostilities in Estonia H. Gutsleff edited and published a North-Estonian New Testament (1715), preceded by a foreword in German which contained the first known survey of earlier Estonian religious literature. A new manual was also prepared, thoroughly revised and expanded with additions of a Pietistic nature. It was printed at Halle in 1721 but this first edition was followed by numerous reprints, and the work was widely used as an elementary reading text. Then came a new hornbook, a catechism and a few other works of the kind. Meanwhile the South-Estonian dialect was represented only by reprints of the New Testament and hymnal.

But the central enterprise of the first half of the 18th century, and indeed the outstanding achievement of the whole of Estonian religious literature, was the publication of the Bible, which had been prepared by years of preliminary labour. Nevertheless, it proved impossible to collect and edit all the earlier manuscript translations and the whole of the Old Testament had to be translated anew from the Hebrew original. A leading part in this undertaking was played by Anton Thor Helle (1683—1748), of Tallinn, who was not only one of the finest exponents of the North-Estonian dialect at that time, as his translations from the Bible convincingly prove, but the author of an Estonian primer published in 1732. His collaborator was H. Gutsleff. The manuscript was completed in 1736 and thanks to the vigorous intercession of Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, the leader of the Moravian Brethren, who happened to be in the Baltic area at the time, was shortly afterwards placed in the hands of the printers. As a result the Estonian Bible was finally published at Tallinn in 1739. This was undoubtedly a remarkable achievement for the period, in both size (the complete text ran into 1415 pages), typographical finish, artistic presentation and, above all, the style and quality of the language.

It was naturally the intention of the church to utilise the Bible as an instrument of religious propaganda, and as time passed its efforts in this direction were attended by a large



Biibli Ramat/
se on kelt
Jummala Sanna,
mis
Pühhad Jummala Mehhed/
kes pühha Waimo läbbi juhhatud/
Manna Seädusse Ramatusse
Ebrea Kele
ja
Ue Seädusse Ramatusse
Kreka Kele
essite on ülleskirjotanud / nüüd agga hopis/
Jummala armo läbbi, mele
Eesti-Ma Kele
Essimest korda
Essimesses orsas on
TALLIN-NAS/
Trükkis sedda Jakob Joan Köler.
1739. Aastal.

Title-page and frontispiece of the Bible, 1st impression *(1739)*

measure of success. But there was another side to the question. In the general absence of reading materials the Bible was accepted as a mere story-book, especially the Old Testament, one of the outstanding narrative monuments of the ancient world. The graphic legends of the people of Israel, especially the dramatic story of its struggle for existence against its large and powerful neighbour states, the generations of slavery passed under an alien yoke, the admonitions and exhortations of the Hebrew prophets, all these struck a responsive chord in the imagination of the oppressed Estonian peasants. Nor did the descriptions of the persecution and sufferings of Christ in the New Testament remain unheeded. The very idea of Christian compassion as addressed above all to those who were overburdened and weary of spirit was invested with a special significance. Moreover, the popularity of the Bible was enhanced by its purely literary qualities, its vivid contrasts and its depth of thought, its wealth of characters and events, its

poetical allegories, and its stores of ancient popular wisdom. To these we should add the astonishing variety of the literary genres represented, ranging from myth to chronicle, from condensed aphorism to passionate exhortation, from the sublimities of the epic to the tragic pathos of the religious ode and the sweet charm of sensuous love poetry. Thus the Bible was itself a whole library to the contemporary Estonian reader. It provided rich materials for study and reflection. For a long time to come it remained the most vital and significant work in the Estonian language, and its imagery impregnated to a greater or lesser extent the consciousness of the entire people. Of course, these qualities were not without their negative aspect, and on the reverse side of the medal it must be admitted that the intensive reading of the Bible fostered the growth of religious prejudice and fanaticism, and incidentally gave rise to a disparaging attitude to folk literature, and later on to all secular literature in general.

The rustic nature of the Estonian written language, which was then still in its infancy, was by no means out of place in the translation of the Bible. On the contrary, it was in some respects a definite asset, since it permitted a high degree of latitude in stylistic experimentation. The translators tackled the formidable task of rendering into Estonian the inexhaustible variety and richness of the original with imagination and inventiveness, and in so doing considerably enriched the literary language. And lastly the Estonian Bible has yet another claim to importance in the fact that it finally confirmed the prestige of the northern dialect, which during the subsequent period was eventually selected as the basis for the standard national language.

The first almanacs and the beginning of narrative literature. It is difficult to say exactly when the first Estonian almanac was launched in Tallinn; the earliest copy that has survived dates from 1731. In addition to the calendar, it contained a reading appendix, which at first consisted exclusively of religious texts. These were mainly paraphrases of stories from the Old Testament, and they continued to appear even after the publication of the Bible. But in the seventeen-forties materials of a more secular nature begin to make their appearance: reports of military operations abroad, hints for the preservation of health, and suchlike. On the whole the almanacs were of

great practical value, and they were highly appreciated by the Estonian peasants, many of whom read little else. In the course of time they attained a wide circulation and their popularity endured long into the 19th century.

The first half of the 18th century also witnesses the birth of narrative literature in the Estonian language. At the end of Thor Helle's primer we find a series of moral dialogues written in a popular and idiomatic style, which were obviously included as an aid to foreign clergymen anxious to acquire the Estonian spoken language. The primer also includes over 500 Estonian saws and proverbs and 135 riddles, evidently destined for the same purpose. The first story-book addressed directly to the peasant reader was published in the South-Estonian dialect in 1737 by the Pietistic clergyman J. C. Quandt (1704—1750). It contains three reading texts, of which one is a dialogue; all are translated from the German, and all are equally imbued with the spirit of Pietistic propaganda. A similar work was published in 1739, in all probability compiled by the very men who were then translating and editing the Bible. The chief part of the second work is a story written in the form of a dialogue between two peasants, but here, too, the didactic element is well to the fore, great stress is laid on the reading of religious literature, and the Bible, which was then on the verge of publication, is particularly recommended. The same tendencies are evident in a booklet "Five Pious Stories", published by A. Vierorth in 1740; here we have a series of dialogues between a clergyman and a peasant, but the subject-matter is either taken directly from the Bible or aimed at propagating the Bible. Although, as will be seen, all of these early stories and dialogues were instruments of Pietistic propaganda, they set a certain example in the development of an Estonian narrative style.

Literature of the Herrnhut movement. At this point it will be necessary to insert a brief discussion of the literature of the Herrnhut movement*, which found its way into Estonia from the early years of the seventeen-thirties. This extreme form of Pietism met with a warm and responsive reception at the hands of the broad masses of the Estonian peasantry, which

* The name given to the later stage of the development of the congregation of Moravian Brethren, so called after the Christian utopian settlement founded by Zinzendorf.

had adopted an attitude of indifference or even covert opposition to the established church. The Lutheran church was part and parcel of the feudal system which so cruelly oppressed the serfs, and which it attempted to justify with all the means at its disposal. But the Herrnhut movement seemed in many ways to express the ideas of the peasants themselves. Nevertheless the role played by the fraternal congregations in the mental and cultural life of the people was, to say the least, deeply self-contradictory. On the one hand the movement, especially in its early stages, expressed a certain opposition to the system of serfdom; this was indeed the reason why it was declared illegal in Russia in 1743. At the same time it did much to assist the spread of literacy and gave birth to a number of Estonian writers. On the other hand it preached contempt of social justice and material benefits and carried on a bitter struggle against the old folk customs and traditions (including the folk songs), which it managed to extirpate completely from certain localities.

The Herrnhut literature of the 18th century circulated almost entirely in manuscript form. The only booklets printed were two small collections of hymns (1741 and 1747). But numerous manuscript copies of edifying biographies, records of activities etc. passed from hand to hand. Many of these were compiled by local preachers and sent to the centre of the movement at Herrnhut in Saxony. Several voluminous works of pious edification were translated into Estonian, but these, too, remained in manuscript form since the ban extending over the whole movement made it impossible to apply for a printing permit. One of the most active figures was M a n g o H a n s (ca 1713—1780), a teacher at an Estonian village school, who compiled several manuscript collections of sermons, translated into Estonian the treatise of "True Christianity" by the German Pietist Johann Arndt, and even produced an Estonian version of Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress", based on a German translation. Mango Hans was also the author of a large number of hymns, some of which were original, others translated from the German. Michael I g n a t i u s (1713—1777) translated a book of sermons by the German Pietist Heinrich Schubert. This outburst of literary activity among the Estonians themselves was something quite new and a remarkable enough achievement in the middle of the 18th century. Nor was the movement

of short duration. Among its later exponents mention should be made of C. M. Königseer who, with the assistance of his Estonian colleagues, saw a voluminous hymnal through the press in Germany in 1759, followed by a church service book (1761). During the second half of the century quite a few writers were engaged in the compilation of hymnals and collections of religious songs. However, in the 19th century the Herrnhut movement with its narrow-minded fanaticism had become a serious obstacle to the development of secular literature, and the founders of Estonian literature joined issue with it in a struggle which was destined to last well into the second half of the century.

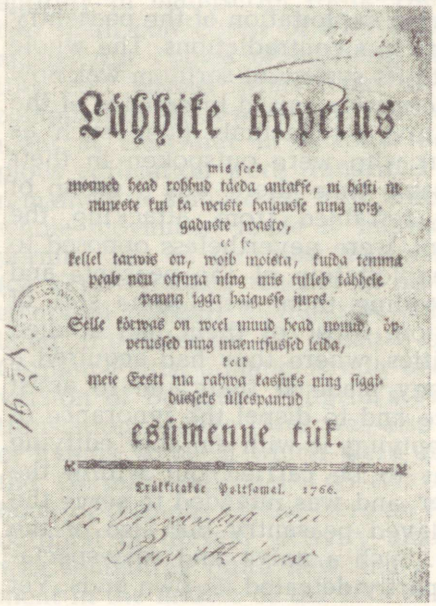
THE APPEARANCE AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF SECULAR LITERATURE AMONG THE PEASANTRY

Social roots and general characteristics. The second half of the 18th century also witnessed the intrusion of commercial money relations into the economic life of the Baltic manor. This in its turn led to an increased exploitation of the peasantry and a general intensification of class contradictions. The whole of the existing feudal order with its system of serfdom was now questioned. Here and there voices were raised in defence of the peasantry, and we find the first intellectuals (men such as J. G. Eisen and H. J. Jannau) who were outspoken in their criticism of serfdom. At the same time there was a group of littérateurs who, while they refrained from attacking the foundations of the social system, were nevertheless opposed to the most inhuman forms of exploitation of the peasants and stressed the necessity of providing them with some sort of intellectual and moral education. Most of them had studied in one of the German universities, where they had acquired a certain rationalist attitude. They made it their aim to assist the peasantry with their advice and to dispel the ignorance of the country population by supplying it with suitably edifying reading material. All this was to be carried out within the framework of the existing order, and was intended to serve the interests not only of the enslaved peasantry but also of the landlords who exploited them. Such a naïve and rosy-spectacled approach to the problem partly defeated its own ends. Yet

for all that it marked a certain step forward inasmuch as it put an end to the hegemony of religious literature.

Now for the first time since its inception, Estonian literature turned from speculation concerning the life to come and concentrated its attention on the needs and vital problems of everyday human life in the real world. After deploring the sins of humanity and threatening it with the torments of hell it now began to preoccupy itself with the terrestrial search for happiness and the pleasures of a rational existence. True, this change of attitude took place centuries later than in Western Europe, but it was none the less significant.

The new type of didactic literature set out to persuade the peasant that by being diligent, orderly and thrifty, by arranging his affairs sensibly and contenting himself with a modicum of requirements, he would be able to build up for himself a passably successful existence with which he might rest satisfied. In everything he was to do his best, but he was not to grudge or resent things that could not be changed. The illusory



Lühhike öppetus

mis sees
monned head rohhud täeda antakse, ni hästi innimeste kui ka weiste haigusse ning wiggaduste wasto,
et se
kellel tarwis on, woib moista, kuida temma peab nou otsuna ning mis tulleb tähhele panna igga haigusse jures.
Selle körwas on weel muud head nouud, öppetussed ning maenitsussed leida,
keik
meie Eesti ma rahwa kassuks ning siggidusseks üllespantud

essimenne tük.

Trükkitakse Poltsamal. 1766.

The first Estonian magazine
(1766)

and short-sighted nature of these views cannot be denied. But the literature which introduced them provided the peasants with reading materials of a new type.

One of the pioneers of the new tendency was August Wilhelm Hupel (1737—1819), a German clergyman of encyclopaedic interests and scientific habits of thought, who published a large amount of diverse information about Estonia in various German collections and periodicals. He was also the author of an Estonian primer (1780) which remained long in use. Perhaps the outstanding achievement of the period, however, was the weekly magazine "*Lühhike öppetus*" ("Information in Brief" 1766—67), published by Hupel in collaboration with the physician P. E. Wilde. This journal, which was devoted mainly to questions of medicine and hygiene, may be regarded as the first periodical publication in the Estonian language. It is full of sympathy for the sufferings of the peasants, which it attempts to relieve, while at the same time it breathes confidence in their powers of self-improvement and forging for themselves a better future. Naturally, its practical information and advice is accompanied by repeated admonitions to fear God and to respect the established framework of society.

Didactic narrative literature and poetry. The first small story book of a secular nature was published in 1778, in the South-Estonian dialect, by the clergyman J. M. von Hehn, but no copies have survived. Far more significant was the contribution made by Friedrich Wilhelm von Willmann (1746—1819), a pastor from the island of Saaremaa, who published a substantial collection of stories called "Tales and Deeds" in 1782. This collection contained nearly ninety short edifying stories and fables in prose. It was based largely on a similar work by a Latvian author G. F. Stenders, who in his turn had extensively borrowed from German didactic literature (M. Luther, C. F. Gellert, M. G. Lichtwer and others). In this way Willmann introduced to the Estonian reader a whole series of literary themes and motives that were already generally known in most European countries: traditional animal stories, parables, legends, anecdotes, tales from chap-books, literary miscellanies, etc. This varied and colourful subject-matter had at that time the fascination of novelty, and it is not surprising that, in spite of the awkwardness of its language and the conventional and orthodox character of its ideas, Willmann's story book became

widely popular among the peasants. It was frequently reprinted and nearly a third of the tales it contained were assimilated into Estonian oral folklore.

The other author of Estonian didactic literature at the end of the 18th century was Friedrich Gustav Arvelius (1753—1806), a private tutor, who was born in Tallinn but had studied at Leipzig University. Arvelius is now chiefly remembered for his two-volume collection of stories for the young "A Fine Book of Entertainment and Instruction" (I 1782, II 1787). Not more than a tenth of the stories that it contains are original; the majority were translated or freely adapted from F. E. von Rochow's reader for German village schools "*Kinderfreund*". This work (which Engels ironically criticised in his "*Anti-Dühring*") entirely suited the aims of Arvelius, who was inclined to attribute the poverty of Estonian peasants to their own stupidity, laziness, carelessness and lack of common sense. Later (1790) Arvelius also published a collection of hints on health, housekeeping and husbandry, largely based on a popular handbook written by the German journalist R. Z. Becker.

From the seventies of the 18th century the almanac supplements carried, in addition to Bible stories, edifying tales and items of practical information, together with extracts from the above-mentioned books. It was not until the end of the century was in sight that these began to be interspersed with pieces of poetry. The author of these verses, the pastor Joachim Gottlieb Schwabe (1754—1800), was well aware of the miserable conditions in which the peasants lived, and his sympathy was still more marked in those poems which remained in manuscript. Previous to Schwabe, a few pastoral or sentimental pieces in Estonian had found their way into various German publications. Of the poems addressed directly to the Estonian reader one of the most interesting is an anonymous work from the last decade of the century entitled "An Old Story about a Thief". This poem, which is written in the form of a dialogue spoken in blunt and racy popular language, contains a lively description of some typical incidents of contemporary everyday life (stealing from the manor, drinking, corporal punishment etc.). It has been attributed to Count P. von Mannteuffel, who about this time wrote a certain amount of fugitive anachreontic poetry, which however did not reach the press; to his stories, published somewhat later, we shall return in due course.

Narrative literature and poetry at the beginning of the 19th century. At the turn of the century, as the crisis of the feudal system in the Baltic area deepened, and the conditions of the enslaved peasantry deteriorated, a new, sharply critical note crept into literature, and several of the articles published in the German-language press were inspired by the spirit of the French revolution. One of the most influential writers of this period was Garlieb Helwig M e r k e l (1769—1850) from Livonia whose books, all of which were published in Germany, passionately condemned the mediaeval forms of exploitation which still persisted in the Baltic countries after a century of enlightenment in Europe. Merkel's example was followed up by Johann Christoph P e t r i (1762—1851), who came from Thuringia, but worked in the Baltic for about a dozen years as a private tutor. On his return to his native country, Petri published a whole series of lengthy works dealing with conditions in Estonia, the most important of them being the three-volume survey "*Ehstland und die Ehsten*" (1802). Herder himself, who had lived in Riga during his youth, included in the second part of his collection of "*Volkslieder*" (1779) a few translations of Estonian folk songs, selecting amongst others a characteristic poem in which a serf complains of his pitiless oppression at the hands of the manor. C. H. J. Schlegel, a German writer from Jena, who had also worked for some time as a private teacher in Estonia, was deeply interested in Estonian folk poetry, of which he published a considerable quantity.

This enlightened and compassionate attitude to the living conditions, history and the traditional culture of the Estonian people paved the way for a more friendly and liberal outlook among the local German intellectuals. In 1813 the Pärnu clergyman Johann Heinrich R o s e n p l ä n t e r (1782—1846) launched his "*Beiträge zur genauern Kenntniss der ehstnischen Sprache*", which attained their twentieth issue in 1832 and which, in addition to problems of the language devoted considerable space to Estonian literature and folklore. The staff of the university founded at Tartu in 1802 similarly exhibited an interest in the Estonian people; apropos, Curator of the University from 1803 to 1816 was F. M. von Klinger, a former leader of the *Sturm und Drang* movement in German literature. The first newspaper catering for the Estonian population was also published under the auspices of the University. This was the South-

Estonian "*Tarto maa rahwa Näddali-Leht*" ("Tartu Country Weekly"), edited by two clergymen J. P. von Roth and G. A. Oldekop, which began to appear in 1806 but was suppressed by the Czarist authorities after the forty-first issue as unsuitable for the peasant reader.

Such criticism of serfdom as found its way into the German-language publications was, of course, strictly excluded from the Estonian works of the period that were destined for the use of the peasant masses. The general tone of the latter — both of the children's books and books written for adults — was calculated to inculcate a spirit of civil obedience and respect for authority. One of the first was "A Little Book of Teaching and Reading" (1805), compiled by Georg Gottfried Marpurg in the South-Estonian dialect and containing a miscellaneous selection of edifying texts. The "Saaremaa Story-book" (I 1807, II 1812) by Johann Wilhelm Ludwig von L u c e (1750—1842) had the advantage of including some apparently original stories, but was conservative in its views and dry and pedantic in tone. The "Reader for Guiding the Minds and Hearts of the Estonian Country People" (1817) by the pastor Otto Reinhold von H o l t z (1757—1828) reflects the growing influence of Neo-Pietist thought. Holtz also is fundamentally reactionary in his social ideas; he supports the agrarian reforms carried out in the interests of the Baltic-German landlords. Nevertheless his book has something more to offer than the usual religious exhortations to piety. Interspersed between pages of dull moralising we find a few episodes of foreign origin and superior literary value, and some original sketches of village life not devoid of a certain liveliness of expression and originality of style.

An appreciable part of the reading-matter of the Estonian peasant in the 19th century was made up of the almanacs or serial calendars, of which three now regularly appeared — two in Tallinn and one in Tartu. They carried much the same kind of moral tales as the story-books, but more verses than before. At the same time the first independent fascicules of verses began to appear. These were: "Some Songs" (1806), a collection of sentimental poems translated from the German; "Songs of the Estonian Territorials" (1807), inspired by the struggle against Napoleon; and "Tales" (1816), a selection of verse fables, ballads and odes. The author of the last two was the pastor Rein-

hold Johann Winkler (1767—1815), who mainly followed in the steps of the eighteenth-century German poets (Gellert, Bürger and others). In 1814 Rosenplänter published a booklet "Little Blossoms", drawn from the Estonian verses that had appeared in his "*Beiträge*". Meanwhile Gustav Adolph Oldekop (1755—1838) was producing in the South-Estonian dialect idyllic poetry, part of which was printed in the Tartu calendar, while many lyrics attained a wide oral circulation, passing from mouth to mouth in the form of popular songs.

About the same time the traditional folk song was undergoing significant changes. Partly perhaps as the result of a change in mentality — the crystallisation of a more "modern" outlook, — but partly also as the result of literary influences, a new type using end-rhymes sprang up alongside the old alliterative *regivärss* and after a comparatively short space of time became the leading form. This new type of folk poetry contained an appreciable "borrowed" element, largely adopted from the traditional German dance songs and sentimental ballads that were popular at the manor. But the process of assimilation gave rise first to variations, and subsequently to entirely new songs based on German models. Finally, about the middle of the 19th century, the old alliterative type of folk song began to lose ground and was eventually superseded by the new, which not only enjoyed the advantage of novelty but was more varied in mood, metre and tune.

An experimental move in an entirely new direction was made by the authors of the first playlets in the Estonian language, which made their appearance in the first quarter of the 19th century. They were staged as additional pieces by the troupe of the German theatre at Tallinn, which also carried them to Pärnu. A leading part in this initiative was played by the Estonian actor P. A. J. Steinsberg, who produced three short plays of which the most effective was a farce in two acts performed in 1824 under the title of "The Dream of Jack Barm", imitated from Kotzebue's "*Der Trunkenbold*", which was based in its turn on Holberg's "*Jeppe på Bjerget*".

Otto Wilhelm Masing. The most prominent figure in the preparatory period of the development of Estonian literature is probably O. W. Masing (1763—1832). He may be regarded as representing the period when the abolition of serfdom by the decrees of 1816 and 1819 aroused among the liberal strata

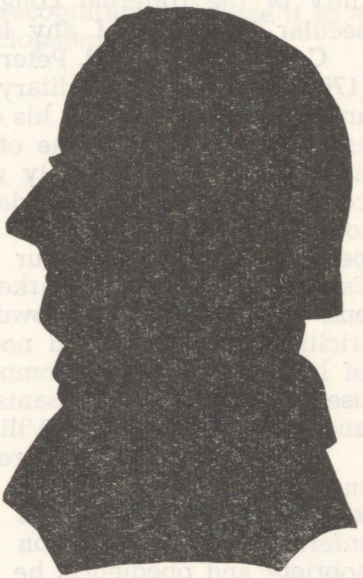
of the professional classes more concrete hopes of educating the peasantry and creating a national Estonian culture. Masing, too, a native Estonian (although he always regarded himself as a German writer), worked tirelessly in the cause of stimulating the mental and cultural activities of the peasantry. A clergyman by profession, he had nevertheless acquired a rationalist outlook. His studies at Halle University and his travels through Europe had equipped him with a substantial erudition covering a wide range of subjects. He resembled his predecessors in so far as he was also inclined to regard social relations as inevitable and immutable; but he was the first to lay such stress on the rights of the peasants, as the creators of all material wealth, to receive an education. He published his Estonian texts with the express aim of stamping out illiteracy; and in the prevailing atmosphere of aggressive Neo-Pietism his readiness to take up the cudgels with religious fanaticism and false piety frequently placed him, as a clergyman, in an extremely difficult position.

Masing devoted considerable attention to the problem of developing the Estonian language, and firmly defended the northern dialect as the basis for a unified standard national tongue. In his hands written Estonian became much more natural and idiomatic, and was to a large extent disencumbered from the Germanisms with which it had been so long embarrassed. With his thorough knowledge of Estonian he was able to enrich the literary language with a large number of new words and phrases drawn from popular speech. He himself regarded an adequate knowledge of Estonian as essential to all classes of society — above all to those who came into direct contact with the peasantry. With this ideal in view he published a special booklet "*Ehstnische Originalblätter für Deutsche*" (1816), in which he makes an interesting attempt to demonstrate the flexibility and expressiveness of the speech of the Estonian peasants by discussing the most varied problems of literature and philosophy. Indeed, his frequent references to the ancients and to the great thinkers of the European Enlightenment are clearly designed to emulate the sparkle and elegance of the classical essay.

Masing, who knew many foreign languages, was an exceptionally well-read man with a wide experience of literature. But with the typical narrowness of outlook of the rationalist, he

looked on folk poetry with indifference, or even disparagement, and quite failed to appreciate its artless beauty. Literature, too, in its more pretentious and refined forms, he considered to be beyond the scope of the Estonian peasant. For this reason he deliberately adopted a popular, simple manner, confining himself to practical everyday questions of an immediate educational value. Typical of this approach was his "Leisure Readings for Sundays" (1818), a book about distant lands, their scenery and their peoples, which attained a remarkable degree of interest and variety for the time. The whole work bespeaks a sensible, practical attitude to life which was warmly appreciated by the more enlightened of his readers.

Masing's "*Marahwa Näddala-Leht*" ("Rural Weekly"), of which four yearly sets were completed (1821—23, 1825) was a remarkable early example of what may be called personal journalism, and at the same time it was the first Estonian periodical that lasted for any considerable length of time. Moreover, the influence of the "Weekly" was by no means limited to the years of publication. The annual sets were bound into separate vol-



Otto Wilhelm Masing

umes and in this form remained the favourite reading of the country people for dozens of years, thus showing, incidentally, how closely the journalism of the period was still bound up in both content and form with the traditional popular forms of the almanac and miscellany. Here, too, Masing expressed his favourite ideas, the harm done by stupidity and superstition, the need for schools and universal education, etc. In addition he found time to discuss various economic and commercial problems, and to offer useful practical hints on farming and the preservation of health. He attempted to broaden the outlook of the country people by inserting a large number of geographical descriptions, historical notes, scientific explanations and — in so far as that was possible — comments on the outstanding events that took place both at home and abroad. He even included a number of purely literary items, such as the instructive fable "The Dancing Bear" (after C. F. Gellert), which enjoyed a lasting popularity among the masses of the people. Unfortunately, however, the circulation of the "Weekly" was too small for Masing to continue publication over a longer period of time; and he was seriously hampered by the hostility of the fraternal congregations and the Neo-Pietists to secular literature of any kind.

Count Mannteuffel. Peter August Friedrich von Mannteuffel (1768—1842), the hereditary possessor of several manors, was an exceptional figure in his class. His peculiar habits and interests won him the name of "the Mad Count"; and indeed his behaviour was highly unconventional, from his romantic companionship with the daughter of a Thuringian shepherd to his spectacular attempts to construct a flying machine. He performed at the amateur theatre in Tallinn, and produced Estonian verses of a markedly hedonistic character. At the end of a long career crowded with the most fantastic eccentricities this strange old nobleman devoted the leisure hours of his senility to the compilation of two story-books for the use of the Estonian peasants "Readings by the Fireside" (1838) and "The Life Story of Villem Navi" (1839).

Mannteuffel treats the relations between village and manor in a patriarchal spirit. His pen is guided by the desire of a kindly landlord to ensure the well-being of his uneducated inferiors. Yet, in addition to teaching the peasant decency, sobriety and obedience, he wishes to provide him with some-

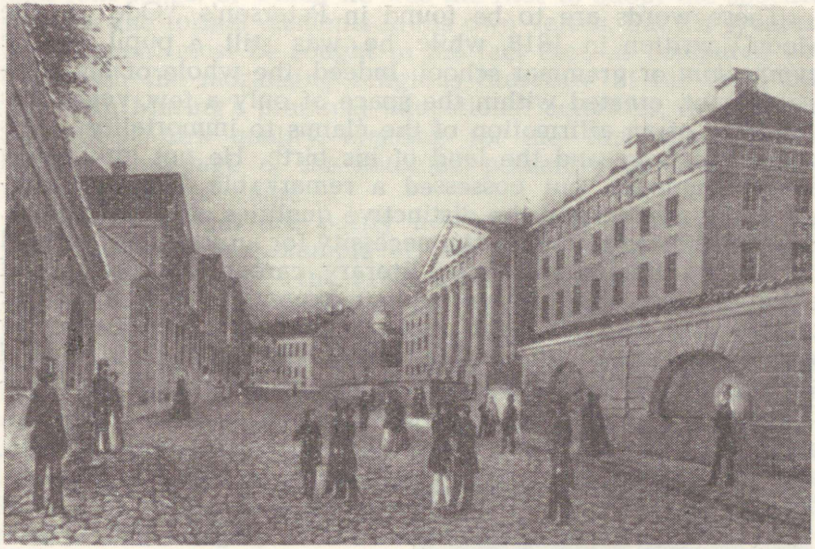
thing entertaining to read. He treats him with sympathy, respects his customs and traditions, and even appreciates his artless folk songs. Mannteuffel is more than a mere didactic writer: he is sincerely interested in his self-imposed task of describing to the people their own life in their own language. He has an eye for picturesque details and a gift for sketching vivid portraits of the country people. And lastly, we must give him credit for his jovial temperament and for the boisterous humour that pervades his work. These qualities earned his "Readings by the Fireside" a warm reception among the peasants at large which the Neo-Pietist elements among the clergy were unable to destroy.

As will be seen from the above, wide divergencies had sprung up by this time in the conceptions of the nature and functions of popular literature. The gulf which now separated religious and secular literature was destined to grow still wider in the succeeding years, when a new generation of Estonian writers, with fundamentally new ideas, was to put forward a new, national programme for the renovation of literature that was to transform it almost beyond recognition and raise it to a qualitatively higher level of development.

FORMATION OF THE ESTONIAN NATIONAL LITERATURE

THE GERMINATION OF A NEW EPOCH

During the first quarter of the 19th century, precisely at the same time when Rosenplänter was publishing his pro-Estonian "*Beiträge*" and Masing was preparing his educational texts for the peasants, a few of the younger Estonian intellectuals were entertaining far more radical thoughts concerning the cultural life of the people and cherishing far more daring dreams of the future. They could not hope, in the circumstances then prevailing, to bring their ideas before the people; but this early period of intellectual fermentation and speculative impulse was an important preliminary stage, an indispensable prologue to the decisive events of the succeeding period. In this significant background we can discern the figure of an exceptionally talented young man who raised Estonian poetry to such a height of artistic perfection that almost a century was to pass before his work was fully appreciated; we find, too, a narrow circle of students who discussed vehemently among themselves ways and means of asserting the prestige of the oppressed people to which they belonged. But however inarticulate and isolated they might seem, they were not the products of mere chance. Rather might they be said to resemble the sparks emitted at the points of intersection of cross-currents of intellectual tension, the first faint gleams of light barely perceptible in the intense gloom immediately preceding the dawn. They responded to real social forces, including the enlightened German writers who openly criticised the irresponsible despotism of the landed gentry and called for a more humane attitude towards the oppressed and degraded native Estonian population. Still more were they influenced, perhaps, by the agrarian reforms that had been carried out under the pressure of circumstances and to avert the menace of peasant unrest. The knowledge that serfdom had at least been abolished *de jure* gave birth to the fleeting and illusory sensation that momentous changes had actually already taken place in the status of the country people — a sensation that



Tartu University *(Fr. Schlater, 1837—1842)*

was calculated to turn the heads of even the maturest thinkers, to say nothing of a handful of radical students. Unfortunately it was soon to become apparent that the emancipated but landless peasantry had yet to traverse a long and weary road before they could hope to achieve any real measure of freedom from the tyranny of the manor. There was something tragic about this false dawn, just as there was an element of tragedy in the destiny of the first outstanding Estonian poet — K. J. Peterson.

Kristjan Jaak Peterson (1801—1822) may be regarded as the precursor, or herald, of the Estonian national literature. His poetry is charged with a sense of anticipation, a premonition that something great, something that would last throughout the ages, was to follow:

Why should not my country's tongue,
soaring through the gale of song,
rising to the heights of heaven,
find its own eternity?

Kas siis selle maa keel
laulutuules ei või
taevani tõustes üles
igavikku omale otsida?

These words are to be found in Peterson's "Ode to the Moon", written in 1818, while he was still a pupil at the *gymnasium* or grammar school. Indeed, the whole of his poetical output, created within the space of only a few years, has the force of an affirmation of the claims to immortality of his native language and the land of his birth. He not only knew many languages, but possessed a remarkable flare for literature and appreciated the distinctive qualities of other nations. He finally came to realise the necessity for an Estonian national literature, although his brief literary career was broken off before he was able to give explicit expression to this idea or to elaborate it in his work. From beginning to end his poetry was dominated by the influences of European classical and early romantic literature; but he was also interested in Esto-



Kristjan Jaak Peterson
(Fr. B. Dörbeck, 1822)

nian folk songs, of which he was the first to adopt the specific motives and formal elements in his own verses. But his greatest achievement must be sought in the fact that, as compared not only with the moralising religious literature of his time, but also with Masing's practical educational activities, he attained an entirely new quality, creating for the first time in the despised language of the Estonian peasantry genuine poetry of high artistic value.

Peterson's odes are partly heroic, partly philosophical in tone, following the example of the classics, and perhaps still more of Klopstock — the great German master of the ode — and his school. The spectacle of cosmic phenomena and the mighty forces of nature frequently bring him (as was natural in his age) to thoughts of the greatness and majesty of God. But these ideas are intermingled with others which reflect the rationalist trend of the Enlightenment: he never tires of exalting the spiritual strength and analytical reason of man. Time and again he returns to the themes of friendship and love, the beauty of nature and the persuasive powers of music and poetry. The imagery of the odes with their elaborate comparisons drawn from the most grandiose elements of nature — towering cliffs and dizzy waterfalls — belong to the heroic landscapes of early romantic poetry; and he paints both the sea and the sky with the intense colours of emotional emphasis. On the other hand, his eclogues, which are more deeply impregnated with the traditional motives and means of expression of Estonian folk poetry, bring us closer to the familiar scenery of his native country. True, the language and style of these poems are also largely borrowed — in this case from the bucolic verses of eighteenth-century classicism. His shepherds, for ever singing songs, for ever complaining of their unrequited love or the fleetingness of human life, are purely literary and conventional figures, who seem out of place beneath these northern skies. Nevertheless they are also the spokesmen of the poet's own thoughts and feelings. From this point of view Peterson's work is of lasting interest as a unique record of a young poet's inner aspirations and as a vision of the world in the early years of the last century.

On the whole, Peterson's poetry differs radically, both in form and content, from the usual run of Estonian verses at that time. Indeed, this was the very reason why it remained

in manuscript and was completely forgotten over a long period of time until it was finally published in the first quarter of the present century. It is written in the form of unrhymed verse, the odes being based on a complex accentual system while the pastorals recall the flexible trochaic rhythm of the traditional folk song. The style is characterised by an abundance of metaphorical images and comparisons; and it is these which impart to the long-drawn-out periods of the odes their architectonic grandeur and stateliness of diction.

Peterson's last poems are darkened by the haunting premonition of his untimely end, though he consoled himself with the thought that his songs would remain the patrimony of his people, whom he so dearly loved. He also wrote a few poems in German (published posthumously in 1823 in the Leipzig literary magazine "*Zeitung für die elegante Welt*"), in which he foresees his fate with the stoic resignation of a philosopher who pins all his hopes on the belief that his work will be appreciated by the generations of the future. These hopes were not unfounded, and Peterson now occupies a place all his own.

This young poet also left an interesting diary in which he set down his impressions and cogitations, thus enabling us to form a closer acquaintance with the world of his ideas. Together with Masing's "*Originalblätter*", it is also one of the earliest examples of philosophic prose in the Estonian language.

We should add that Peterson published a few articles in Rosenplänter's "*Beiträge*" on various questions pertaining to the Estonian language, which reveal him as a linguist of no inconsiderable merit; and, lastly, one of his most influential undertakings was the translation of C. Ganander's "*Mythologia Fennica*" from Swedish into German, with a large number of personal additions, including the valuable suggestion that a native Estonian mythology might be reconstructed on the basis of Finnish folklore. In the following years this idea was expanded into an entire Estonian pseudo-mythology, which was later to play an important role in the formation of the national literature and culture.

Friedrich Robert Faehlmann. Not many years after Peterson had, unknown to his people, sunk into a premature grave, F. R. Faehlmann (1798—1850) was gathering around him in Tartu the first Estonian student circle with conscious national



Friedrich Robert Faehlmann
(Fr. Schlater, 1840s)

aspirations. In spite of the reactionary policy of the Czarist authorities, the University of Tartu, where these young men studied, still remained under a strong influence of the European Enlightenment, intensified by the fact that many of the professors were scholars or scientists of international standing. The members of this student circle, stimulated by the campaign for the abolition of serfdom, were not only passionately interested in the historical past of the Estonian people, its folk songs and its age-old traditional culture, but were equally stirred by the present condition and the future prospects of the Estonian people.

Faehlmann was a man of outstanding intellectual integrity and a high sense of personal and national dignity. From the very beginning he took up his stand on a platform of advanced democratic ideas. At a time when the few Estonians who received an education usually became Germanised and threw in their lot with the Baltic-German intelligentsia, Faehlmann succeeded in inspiring his comrades with a national spirit and an unswerving determination to devote their lives to the cause of the people. Later he managed to draw into the sphere

of his activities a number of the more liberal German intellectuals, in whom he awakened a lively interest in Estonian culture and a sympathy for the Estonian population. The centre of this movement became the Learned Estonian Society *(Gelehrte Esthnische Gesellschaft)*, founded on Faehlmann's initiative, but with the active co-operation of former members of the original student circle, in 1838 within the framework of the University. At Faehlmann's suggestion the distinguished abolitionist G. H. Merkel was elected to honorary membership of the Society in 1841. The object of the Society was the study of the Estonian language, history and folklore, while every effort was made to further the propagation of educational literature in Estonian. The fact that many of the members of the Society were clergymen gave rise to serious internal contradictions; but it was none the less true that Faehlmann and his companions prepared the way for many decisive steps in the future development of Estonian culture.

Faehlmann also has the distinction of initiating the use of national legend in the struggle for emancipation. In a speech on the legendary hero Kalevipoeg, delivered to the Learned Estonian Society in 1839, he put forward the idea of building up a national epic around this figure. An additional stimulus came from the Finnish epic "Kalevala" (compiled by E. Lönnrot), of which the first variant had already appeared in 1835. But Faehlmann's speech contained more than a mere proposal: he showed how the separate legends could be united into one organic whole, outlined the broad plot of the prospective epic and pointed out the way in which the existing materials could be invested with a quality of heroic greatness. Later he produced one or two poetic fragments in the German language, obviously with the intention of introducing the subject to an international reading public and thereby rousing a wider interest in the cultural traditions of his oppressed and humiliated fellow-countrymen.

With the same end in view Faehlmann published under the auspices of the Learned Estonian Society German versions of a series of myths including "The Dawn and the Dusk", "The Birth of the River Emajõgi", "The Song of Vanemuine", etc., which have since become widely popular. In these legends, which are partly based on genuine folk motives, he followed the example of Peterson in borrowing the gods and heroes

of Finnish folklore, modified in imitation of the classics. These pseudomythological figures eventually became part and parcel of Estonian literature and in the course of time caught the popular fancy. The figure of Vanemuine, the god of song, (derived from Väinämöinen, the minstrel hero of the Finnish epic) acquired particular significance and was exalted, after a fashion, into a sort of symbol of Estonian culture in general. Such universal acceptance of a largely fictional creation must be a rare occurrence in the domain of literature. For a long time Faehlmann's myths — especially "The Dawn and the Dusk", perhaps the most beautiful and poetical of them all, — stood for Estonian folklore in the mind of the foreign reader. In the chorus of approval a few sceptical voices impugned the authenticity of these myths. But he had achieved his goal: he had drawn attention to Estonian folk literature, and had convinced the public, both at home and abroad, that the Estonian people lacked none of the propensities necessary for the development of its national culture.

Faehlmann's few Estonian poems are written in exacting classical metres, evidently with the object of demonstrating the flexibility of the language from this point of view. Yet notwithstanding this somewhat propagandistic aim, he succeeded in imparting to his verses a deep philosophical content coupled with a touch of sincere personal feeling which has earned them a place in the very front rank of early Estonian poetry. We may add in passing that he also found time to study the prosody of traditional Estonian folk song and published some valuable articles on linguistic problems.

But it was through the medium of his calendar tales that Faehlmann was chiefly appreciated by the Estonian reader of his day. As editor of the calendar of the Learned Estonian Society he was able to insert in 1842 the satirical piece "Idle Talk, Empty Chatter", in which his informal, conversational tone did not hinder him from putting forward the peasant viewpoint on a number of burning social problems. It is to be regretted that the later calendars were prevented from following up this lead by a tightening of the censorship, which would now pass nothing more daring than a few humorous sketches or didactic tales.

Faehlmann's importance in the history of Estonian literature and Estonian culture as a whole lay in his power of stim-

ulating and mobilising new forces. He voiced new aspirations, opened up new lines of thought. As such, he was the central and dominating figure of the second quarter of the 19th century, and without him it is difficult to conceive the whole of the following period. His immediate successor was his close friend and associate F. R. Kreutzwald, who in the course of his fruitful and multifarious activities was destined to carry his work a stage further, and in so doing to become the real founder of the national literature of Estonia.

FRIEDRICH REINHOLD KREUTZWALD

F. R. Kreutzwald (1803—1882) was born in serfdom. Yet, in spite of all obstacles, he not only stood on an equal footing with the outstanding representatives of contemporary European intellectual activity, but at the same time provided a striking example of the powerful urge of the Estonian intelligentsia, then in process of formation, to achieve national self-expression. All his life he was bound by the closest ties to his own people. Already in childhood he had learnt to love the traditional folk poetry of the peasantry. Inspired and supported by Faehlmann, he, too, became a conscious, democratic thinker and educationalist. In his student days he assimilated the literature of the European Enlightenment, both from German and other sources; and hence he drew the ideas that remained to the end his basic principles.

Kreutzwald made his debut in literature through the German language, in which he had received his education. Mention may be made of his poetic juvenilia. But more important are the articles and essays published at Tartu in the literary magazine "*Das Inland*". Here, from 1837, he systematically popularised the habits, customs and beliefs of the Estonian people. To these he added outspoken commentaries on the events of the day, which owing to the sharpness of their criticism frequently encountered the indignant disapproval of the local authorities.

It was not until after the foundation of the Learned Estonian Society that Kreutzwald effected the transition to Estonian as his basic literary medium. His first educational works began to appear, under the auspices of the Society, from the beginning of the eighteen-forties. These included the story "The



Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald *(K. Tael, 1952)*

Scourge of Drink" (a temperance tract based on a work bearing the same title by the Swiss author J. D. Zschokke) and the miscellany "The Ant". At the same time he produced an Estonian rendering of the sentimental German novelette "Pious Genevieve" which became widely popular. In the second half of the eighteen-forties, after contributing a number of educational articles to the almanac of the Learned Estonian Society, Kreutzwald began to edit a new interesting almanac, "The Useful Calendar", of which the informative appendix was highly appreciated by the reading public. In addition to moral

and instructive items, the calendar carried poems and tales. One of the most remarkable among the latter is the allegorical satire "Reynard the Fox", for the most part based on Goethe's epic narrative. Published in book form, this work ran into many editions and with its sharply antifeudal attitude became one of the most influential creations of early Estonian literature. The popular illustrated series "The World and Something of What It Contains" (five issues appeared in 1848 and 1849) did much to educate the Estonian reader and to equip him with a more scientific conception of the world.

In all these activities Kreutzwald, together with Faehlmann, represented the new educationalist trend in the reading materials compiled for the benefit of the Estonian peasantry in the eighteen-forties. This trend may be regarded as a further development of Masing's finest publications and, like them, firmly opposed the fashionable trend of Pietist propaganda. Indeed, Kreutzwald made no secret of his contempt for this sort of literature, which only served to stultify the peasantry and to blind them to their real interests. But however highly we may value his educational writings, he has a far greater claim to literary fame in the capital achievements by means of which he fashioned the very conception of the national literature, providing stimulating examples in the course of his activity.

Kreutzwald was well acquainted with the views of Lessing and Herder, who had played such a decisive part in the development of German literature. He accepted the demand for a distinctive national quality in literature and supported the idea of using folk poetry as the foundation stone on which original literary works might be based. He had made a thorough study of the ensuing peak achievements of German literature, especially the works of Schiller and Goethe. He was convinced that the creation of a genuine Estonian literature was a task that had yet to be confronted, and that to fulfil it successfully it would be necessary to turn to account not only the examples of foreign literature, but also the age-old poetic traditions of the people themselves. Simultaneously with Faehlmann, and spurred on by the latter's initiative in drawing on folklore as a fount of literary creation, he was already exploring similar paths in the eighteen-forties.

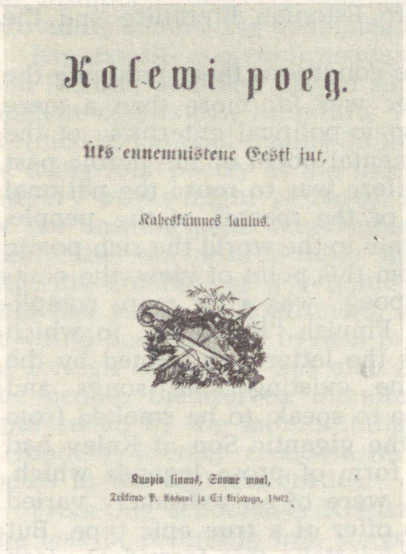
From his schooldays Kreutzwald had busied himself with the task of recording folk songs, and he soon acquired, for his

time, a sound knowledge of the problems of folklore. On the one hand he was motivated by patriotic feeling, on the other he was undoubtedly influenced by the romantic approach to folklore, which was mainly concerned with historical legend and the immemorial themes of folk mythology. He introduced literary elements and motives into folk songs which he had copied down from word of mouth, and expressed mythological and legendary materials of his own invention in the style and language of traditional folk poetry, much after the fashion of Macpherson's "Ossian". In recasting and imitating authentic folk poems, he frequently intensified the spirit of protest against servitude and exploitation. But the songs he published (most of which appeared in A. H. Neus's anthology "*Ehstnische Volkslieder*") were presented as genuine traditional folk texts, just as Faehlmann had done with his prose legends. Parallel with his work in the field of folk poetry, Kreutzwald also undertook the task of producing literary paraphrases of a number of traditional folk stories. These activities were to bear him yeoman service after Faehlmann's death in 1850, when he was obliged to shoulder alone his friend's long-standing ambition of composing a national epic. It was this undertaking which was to become his chief contribution to Estonian literature and the central project of his life.

The epic "Kalevipoeg". In the conditions then obtaining the composition of the national epic was far more than a mere literary undertaking: it was a socio-political enterprise of the greatest importance. This monumental poem of the heroic past forged after the materials of folklore was to rouse the national consciousness, as yet dormant, of the masses of the people, and at the same time to demonstrate to the world the rich poetic heritage of Estonian folklore. From this point of view, the compilation of the Estonian "Kalevipoeg" was a far more complicated business than that of the Finnish "Kalevala", to which it was partly indebted. Whereas the latter was formed by the process of welding together the existing epic songs and cycles, the Estonian poem had, so to speak, to be smelted from the primitive ore. The tales of the gigantic Son of Kalev had hitherto circulated only in the form of prose legends which, however ancient they might be, were of an extremely varied nature and had little material to offer of a true epic type. But Kreutzwald was encouraged to undertake this formidable task

by the belief (shared by many of his contemporaries) that the surviving legends were fragments of what had formerly constituted a complete work, handed down orally from generation to generation. Thus he set himself the aim — following the suggestions already outlined by Faehlmann — to restore this age-old poetic monument as far as possible in its original form. Under the influence of this romantic illusion he achieved something truly exceptional in the history of literature: he gave the Estonian people a national epic of their own, which was to perform a unique function in the literary and cultural life of the nation.

"Kalevipoeg" was eventually published, after a long period of compilation and repeated revision, in the transactions of the Learned Estonian Society from 1857 to 1861. This academic edition was equipped with an interleaf German translation. The first popular edition followed in 1862, but was printed in Finland. The work received an eager response in the philological and literary circles of St. Petersburg, Helsinki (Helsingfors), Berlin, Budapest and elsewhere; and paraphrases, descriptions and commentaries were published in a number of foreign


Kalewi poeg.

Üks ennemuistene Eesti jut,

Kaheskümnes laulus.

Kuopio linnas, Soome maal,

Trükkind P. Aschani ja Ci kirjadega, 1862.

Title-page of "Kalevipoeg"

languages. In this way the first original masterpiece of Estonian literature was brought to the notice of a broad international reading public.

But among the Estonian readers, accustomed as they were to a much more primitive diet, "Kalevipoeg" at first met with little more than a lukewarm reception; it was too strange and unusual to achieve a wide circulation from the outset. But with the passing of the years its prestige continued to grow in both depth and extent. During the ensuing period it became one of the central rallying-points of the national movement. This was natural, as it was the first work which spoke openly of the nation's determination to win freedom. Its theme was the struggle of the people against slavery and oppression, and it proclaimed the patriotic ideal of selfless devotion to the fatherland. The legendary age of Kalevipoeg was represented as a period of freedom and prosperity, sharply counterposed to the succeeding centuries of tyranny, violence and suffering.

Kalevipoeg himself, in spite of his gigantic stature and royal title, is essentially a hero of peasant labour, a great builder and seafarer. The idea of resistance to enslavement and oppression is expressed in his battles with the historical "men of iron", as the crusaders were termed, and reiterated on a second plane in the fantastic, allegorical theme of his struggle against the Horned One, Sarvik, the ruler of the netherworld, and other forces of evil and darkness. At the same time the epic has an ethical axis in the motive of crime and punishment. In this conception of destiny, expressed in the form of the inexorable ties binding deed with consequence, we may discern a reflection of the author's deist attitude to life. The fate of the hero is tragic, no less than the historical destiny of the people he represents: after all his heroic feats he is finally subdued and by the will of the forces of heaven he is fettered by the wrist to the living rock that frames the gate of hell. However, the work ends with the hopeful prophecy that one day he will be released, and will be received once again in the bosom of his people as the herald of a new life.

In his epic "Kalevipoeg" Kreutzwald convincingly demonstrated the efficacy of his conception of literature and revealed the rich possibilities latent in the free adaptation and creative elaboration of authentic folklore. He made full use of the stylistic devices of folk poetry, and his text is richly interspersed



Illustration to "Kalevipoeg" *(Kr. Raud, 1935)*

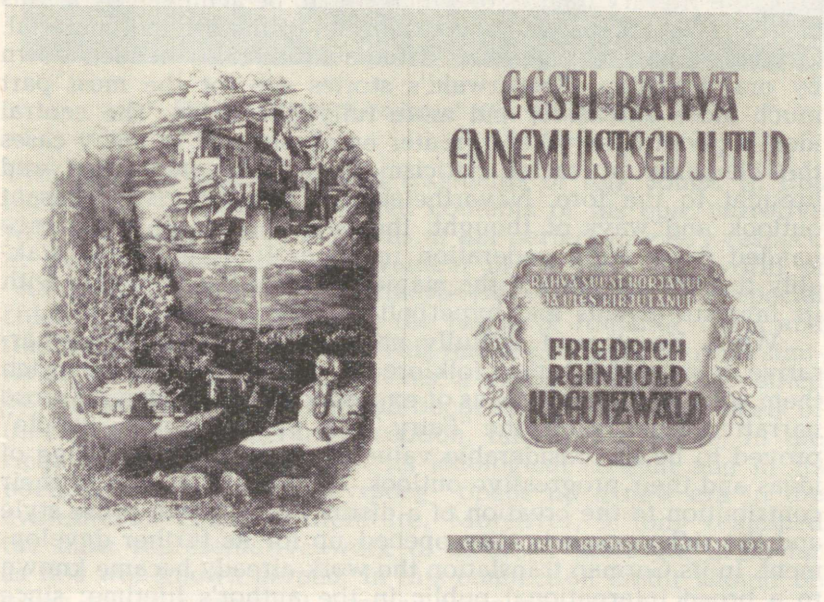
with genuine folk songs and fragments of folk songs. In this manner he invested the varied contents of his epic narrative with an artistic form which was, if not perfect in every respect, at least a remarkable achievement in his day. The world of "Kalevipoeg" exists in an atmosphere of its own, the special colouring of which is due to the fusion of romantic traits and traditional popular elements. This fusion produces a vision similar to that of the "Ossian" poems, a vision which is intensified by the archaic vestiture which decorates the multiple facets of the epic. In its general conception, taken as a whole, in the richness and forcefulness of its ideological content and in its poetical originality, "Kalevipoeg" opens up a new era in the evolution of Estonian literature. Moreover, it long remained the most representative work of Estonian literature in so far as this was known abroad. In this connection credit should be given to the competent German translation by F. Löwe, published in 1900. In Soviet times the epic has been received with

widespread interest: no less than four Russian editions have been published; the work has also been translated into Hungarian, Lettish, Finnish, Czech, Swedish and Lithuanian.

Kreutzwald's "Fairy Tales" and other works. In addition to epic "Kalevipoeg", Kreutzwald was the author of a substantial collection of folk stories: "Fairy Tales of the Estonian People", first printed as a series of small booklets, later collected and published under a single cover at Helsingfors in 1866. The genesis of this work is in many respects analogous to that of the epic. It was based on elements of folk tradition but was given literary form through a process of adaptation in which the influence of the romantic school, especially the brothers Grimm, played an important part, though in a few isolated cases Kreutzwald also appropriated suitable motives and situations from similar stories of other nations. He did not set himself the aim of producing a scientific collection of folk-tale texts. What he wanted was a sort of original prose miscellany, the literary quality of which was to be achieved by means of free stylistic recasting and expansion of the original material. Compared with the genuine Estonian folk tales handed down by oral tradition, Kreutzwald's stories are for the most part much more extensive, and more fully developed. The central idea is given everywhere greater emphasis, and in many cases the elements of social criticism have been intensified and brought to the fore. Nevertheless, the characteristic peasant outlook and ways of thought, the deep lessons of experience handed down from generation to generation shine unmistakably through the veil of the magic world of the fairy tale with its fantastic events and hyperbolic imagery.

While Kreutzwald skilfully utilised all the traditional narrative devices of Estonian folklore, he did not hesitate to enrich them with the typical means of expression of the romantic prose narrative. As a result, the "Fairy Tales of the Estonian People" proved to be of considerable value not only for their range of ideas and their progressive outlook, but also by reason of their contribution to the creation of a distinctive national prose style and the rich prospects they opened up for its further development. In its German translation the work already became known to a broad international public in the author's lifetime; since then it has been repeatedly translated and has been published in a number of foreign languages.

Kreutzwald proceeded with his self-assumed task of propagating the enlightenment narrative in other stories, of which some were included in almanacs, others appeared in the form of independent publications. One of the most popular of these was "The Land of Fools" (1857) adapted from the German *Volksbuch* "Schildbürger" in which the satire of stupidity is closely paralleled by the English Wise Men of Gotham. Kreutzwald also produced a number of didactic writings; and adapted or translated a wide range of German works, including two tragedies by E. C. von Houwald. In the domain of poetry he confined himself mainly to translations or free paraphrases of Schiller, Goethe, Bürger, Lenau, Uhland, Hauff, Heine, Freiligrath and others, publishing only a small amount of original lyric poetry. However, it would be quite wrong to dismiss his main collection "Songs of a Viru Bard" (1865) as a mere anthology of verse translations: the whole volume bears the



Title-page and frontispiece of the "Fairy Tales" *(G. Reindorff, 1951)*

stamp of Kreutzwald's personality and turn of mind. More, it played a decisive role in the evolution of original Estonian poetry. In his old age Kreutzwald published two more volumes in the form of translations of Witschel's lyric poetry, where the religious content is impregnated with a strong rationalist tendency. He also collaborated in the compilation of the extensive philosophical poem "Lembitu" (based on the Swiss author J. V. Widmann's "Buddha", which did not appear until 1885), after his death.

Apart from Kreutzwald's purely literary output, attention should be drawn particularly to his letters, which form an invaluable and extensive collection including his correspondence with younger writers and other prominent figures of the national cultural movement, not to speak of a large number of eminent foreign scientists and scholars (at St. Petersburg, Helsingfors, Berlin, Leipzig and elsewhere). The whole forms a kind of living chronicle from which later generations have extracted a wealth of interesting information both on the social and literary problems of the period, and on the personal views and aspirations of the writer himself.

Kreutzwald was a consistent patriot and a tireless worker in the domain of Estonian culture. In the course of his long and productive career he enriched Estonian literature with much that was new and valuable. His fundamentally democratic attitude, together with the indisputable national quality of his chief works and artistic methods, entitle us to speak of him as the real founder of Estonian literature, who also did more than anyone else to popularise it on an international scale.

POPULAR MISCELLANIES IN THE MIDDLE OF THE 19TH CENTURY

As we have seen, the work of Faehlmann and Kreutzwald combined their educationalist purpose with aims of a far deeper and more sweeping character, embodying both the political aspirations and aesthetic ideals of the Estonian nation; and it was this quality which imparted to the whole of their life-work a significance that was to grow steadily in proportion as the new roads which they opened up were explored by their successors. Their achievement must be seen against a background filled by the activities of other publicists, who also made it

their object to provide the Estonian peasantry with reading matter, but with the difference that they lacked a vision of the future and a conscious programme. Most of them were village school teachers with a bent for literature. They mostly began by translating or adapting popular publications of a more or less primitive character, but were led in the course of time to make tentative efforts in the field of original prose and poetry. Yet in spite of their modesty of achievement they played a certain role in encouraging the reading habit and inspiring the public with a taste for secular literature.

One of the earliest, and also most gifted of them, was Suve Jaan, the pseudonym of Johann Friedrich Sommer (1777—1851). He was an exceptional figure in his time in the sense that he was well acquainted with Russian literature and was the first Estonian writer to draw his subject-matter and other particulars from this source, although he also introduced a dubious spirit of loyalty to Czarism. His book "The Russian Heart and the Russian Soul" (1841) gave a general survey of the resistance to Napoleon and the final destruction of the Grande Armée in 1812. The story "Laos Luik" (1843) describes the adventures of an Estonian peasant who served in the Russian navy at the end of the 18th century. Suve Jaan has a pronounced sentimental bias; his heroes are popular characters with whom he deeply sympathises, commiserating with them in their trials and tribulations, and extolling their fortitude and nobility of character. But at the same time he has a strong conservative tendency, which rises to the fore in his religious piety and uncritical submission to authority. He also wrote poems characterised by the same strain of sentimentalism that we find in his prose works.

The poems and stories written by Carl Wilhelm Freundlich (1803—1872) have few claims to literary distinction. His verses are mainly concerned with the moralising reflections of a simple soul in which conventional religious ideas play a leading part. More interesting are those poems in which he gives a realistic, if somewhat coarse picture of country life and farm work. Freundlich's prose narratives, which are mostly borrowed from foreign sources, are in the main unvarnished accounts of unusual events and happenings in alien lands, both far and near, but always with an emphatic edifying purpose.

Mention might be made of several other schoolmasters of scant erudition and still less distinguished artistic ability. The kind of books that appealed to them most were the sentimental German *Volksbücher*, and when they took up their pens round about the beginning of the eighteen-forties they turned out free Estonian renderings of them. One after another, in widely different versions, appeared stories about the sufferings of pious Genevieve, the unfortunate Hirlanda, patient Helena, the despised and humiliated Griselidis etc. These books, with their varied situations and their simple but moving themes of persecuted innocence, were well calculated to please the less refined strata of the public, by whom they were gratefully received. The hearts of simple readers of this sort were won by the moral superiority of the persecuted victim over her cruel and remorseless enemy; perhaps, still more by the triumph of justice and the reward of virtue which followed inevitably at the end. Unfortunately other lessons might be deduced: the religious doctrine of patience and humility, non-resistance to evil, and the necessity of trusting passively in God and leaving everything to the care of Providence. It must be admitted that these sentimental stories effectively swelled the ranks of the reading public; but it was not long before they were converted into obstacles hindering the diffusion of a more valuable and original literature.

Parallel with these sentimental stories translations and paraphrases of a somewhat different type began to make their appearance in Estonian, although here, too, we find strange or exceptional situations combined with a certain element of adventure and a more or less pronounced didactic tendency. In 1842 there appeared an Estonian version of "Robinson Crusoe" — regrettably based not on Defoe, but on an adaptation of J. H. Campe, the German author of boys' stories. An extremely warm reception was accorded to the Estonian rendering of G. A. Bürger's Munchhausen tales, which ran into no less than four editions between 1855 and 1858. A large number of other translations and adaptations were printed in the eighteen-fifties and '-sixties, but they were too primitive in quality to deserve separate mention. These books were full of striking events, their subject-matter was usually historical, their protagonists were idealised representatives of the upper ranks of society, whose lives were patterns of Christian morality

and practical evidence of the inevitable triumph of virtue. It was not until the eighteen-seventies that a new note began to make itself felt in the story-books of the time — a note of protest against social oppression and the whole system of slavery in every part of the world.

Johann Voldemar Jannsen. Head and shoulders above these translators and adaptors rises the figure of J. V. Jannsen (1819—1890), who also substantially contributed to the development of Estonian journalism and to the organisation of national cultural activities, although the part he played both in literature and in the national movement was in many respects discounted by the conservative and clerical colouring of his social views.

Jannsen began his literary career as a translator of German Pietist hymns. In 1848 he began to publish a miscellany "Messenger", of which seven volumes appeared by 1860. From 1857 onwards he dedicated himself exclusively to journalistic and literary work, and from this point of view may be considered the first Estonian professional writer. In this capacity he left his mark as an indefatigable worker, producing over 220 stories of varying length that were printed in different collections, newspapers and almanacs. The vast majority of them are derived from the edifying German story-books of the day (especially the works of W. O. von Horn), and probably only a tiny fraction of them can lay claims to originality. But the manner in which Jannsen borrows his materials is so free and creative, so well adapted to local tastes and conditions, that in default of external evidence it is often no easy matter to distinguish between what is loaned and what is original. As for their subject-matter, most of the stories either deal with village life, or are based on the lives of outstanding historical personages.

The materials Jannsen had to offer to the Estonian reader were marred, especially in his earlier work, by their aggressively religious and moralising tone, and their lessons of an uncomplaining acceptance of a humble station in life. But he was basically a man of sound common sense with an appreciation of material values, and his attempts to reconcile the spiritual and secular interests of life were far from the asceticism of the religious fanatic. The Christian virtues of his heroes receive their recompense in this world; in the end



Johann Voldemar Jannsen

they achieve prosperity or even riches, and it is here that the reader is invited to identify his ideal of happiness. Following the example of the early educationalists, Jannsen was never tired of stressing the importance of receiving a sound schooling. His warnings against ignorance were combined with frequent attacks — expressed in the form of ridicule or open reprimand — on superstition and drunkenness. But what attracted the reader more than anything else was Jannsen's vivid style and informal confidential manner. This raciness of diction is sometimes attained by the cheapest of devices; but it cannot be denied that Jannsen did much to bring the written word closer to the spoken language. There was also something that was new in his inborn sense of humour and in his ability to reproduce, in all their full-blooded vitality, the robust types of village life.

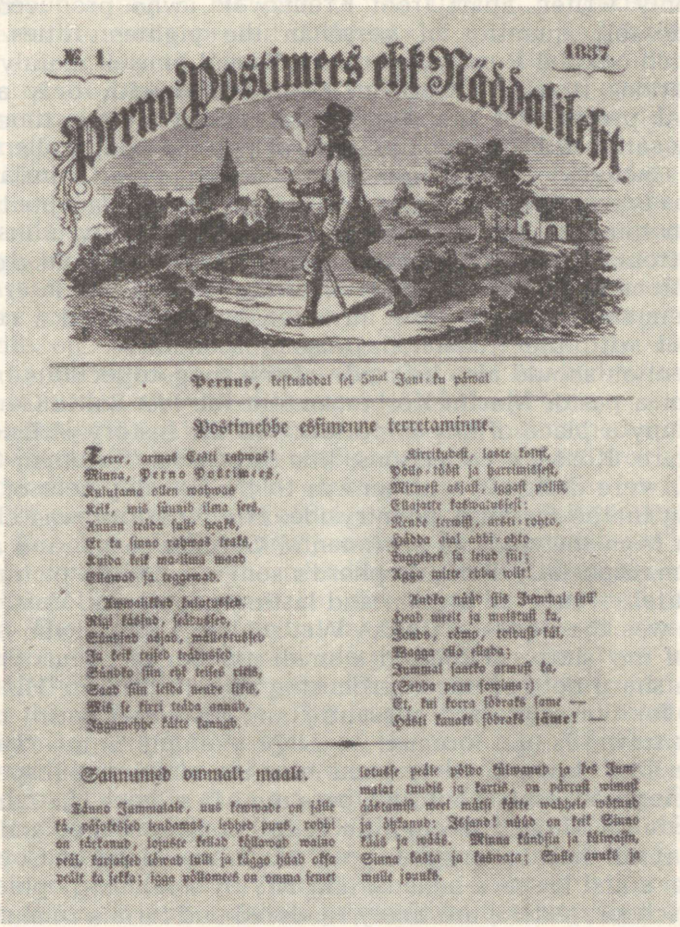
Jannsen's poetry, or rather his versions of choral songs, is similarly quite imitative in origin. His large "Estonian Song-Book" (1860), to which he later added the tunes, was built up on the characteristic repertory of the German *Liedertafel.* But these songs were at least singable, and this was enough to win

them wide popularity and far-reaching influence, true — not so much in a literary sense, as in propagating choral-singing.

From the point of view of the general development of Estonian culture, Jannsen's pioneer work in the field of journalism was of far greater importance than his partly translated literary output. From 1857 he edited the "*Perno Postimees*" ("Pärnu Courier"), and from 1864 the "*Eesti Postimees*" ("Estonian Courier"). It would be no exaggeration to assert that it was he who first evoked in the Estonian peasant a taste for newspaper reading. Whereas Masing's "Weekly" had less than 200 subscribers in the first quarter of the century, Jannsen's "Couriers" had more than 2000 — a remarkably large number for the time. There can be no doubt but that this widespread popularity was due to the easy, unconventional and colloquial tone of the language, which retained all the rich imagery of rural speech.

But perhaps the most valuable quality of all was that Jannsen's newspaper articles consistently stressed the creative vitality of the Estonian people and its capacity for development. In so doing he helped to awake the national consciousness of the masses. He also did his best to broaden the outlook of his readers, he stressed the importance of education and the harmful results of obscurantism and alcoholism. His chief weakness was his religious narrow-mindedness, and above all his doctrine of social appeasement and submissiveness, which met with the growing disapproval of the more radical strata of the national movement.

Thanks largely to the increasing importance of the devoted activity of the younger members of the staff, including Jannsen's daughter Lydia Koidula, who assisted him in his editorial work, the "*Eesti Postimees*" adopted a much bolder attitude from about the end of the eighteen-sixties. This was particularly marked in the contributions of C. R. Jakobson, who denounced the very idea of social and national oppression, and crusaded against the feudal survivals on which they were based. Such a line could not but arouse the fierce opposition of the clerical world and the Baltic-German aristocracy. The attacks of the landlords' press were soon followed up by underhand negotiations as a result of which Jannsen, who was easily influenced, in 1871 finally closed the columns of his paper to his more radical contributors in exchange for a financial subsidy from



№ 1. 1837.

Perno Postimees ehk Nädhalileht.

Pernus, teisipäddal sel 3mal Jani-ku päwal

Postimehhe essimenne terretamine.

Terre, armas Eesti rahwas!
Minna, Perno Postimees,
Kulutama ellen mahwas
Keik, mis sinnus ilma jees,
Innen teiba sulle head,
Et ta sinno rahwas teaks,
Kuida teik ma-ilma moel
Ellawad ja tegemad.

Ammuktud kulutusteks.
Mitt kähhe, sedrusse,
Sõnatsed aßjad, mälletrukkid
Ja teik teised tedhusted
Sündo sin ehk teises eiste,
Saab sin teiba neide tiftt,
Mis se kirri teiba annab,
Jagamehhe kätte kunnab.

Kirrikuhsk, laste kasw,
Pöllo-tööst ja herrimisest,
Mitmest asjast, iggast polist,
Ellajatte kahwatusest:
Nende teemist, arsti-rohto,
Hädha ehk abbi-ohto
Taggasi sa leiad siit;
Agga mitte ehha wiit!

Aidko nüüd siis Jummal sull'
Head meelt ja meistrull ka,
Jõudo, rõmo, teibuß-tull,
Waggo elo elada;
Jummal saatko armuß ka,
(Sedda pean sowima:)
Et, kui korra sõbraks same —
Hästi kunnaß sõbraks jäme! —

Sannumed ommalt maalt.

Tänno Jummalale, kus kewade on jälle tä, päfokesed leuhemad, leibad paus, rehhi on tärkanud, lojuste hellad tõllawad wainc peäl, karjatsed lõwad tulli ja lägge hõad ehta peält ka jelka; igga põllomees on omma kesset leotuße pedle põhe tähwanud ja Jes Jummalat tundiß ja kartiß, on pärrast wimaß dästamiß weel mitti kätte wahhele wõtnud ja öhkanud: Jõjand! nüüd on teil Sinno käsk ja nõuß. Minna tündsin ja tõllwaßin, Sinna kesta ja kahwata; Sulle annaß ja mulle jouaß.

The newspaper "*Perno Postimees*"

the Estonian and Livonian nobility. This step could not be construed otherwise than as a betrayal of the national interests.

Poetry and popular song collections. As compared to the growing output of narrative prose literature, poetry occupied a far more modest place in the favours of the reading public.

The only writer, apart from Kreutzwald, who produced any considerable quantity of verse in the eighteen-fifties, was Friedrich Nikolai Russow, who, too, busied himself mainly with translations from the German, interspersed with only a few original pieces. But the demand for poetry at the time was mostly satisfied by the compilation of popular song collections. These included original poems by local poets, translations, various types of folk songs, a few ballads (usually adapted from foreign sources), and a certain amount of relatively uninspired verse from the pens of the compilers themselves. About a dozen collections of this kind appeared in the 'fifties, and later their numbers continued to grow. In a sense they formed a certain parallel with the translated prose miscellanies.

Mention should also be made of the song collections by the Saaremaa pastor Martin Körber, one of the last Baltic Germans to occupy a place of any importance in the history of Estonian literature. Körber's collections, like Jannsen's "Estonian Song-Book", were designed with an eye to the development of part-singing in the Estonian countryside. His repertory was chiefly drawn from the stock of sentimental German songs; and a few of them, especially some shepherd's songs — idyllic pictures of rural life, — enjoyed a great and lasting popularity. Vastly different was the figure of Juhan Weitzenberg, who at the beginning of the 'sixties published a small number of poems endued with a sharp note of uncompromising social criticism. His sympathy for the oppressed peasantry and his bitter satire of the manor stewards and foremen — as for example in the "Lament of the Old Steward" — earned him the universal respect of his generation. Nor should we pass over in silence the name of Carl Eduard Malm, although he is rather a translator and skilful adaptor than an original poet. His translations of Goethe's, Schiller's and Heine's ballads, and Krylov's fables (popularised in his school readers) are finely rendered and form a remarkable contribution to the development of Estonian verse technique.

LITERATURE OF THE INITIAL PHASE OF THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT

The national awakening of the Estonian people. The deepening crisis of the feudal system of production, which had brought in its train a steady decrease in the productivity of the manor

economy, leading in its turn to the further pauperisation of the peasantry and repeated outbreaks of unrest, had forced the Baltic aristocracy to introduce new agrarian reforms about the middle of the century. These gave the peasants an opportunity to pass from work-rent to money-rent, and opened up for them the prospect of eventually becoming full owners of the land they tilled. This opportunity was quickly taken advantage of in the richer districts in the south, where many farms passed into the hands of the Estonian peasants. The abolition of serfdom throughout Russia in 1861 was followed up by certain supplementary reforms in the Baltic area: the peasants were granted identity certificates and received the right to change their domicile, etc. With these measures Estonia entered the capitalist era in the eighteen-sixties, a step that was marked by a sharp increase in the activity of the masses of the people.

The struggle against the manor was now intensified and took on new forms, to which the landlords responded by proclaiming the so-called "special state of affairs in the Baltic" with the object of preserving their feudal privileges. The administrations of the Estonian and Livonian provinces or "governments" were entirely controlled by the hereditary nobility. Both the courts and the police force were in the hands of the lords of the manor. The latter were bound by the closest ties of class collaboration to the Lutheran clergy, which consisted almost exclusively of Baltic Germans. The pastors in their turn controlled the village schools. The towns were still dominated by the German element, in spite of the fact that Estonians now made up the majority of the urban population; and German was the language used in the town schools and public offices. Everything in this *Landesstaat* of the Baltic aristocracy, which enjoyed its own internal autonomy within the framework of the Russian state, was calculated to perpetuate the subordination of the native Estonian and Latvian population. But impelled by the objective laws of the development of society, the triumphant new capitalist relations inevitably made possible the transformation of the peasant population into modern nations. In these conditions a general struggle was engaged against all forms of surviving feudalism. This national movement was led by the more educated elements among the people, and as it gained momentum adopted a broad programme of democratic aims and demands.

Thus the national movement in Estonia grew out of the peasant movement against feudalism. Under the pressure of economic and social developments, the struggle for free ownership of the land and for the capitalist transformation of the countryside was reinforced by purely national aspirations, from which in its turn it derived new strength. The idea of national solidarity gained ground, and with it the conviction that the Estonians, as the original inhabitants of the land, should wring from the Germans equal rights. This national awakening was borne forward on the wings of the Estonian written word, which in spite of the repressive measures of the censorship, more and more gave voice to patriotic appeals to common action in the name of the people's future. Since there were no opportunities for political activity — even the authors of a collective petition addressed to the Czar in 1864 were brought up for trial, — the main impact of the national movement was naturally delivered on the ideological front, where it took the form of the affirmation of the right of a small nation both to exist and to pursue its own cultural activities. The better educated leaders of the movement spread the idea that the Estonians should fight for a chance to demonstrate the vitality of their own culture and the latent potentialities of the people for independent self-development. But complete unanimity could not be attained. As the leaders themselves adhered to different social and political views they were unable to reach full agreement in a few questions of principle, and still more, in the problem of the tactics to be adopted. Later these divergences were to split the movement into two wings, of which one was democratic and the other conservative and clerical in its attitude. But at the beginning the internal contradictions were of secondary importance, and did not as yet impair the main objectives of the movement.

The chief centre of the national movement was Tartu, where a number of patriotic-minded Estonian intellectuals were gathered. As we have seen, Jannsen's "*Eesti Postimees*" was launched at Tartu in 1864. Here, too, in the following year the *Vanemuine* choral society was founded, also on the initiative of Jannsen. This led up to the organisation of the first all-Estonian song festival, held at Tartu in 1869, which gave a powerful fresh impetus to the national culture and marked the beginning of a tradition that has persisted to the present day. In addition to singing, the *Vanemuine* society engaged in regular speech-

making and organised ceremonial gatherings enlivened by artistic performances. From these the Estonian theatre was born in 1870. About this time one of the central issues of the national movement was the demand for the foundation of an Estonian secondary school (the so-called "Alexander School"), for which donations were collected on a wide scale. One of the leading spirits in the elaboration of a national educational programme was the schoolmaster Jakob Hurt. Towards the end of the eighteen-sixties a campaign was launched for the organisation of a new national literary society, as the Learned Estonian Society had passed into the hands of a group of reactionary German scholars, whose chief aim was the Germanisation of the Estonian people. After years of negotiation with the local authorities the Society of Estonian Literati (*Eesti Kirjameeste Selts)* finally began to function in 1872, its principal object being the compilation of new, up-to-date schoolbooks, while in another sphere considerable energy was devoted to the collection of traditional folklore. In the eighteen-seventies societies for singing, amateur theatricals and other cultural and educational activities were created in all of the larger towns.

Thus within a relatively short space of time a striking change had taken place in the cultural and intellectual life of the country. The Estonian peasants, whom the ruling classes had branded with the stamp of intellectual inferiority and whom they had declared incapable of cultural development, now hungrily seized on their first opportunity to assert themselves in a spiritual sense and gave evidence of a relentless determination to live a cultural life of their own. Encouraged by the national intelligentsia, they consciously devoted their efforts to the task of overtaking the more advanced peoples of Europe; and in many respects literature led the way.

The transformation of literary life. Already by the middle of the 19th century the Baltic-German clergymen were in full retreat before the Estonian writers. During the third quarter of the century they confined their activities mainly to the production of religious works, which by this time could hardly be regarded any longer as a branch of literature proper. With the inception of the national movement the new type of educational secular writing in the Estonian language began rapidly to gain ground, and the production of original Estonian litera-

ture was intensified. In the 'sixties and 'seventies an entire new generation of Estonian writers was eagerly building on the foundations so strongly based by Kreutzwald.

Perhaps the most important progressive element in their work lay in their treatment of the idea of patriotism, combined with a strong measure of social protest. This was most eloquently expressed in the field of lyric poetry, which in young literatures has often been noticed to lead the field. The poet's chief aim was to give voice to the noble and heroic moods of the national awakening, to make the people aware of its historic destiny and to rouse consciousness of its mission. Here we find much that is close to the world of "Kalevipoeg": the predominant role of mythological folklore and historical themes, the opposition of centuries of slavery to the legend of the golden age of freedom, the idea of rebirth and the expectation of a brighter future. But the same ideas were also expressed in popular educational works, in which the early history of the Estonian people was similarly harnessed to the needs of social propaganda. The whole of this early flowering of Estonian literature was democratic in spirit.

There was also a tentative movement in the direction of a sharper differentiation of genres, coupled with a certain — albeit not very pronounced — rise in artistic quality. The forms of literary activity were broadened and revitalised; and the thought content of literature became more cogent. The attacks on pious, borrowed, imitative and other inferior types of publications were both more frequent and more resolute. The insistence on originality, national colouring and the reproduction of popular life acquired the force of a programme. The adoption of a more scientific approach to folk poetry acted as a further stimulus to its adaptation and application in literature. The study of the Estonian language was carried a decisive step forward by the linguist F. J. Wiedemann (1805—1887), who was the author of a series of capital works, including a comprehensive Estonian-German dictionary (1869) and a descriptive grammar of the Estonian language (1875).

The ideology of the literature of the first phase in the development of the national movement was bourgeois-democratic in character. Its prevailing trend was that of legendary romanticism, of which Kreutzwald had already provided a splendid example, especially in his epic, and which seemed best

suited to inculcate a spirit of patriotism, determination and confidence in the future of the nation. The new mentality that was seeking an outlet in literature and the mood of dissatisfaction with the state of affairs in which national inequality and social injustice had not yet been abolished found a literary example — mainly of a poetic order — in the traditions of the romantic school. This active, national, type of romanticism which saw a vision of the future in its idealisation of the distant past, was intended above all to infuse into the masses a spirit of optimism and a will to action. At the same time the practical, instructive trend of the enlightenment tradition still persisted. If poetry was mainly romantic in its general character, the current of englightenment realism held the foreground in prose literature, and still more in the theatre, which was most directly concerned with the typical situations, real conditions and living human types of the contemporary world. However, even here a certain admixture of a romantic (or perhaps sentimentalist) element might be discerned. Thus it was the close interweaving of romantic and realist tendencies which imparted to Estonian literature in the second half of the 19th century its distinctive quality; and everywhere we find an abundance of transitional and intermediate forms.

As before, immediate models were mostly derived from German literature, with which all the Estonian writers were closely acquainted from the days of their German schooling. Other relations and influences, including that of Russian literature, occurred much more rarely, and even then mostly through German translations. But German influences made themselves felt on all levels and in all spheres, from the loftiest flights of poetry to the humblest popular miscellanies; and it should be added that the patriotic songs of romantic German poetry found a ready echo in Estonian literature, to which they transmitted a fundamentally progressive and democratic message.

The rise of the national movement was reflected in an increased output of literature in the Estonian language. The growth of the schools had encouraged the spread of literacy and created a growing reading public. There was an increase in publishing activities, and new print-shops were opened in a number of the smaller towns in addition to those which already existed in Tallinn, Tartu and Pärnu. In the eighteen-seventies the annual production of books was increased by nearly three times.

In 1879 the first Estonian magazine of a genuinely literary character — the "*Meelejahutaja*" ("Entertainer") — began to appear. The number of bookshops was growing by leaps and bounds, and steps were taken to organise the first Estonian public libraries. All this (in spite of certain unfavourable conditions as compared with those obtaining in Central and Western Europe) showed that all the factors necessary for the achievement of a normal literary life were already present, and that the path now lay open for the accelerated development of original Estonian literature.

Lydia Koidula. A special place in the generation which sprang into being in the early stages of the national movement belongs to Lydia Koidula (1843—1886), whose prestige is secured by her vivid personality and by the outstanding poetic talent which she manifested in so many different ways. As Jannsen's daughter she was brought up in a conservative environment, but also in an atmosphere of keen interest in problems of the national culture. From an early age she assisted her father in his editorial work. But contact with the more radical contributors to the "*Eesti Postimees*", particularly C. R. Jakob-



Cover of "The Nightingale of the Emajõgi"

son, coupled with the powerful influence of Kreutzwald's literary work and her own correspondence with him, effectively broadened her outlook and strengthened her natural democratic sympathies; and it was precisely this young poetess who was to become the supreme bard of the national movement.

The earlier part of Koidula's poetry appeared in the collections "Meadow Flowers" (1866) and "The Nightingale of the Emajõgi*" (1866), her later poems appeared in the periodical press. The intensely national spirit of her work made a deep impression on the more sensitive of her contemporaries. Essentially romantic in conception, it is fired with a spirit of passionate love for her long-suffering people and mother country. It is this intensity of feeling which imparts such force to her patriotic outbursts. She reacted to the historical humiliation of the Estonian people as to a personal affront; she spoke of slavery and the yoke of subordination with all the grief and anguish of individual experience. But her poetry is not purely tragic: it is also charged with her faith in a brighter future, her hopes for the triumph of freedom and enlightenment, her desire to make her own contribution to the prosperity and awakening of her people. Her patriotic odes are proud and exalted, and her songs breathe a spirit of national solidarity that is stronger than death:

My native land, my dearest love,
I'll never thee forsake,
And should I die a thousand deaths,
That penalty I'll take.
Let jealous strangers say their part,
They'll never tear thee from my heart,
My native land!

Mu isamaa on minu arm,
Ei teda jäta ma,
Ja peaksin sada surma ma
Seepärast surema!
Kas laimab võõra kadedus,
Sa siiski elad südames,
Mu isamaa!

(Translated by V. Hain)

In all this we feel the influence not only of the earlier Estonian poets, especially Kreutzwald, but also of the German revolutionary romantics, from whose patriotic verses, born in the struggle for national unity, a number of recognisable motives have been directly borrowed. This genetic relation is due to the similarity of the emotional background. Motives of German origin can also be traced in Koidula's nature and love poetry,

* The R. Emajõgi, or Mother River, is the largest river in South Estonia and flows through Tartu.



Lydia Koidula *(T. Grenzstein, 1887)*

and in her verse meditations, especially in her earlier work. But as she approached maturity, she achieved full self-assurance and originality. In such poems the elements of nature often acquire the force of cogent philosophical symbols, exalting the inexhaustible richness of human life, to which its very fugitiveness gives an added and poignant beauty.

Thanks to her gift for poetry and the swiftness of her development, Koidula achieved a remarkably high level of artistic maturity. Although she was hampered here and there by the awkwardness of a literary language that was still in process of formation, her finest verses bear the mark of an unusual spontaneity, carrying the reader away with the passion of their thought and feeling, and the splendour of their imagery. Most of her work is done in end-rhyming metres, which by this time had become dominant in Estonian poetry. But sometimes she makes free use of the traditional devices of folk song. The appeal of her poetry was immediate and irresistible: it could leave nobody indifferent whose heart was open to poetry or susceptible to the spirit of patriotism. But her own fate carried her away from Estonia and her long years of separation and solitude throw an elegiac veil over many of her later poems, which are fraught with an unappeased longing.

It is Koidula's poetry that has ensured her immortality among her own people. But in addition to her verses, she wrote a considerable amount of prose. True, most of this prose output is — after the example of her father Jannsen — half-translated or adapted; and only a few narratives can be called entirely original. But even these borrowed stories testify to Koidula's deep interest in other oppressed peoples and her unfailing sympathy with their struggle for liberty, whether they are Indians from Peru, Negroes from Jamaica or serfs from the Ukraine; whether they lived at the time of the French Revolution, or of the popular uprisings in Ancient Rome. In the original stories of Estonian rural life, which appeared towards the end of the eighteen-sixties, we recognise many of the characteristic situations of the period, together with interesting indications of the changes in mental outlook; everywhere we feel the author's disapproval of the old, outmoded ideas and prejudices, and her support of the new — including the right of young people to choose their own partners in life. Moreover, Koidula's stories are technically well written and show a marked advance in the direction of a more efficient and expressive prose style.

Still more important, however, was Koidula's role as the founder of the Estonian drama and the national theatre. Although, as we have seen, short Estonian pieces were performed from time to time at the German theatre in Tallinn during

the first quarter of the century, they failed to give birth to a permanent tradition, and there was as yet no real national theatre, nor even a realisation of the value of the theatre as a form of popular culture. Kreutzwald had attempted to fill in the gap by translating two verse tragedies; but it was not till the end of the 'sixties that the creation of an Estonian theatre was placed on the order of the day — stimulated undoubtedly by the news of the first native performances staged in the neighbouring countries of Latvia and Finland. This aim was finally realised in 1870, when Koidula's comedy "The Cousin from Saaremaa" was presented by the *Vanemuine* Society under the author's direction. The play was based on Körner's farce "*Der Vetter aus Bremen*", but was boldly adapted to suit Estonian tastes and conditions. In spite of the rudimentary plot and the simplicity of the dialogue, the play met with an enthusiastic reception, and Koidula was encouraged to proceed further along the same path. In 1870 and 1871 she wrote and staged two more comedies: "Maret and Miina" and "Such a Bumpkin". Koidula's last comedy "The Betrothal" was written later, during the period of her residence at Kronstadt.

Koidula's attitude to the theatre was probably influenced by the views of Lessing. At any rate she regarded it not as a simple means of entertainment, but as a valuable means of mass education. Naturally, in view of the primitive technical resources of the time — (she had at her disposal an untrained amateur troupe in which the female parts were performed by young men) — she could not undertake anything more ambitious than crude comedies of village life, as a romantic tragedy, in such conditions, would have inevitably degenerated into a parody of itself. But while she had no illusions as to the restricted nature of her resources, she succeeded in producing plays which touched on vital problems and in creating a gallery of true-to-life local types. These were the qualities which impressed her contemporaries, and which have ensured the repeated performance of her plays in the professional theatre right up to the present day. She was the first to grapple with the problems of original playwriting and stage production; and her initiative in this respect must be regarded as one of the most substantial cultural achievements of the national movement. In this sense she marks the beginning of a tradition which has already a century of progress behind it.

One of Koidula's first biographers — Aino Kallas — has compared her literary career to a falling star (such was the title of her study). This poetic image admirably conveys the brightness of her talent and the relative briefness of the period during which she remained at the height of her creative powers. But perhaps it expresses too exclusively the tragic aspect of her personality. For Koidula was no short-lived meteor that blazed for a moment against the dark background of her age only to vanish in the night. Her best works have continued to comfort and gladden the hearts of the Estonian people, and for the generations that followed she was to live on as the very symbol of the national awakening and the renovation of Estonian culture.

Other writers of the early awakening. As compared with the previous period the 'sixties and 'seventies brought to the fore a far greater number of young writers and progressive intellectuals. The most prominent of the latter, not so much for his literary activities properly speaking, as for his role of propagandist and controversialist, was Carl Robert J a k o b s o n (1841—1882), who from 1865 published sharply antifeudal articles in the "*Eesti Postimees*" and delivered to the *Vanemuine*



Carl Robert Jakobson

society a series of lectures on the history of the Estonian people (printed in 1870 under the title "Three Patriotic Addresses"). Jakobson also compiled an influential school reader, which was something in the nature of an anthology of Estonian literature and remained in use for nearly half a century. After 1871, when Jannsen entered into his agreement with the nobility and barred Jakobson from access to his columns, the latter was hard put to find a vehicle for his ideas. It was not until 1878, after supplicating ten years for permission, that he was finally able to launch his own paper, the "*Sakala*"*, which in spite of the obstacles raised by the censorship became the tribune of the democratic wing of the national movement. Jakobson's newspaper maintained an exceptionally high level of information for its day, and with its over 5000 subscribers enjoyed a wide circulation. With his bold criticism of the church and the aristocracy and his insistent demands for social and national equality of rights, he successfully roused the masses to political activity. The "*Sakala*" supported and encouraged the cultural enterprises of the national movement and helped to popularise its leading writers. Indeed, the years when Jakobson was editor of the "*Sakala*" (1878—1882) were the culminating period of the movement. The clergy and the Baltic-German aristocracy were bitterly hostile to him and fought back with all the means at their disposal; his supporters were labelled "Jacobins", and he himself was styled the "Robespierre of the Baltic". A fierce controversy also took place between the "*Sakala*" and the conservative or clerical wing of the national movement. In 1881 Jakobson, who was now the acknowledged leader of the democratic faction, secured the majority among the members of the Society of Estonian Literati, and was elected president. His premature death, which put an end to so brilliant a career and left his numerous following without an effective leadership, had far-reaching repercussions throughout the whole of the Estonian national movement.

In addition to his polemical and propagandist writings, Jakobson published a certain amount of poetry, including a number of manly patriotic verses, a few nature and love poems, and some translations from classical German poetry; he himself in his youth had rhymed in German. Like Kreutzwald he

* The old name for the district of Viljandi, in the south of Estonia.


№ 1 ja 2. Wiliandis, sell' 11mal Märtsil 1878. I. aastakäi

Sakala.

üks poliitika, kirjanduse ja põllutöö ajaleht.

Wastutaja toimetaja ja wäljaandja G. N. Jakobson.

Title of the newspaper "Sakala"

believed that the clue to the development of original Estonian poetry should be sought in folk song. Together with Koidula he experimented in the field of the drama and he was the author of one of the first Estonian plays: "Arthur and Anna, or People of the Old and the New Times" (1872). Here, too, he attacked national and class prejudices — so successfully that his play was banned on several occasions by the authorities.

The poet Friedrich Kuhlbars (1841—1924) is remembered chiefly for his verse legends and patriotic hymns, some of which became widely known. He was influenced both by the later German romantics, and by Faehlmann's myths and Kreutzwald's "Kalevipoeg", while yet other motives are drawn from classical mythology and the Bible. As a result his imagery is somewhat literary in character. Kuhlbars also wrote a large number of nature lyrics, and especially children's songs, of which latter genre he is regarded as one of the founders in Estonian literature; indeed, some of his most successful children's verses have retained their popularity right up to the present day. He also published two collections in German.

The work of Mihkel Veske (1843—1890) is restricted in quantity but on the whole more vital and true to life, and has consequently left a deeper mark on the formation of the national poetic style. Patriotic ideas are here combined with intimate domestic scenes, and the poet's childhood memories are touchingly associated with pictures of the countryside surrounding his birthplace. Veske's conception of his Estonian fatherland is strongly idealised. In this way he endeavoured to rouse and cultivate a sense of patriotism in the reader, teaching him to honour his people and his native language. His homely, idiomatic style gained him many admirers, and many of his songs have won a permanent place in the popular repertory. Of particular significance are those poems which reflect the growing social inequality in the countryside, and the hard lot of the hired labourer and the poor farmer. These motives were evidently reinforced by the influence of traditional folk poetry, from which Veske also successfully adopted a number of poetic devices and formal elements. His nature lyrics and shepherd's songs are admirable for the simplicity of their language, and their warmth and sincerity of tone. It may be added that Veske — who was a linguist of no mean ability — translated a number of poems not only from the German and Russian, but also from the Finnish, Hungarian, Swedish and Danish.

In his views and aspirations Veske belonged to the democratic wing of the national movement; he was Jakobson's closest collaborator, and after the latter's death, the chief representative of the progressive trend, becoming incidentally — like Jakobson — president of the Society of Estonian Literati. But lacking Jakobson's political perspicacity, unswerving determination and tactical foresight, he was before long deposed from the leadership.

The peasant poet Ado Reinvald (1847—1922) was not only inspired by the example of Kreutzwald, Koidula, Jakobson and other contemporaries, but was directly encouraged by them. One of the central themes of his poetry, which enjoyed a widespread popularity, was the need of an uncompromising struggle against the oppressors of the people — the Baltic-German landlords and their hirelings. With these he did not hesitate to associate the obscurantist function of the church. Like the other poets of the day, he gave expression to the ideals of the national awakening through the medium of historical themes,

and by exalting the Estonian language and the scenery of his native countryside. His dreams of a brighter future lend a romantic colouring to his verse; but he trounces his adversaries with a satire that is plainly influenced by the more recent types of folk poetry. Reinvald is a peasant both in his social status and in his mentality; with him it is a point of honour to wear the long black coat of the Estonian peasant, to remain true to his vocation and his people. His nature and domestic poetry is similarly saturated with the typical peasant outlook. But, for all his simplicity, he has a strong philosophical bent and is never weary of pondering over the mystery of human destiny, the dictates of morality, the ideal of freedom and the insuperable chasm that lies between dream and reality.

A number of younger poets (J. Kunder, M. J. Eisen, J. Bergmann and others) also make their first appearance in the eighteen-seventies, though the bulk of their work belongs to a somewhat later period. But perhaps of more particular interest, for present purposes, is a new tendency which lies on the boundary-line that divides literature from folklore. These are the verse satires and lampoons that circulated in manuscript form during the 'sixties and 'seventies. Under the strict censorship then in force they had no prospects of appearing in print on account of their sharp criticism of the entire feudal system, and their unveiled hostility to both manor and church. As a result they formed a sort of illegal undercurrent of the national movement, expressing the views and aspirations of its most radical elements. One characteristic feature of these verse satires is their active and militant approach to the problems of history. They passionately denounce the enslavement and humiliation of the Estonian people. Their spirit of protest finds indignant expression in such works as "The Estonian's Complaint", an extensive song cycle, containing from 120 to 180 verses, which spread through the countryside in a large number of variants. It drew drastic pictures of the bitter lot of the peasantry both in the past and in the present, lashed the parasitic mentality and the brutal habits of the landed gentry, and exposed the greed and inhumanity of the clergy. Other cycles of this type also enjoyed widespread popularity. All of them reacted violently against the oppressive policy of the Baltic aristocracy, and some went so far as to incite the peasants to open resistance. A number of verse pamphlets derided Jannsen for his underhand bargain

with the representatives of the aristocracy. Many satiric poems were directed against the church. Taken together, these works, in the conditions then obtaining, constituted a formidable body of illicit political verse, which, circulating in manuscript form or passing orally from mouth to mouth, awoke a lively response among the population of the countryside.

The prose literature of the time was of a more modest order, both in respect of its authors and of the general quality of their work. Estonian prose, which was still comparatively undeveloped, could boast of no narrative talent that might be compared with the lyric inspiration of a Koidula; and for this reason the reflection of the age in prose remained somewhat vague and diffuse, taking on here and there a deceptive, or even illusory quality.

The most productive narrative author at the height of the national movement was the teacher Jakob P ä r n (1843—1916), who remained — it must be admitted — more of a schoolmaster than of a writer in the true sense of the word. Not only his collections of children's stories, published at the beginning of the 'seventies, but also the majority of his books for adult readers are didactic and moralising in tone. Of the ideas on which the national movement was founded Pärn takes as his central theme the aspirations of the Estonian peasantry to economic prosperity, often at the cost of obscuring farther-reaching and more important aims beneath a narrow-minded web of bourgeois utilitarianism. His best-known work is a tale of village life characteristically entitled "Master of His Own Home" (1879). Although it is undeniably more realistic in conception than Pärn's other books, this account of how a young Estonian eventually becomes the owner of a farm is far too simple and slick to be entirely convincing. Other stories, in which Estonian characters in towns finally acquire wealth and equality of status with the German population, are still more facile and superficial in their treatment of involved social problems. Carried away by his wishful thinking, Pärn even went so far as to describe Estonian landowners, who in the refinement of their manners and the extent of their possessions stood on an equal footing with the local German aristocracy. In so doing he only succeeded in exposing the vagueness of his own social ideals. Indeed, in his later works he abandoned these flights of imagination and endeavoured to give a more convincing picture of

peasant life, showing both its hardships and its contradictions, thereby coming into inevitable conflict with the censorship, with the result that a number of stories were suppressed.

It was C. R. Jakobson who encouraged the literary activity of Lilli (Caroline) Suburg (1841—1923), remembered for her largely autobiographical story "Liina" (1877). This is the story of an Estonian girl who resists the pressure of the German school to which she is sent and the atmosphere of forcible assimilation of the philo-German environment in which she moves. Appearing, as it did, at the height of the national movement it was naturally received with acclaim. This success the author was never destined to repeat, although mention should perhaps be made of Suburg's work as editor of the first Estonian women's magazine "*Linda*" (1887—1893), which was also inspired by the educational principles of the growing demand for emancipation.

As will be seen from the foregoing, Estonian literature underwent a radical change during the period of preparation for the national movement and especially when it was at its height. This change was one of both function and basic character. Now, for the first time, a genuinely original literature had sprung into being and begun to follow its own path of development. It was no longer the protégé of the Baltic-German clergy. It had become the spokesman of the vital interests and aspirations of the masses of the people. It had taken upon itself the task of educating the public in a spirit of opposition to political oppression. It had awakened the national consciousness of the Estonian people. On the whole it bore a progressive and democratic character, corresponding to the needs and fundamental problems of society at that time. The new ideas found expression in a historical and social subject-matter that would have been inconceivable in the earlier stages of the development of Estonian literature. Great emphasis was laid on the demand for national equality. The idea of a struggle against the feudal system was vigorously expressed in the shape of patriotic appeals and utterances, legendary romanticism and optimistic visions of the future. In addition to external influences an important role in the development of literature was played by the practice of utilising the materials of folk poetry. It is precisely here that we must seek the beginnings of a conscious

effort to achieve a specific national quality in Estonian literature.

But it must be admitted that these achievements, considerable in themselves, were debilitated by the fact that Estonian literature was still groping its way towards maturity and had only just learnt to stand on its own feet. The Estonians were a small people, dependent on both the Czarist government of Russia and on the Baltic-German aristocracy. Their status was by no means a favourable one from the point of view of the development of the national culture; and to a certain extent their attempts at self-expression were made possible only by the conflict of interests between the Baltic Germans and the central authority of the state. Their position was a precarious one, and the whole of the Estonian national movement was little more than a slight local disturbance within the huge framework of the Czarist Russian Empire.

Nor should we forget the fact that the Estonian writers of the time were forced to address their works to a reading public on a low level of education. Moreover, they themselves had attended a German school, and had been obliged to acquire the use of their native language without guidance or tuition. In these conditions the most progressive and valuable ideas had to be clothed in the simplest and homeliest form. In the first flush of national excitement the intoxicating joy of self-discovery had caused these weaknesses to pass without notice. But when the initial enthusiasm began to die down, they made themselves felt with increasing force, often giving rise to moods of disillusionment and despair. These moods can be clearly discerned in the literary and cultural life of the eighteen-eighties.

LITERATURE DURING THE DECLINE OF THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT

Deepening social contradictions. By the time of Jakobson's "*Sakala*" the national movement, which had been heterogeneous from the first, split up into two sharply differentiated wings which were soon involved in a bitter controversy. This was not an entirely bad thing in itself, although many contemporary observers were inclined to regard such "internecine strife" as a deplorable and tragic misunderstanding; for the struggle

between the democratic or radical wing and the conservative or clerical wing brought in its train a sharp rise in social activity of the broad masses of the people, with the result that the prestige and influence of the democratic wing rapidly increased. But when the struggle reached its climax after Jakobson's death there was no outstanding leader capable of filling the breach that he had left, and among the men who disputed his succession there were some who had already rendered themselves notorious for their vacillation or lack of principle. A severe internal crisis ensued that made itself felt in the Estonian newspapers and organisations. The number of the former, in particular, had grown considerably, but for the most part they were engaged in childish polemics on trivial local issues. There was no clear programme of struggle, and the claims put forward were invalidated by a cringing attitude to the Czarist authorities. All this could only partly be explained by a lack of competent forces. To a far greater extent it was due to the advent of grave new complications in the contemporary texture of social and national relationships.

Since national oppression continued, it still had to be resisted; and the national movement also continued although it had now lost its former impetus and singleness of purpose. In the 'eighties the process of social differentiation among the Estonians themselves was accelerated, and the nationalist slogans were no longer capable of uniting the divergent aims of the different strata of the population as they had done before. Meanwhile the policy of the Czarist government dealt a severe blow to the entire programme for national emancipation in its present shape. The movement itself had mainly been directed against the privileged status of the Baltic-German aristocracy. It had adopted a position of unswerving loyalty to the Russian authority, to which it even appealed for assistance. But when the long-awaited administrative reforms were finally granted in the 'eighties, they were deeply tinged by the chauvinist tendencies of the reactionary period of Alexander III.

One of the demands of the national movement had been the acceptance of Estonian as an official language in the higher administrative organs and in the provincial courts. Now, however, the Russian language ousted not only German as the official language of the higher authorities, but also Estonian, which had hitherto been permitted in the local administrative

centres. In the same way the national movement had set itself the aim of extending the use of Estonian, already accepted in the village schools, to establishments of secondary education. But now teaching was to be carried out in Russian only in all the schools — including the village schools. When, after years of patriotic agitation, the Estonian Alexander School, for which the funds had been collected by voluntary subscription, was finally opened in 1888 it was also a Russian-language school, in seeming mockery of the principles on which the campaign for its foundation had been based.

Nor was there any lack of persons who for one reason or another — out of hostility to the German aristocracy and the Lutheran Church, or from purely selfish motives or mere pusillanimity of character — were prepared to support the new order. One of the most vociferous spokesmen of the government policy and the campaign for Russification was Jakob Kõrv, whose newspaper "*Valgus*" ("Illumination") appeared at Tallinn from 1882, and who did not shrink from using the most underhand methods to remove his rivals. It was owing to Kõrv's intrigues that Jaak Järv's paper the "*Virulane*"*, also published at Tallinn, where it was the most consistent defender of the democratic traditions inaugurated by Jakobson's "*Sakala*", was removed from circulation in 1888. Ado Grenzstein's newspaper "*Olevik*" ("The Present"), published at Tartu, also gradually withdrew from its former nationalist stand and began to preach assimilation with Russia. These and similar arguments must be regarded as the result of the politically and morally distorted, abnormal and oppressive relations typical of the period.

Certainly, some Estonian newspapers tried to avoid the extreme expressions of blind allegiance to the Russian state. One of them was the Tartu "*Postimees*" ("Courier"), edited by Karl August Hermann. In spite of his timidity and political naïvety he succeeded, with the assistance of a group of young intellectuals, in placing the "*Postimees*" on such a firm footing that in 1891 it became the first Estonian-language daily newspaper (all the others were still weeklies). In addition to these newspapers there were five or six Estonian periodicals of various types, though none of them could be said to play an

* *Viru (Virumaa)* is the name of a region in North Estonia; the title of the newspaper means "a native of Viru".

important part in cultural life. Mention may be made of the "*Meelejahutaja*" ("Entertainer"), a domestic magazine with a literary bent, which remained in circulation until 1887. Another journal of a more literary character was "*Oma Maa*" ("Our Country") founded by M. Veske in 1884. On the whole a fairly large number of newspapers had come into being by this time, but by cultural standards they were still primitive, and this could not fail to exercise an adverse effect on the literature of the period.

One of the indications of the critical situation into which the national movement had fallen was the decline of its central cultural organisation, the Society of Estonian Literati. This in the course of time degenerated into an arena for petty squabbles, thus furnishing the Czarist authorities with a plausible pretext for its suppression in 1893.

But although the prevailing confusion of ideas and the weakness of the leadership in face of the growing pressure from without led to a series of bitter setbacks and disappointments, the general democratic character of the movement was by no means destroyed. All in all, the social and cultural activity of the Estonian public continued to grow, finding expression in the formation of an increasing number of local societies, in the spreading popularity of choral singing and amateur theatricals, and in the steadily growing number of participants in the national song festivals. The publication of literary works, both original and translated, kept pace with the rapid expansion of the periodical press. As a result the cultural aspirations of the national movement attained a wider resonance carrying with them — in the literal meaning of the word — the broad masses of the people.

One of the most stirring examples of the spontaneous cultural activity of the masses was the nation-wide movement for the collection of folklore. A beginning had already been made by members of the Society of Estonian Literati in the 'seventies, but the movement assumed particularly broad dimensions during the last two decades of the century. It was led by Jakob Hurt (1839—1907), whose enthusiasm for the national epic "Kalevipoeg" had induced him to make a study of the traditional Estonian folk poetry. His appeal, launched in 1888, met with an eager response, and resulted in the creation of a network of more than 1300 correspondents from all parts of the

country. The work of collection was mainly organised through the periodical press, and was carried out by volunteers who looked for no other payment than the satisfaction of their own patriotic fervour. Another leader was Matthias Johann E i s e n (1857—1934) whose methods were similar to those of Hurt. In this way, by the end of the century, a total of more than 162,000 pages of traditional folk texts had been gathered, including folk songs and folk tales with variants running into tens of thousands, proverbs, saws and adages, riddles and descriptions of rites, games, customs etc. Thus the foundations were laid for the national stocks of folk literature, which have since been steadily and systematically augmented. At the present time these stocks, which are preserved in the Kreutzwald Museum of Literature at Tartu, exceed 800,000 pages, and have received international recognition as one of the richest and most extensive collections of this type.

Moreover, the folklore movement had direct repercussions on the world of literature. Much of the materials gathered was propagated in the form of popular reading matter, and folk texts came to occupy a conspicuous place among the literary interests of the public. While Hurt initiated the scientific publication of folk song texts, Eisen and a number of others who followed his example undertook the publication of popular miscellanies drawn from folklore. These became popular indeed, and formed a useful addition to the original works available at that time.

General characteristics of the literature of the period. For the most part, literature during the eighteen-eighties at first strictly conformed to the general pattern of the national movement, with its characteristic themes, problems and treatment. The wave of patriotic idealism required that every aspect of Estonian life should be seen through rose-coloured spectacles. The honest hard-working farm hand inevitably won through to economic independence just as the young Estonian intellectual who had become conscious of his national allegiance inevitably achieved his aims. Everything that they said, did or thought was plainly designed to illustrate the theses of the national movement. Poetry continued to exalt the beauty of the Estonian countryside, the charm of the Estonian language, and the courage and manliness of the Estonian people. But the more often — and the more superficially — these

ideas were repeated by growing numbers of writers, the more they were varied without advancing a step further, the faster they lost both their appeal and their significance. In the course of time, as social conditions grew more and more entangled, and the hopes and dreams of an earlier period were dashed one after another, it became patent that this epigonic literature, with its outmoded post-romantic vision of life, was losing touch with reality and had become estranged from the concrete needs and problems of contemporary society.

To a certain extent the survival of this unreal subject-matter and the conventional treatment in literature was due to the persistence — perhaps it would be truer to say the intensification — of national oppression. But the heyday of national romanticism had passed, and little by little there arose a demand for a more authentic picture of the life of the people, in which its real sorrows and hardships should be faithfully reflected. Neither in its essence nor in its aims was this new tendency antagonistic to its predecessor, of which it inherited the democratic outlook and patriotic mood. But these were now expressed in a much more sober manner. Everyday life was to be depicted as it was, without illusions; and here and there the use of humorous narrative or description opened up the way to a more profound analysis of the social problems involved. As the transition from national romanticism to realism gained ground, problems of a different order began to find their way into literature, which no longer ignored the presence of deepening internal contradictions within the structure of the Estonian population, or the wave of disillusionment caused by the decline of the national movement. One characteristic feature of the phase under discussion is the gradual transference of the centre of gravity from poetry to prose. In the course of the decade the latter becomes strikingly more varied, in both content and style; and in addition to the sketches and narratives of the earlier period, the first Estonian novels now make their appearance.

But the advance towards realism was by no means straightforward or automatic; and, paradoxically enough, it is precisely at this moment that the romantic historical narrative springs into prominence, and its widespread popularity with the broad reading public converted it into one of the chief weapons in the propagandist armoury of the patriotic movement.

Historical prose fiction. Estonian prose, which had been mainly represented by sketches of village life, was now enriched by the introduction of a historical subject-matter that had previously been confined to poetry, where it had been utilised to a certain extent, mainly owing to the influence of "Kalevipoeg". The first example of this new genre was the historical narrative "The Avenger", which appeared already in 1880, at the height of the national movement. Its author was the young writer Eduard Bornhöhe (1862—1923), who had turned to literature at an early age; its subject was the great peasant uprising that took place in North Estonia in 1343. It succeeded, in its way, in creating an enthralling general picture of the national struggle for freedom that was thoroughly in tune with the patriotic upsurge at the time. While he sharply condemned the tyranny of the alien feudal overlords, Bornhöhe depicted the struggle of the native Estonians in a spirit of youthful enthusiasm and exalted romanticism. His vivid characters and gripping plot made the events of the distant past seem somehow familiar and real to the contemporary reader. His central figure, the Avenger, was received as a symbol of heroic sacrifice and still lives in the imagination of the people as the leader of the



Eduard Bornhöhe

uprising and the spirit of the popular struggle for liberation. Bornhöhe's second story "The Struggles of Villu" (1890), which deals with the same period and is characterised by the same tragic conclusion, taught a similar lesson of unflinching resistance to oppression and social injustice. His third outstanding work "Duke Gabriel" (1893) carries us forward to the events of the Livonian War, which took place during the second half of the 16th century (suggesting incidentally a prospect of uniting Estonia with the then rising power of the Russian state). In style and treatment Bornhöhe — like other contemporary representatives of the Estonian historical narrative — may be characterised as a late follower of the school of Walter Scott, with all the specific features of the romantic conception of mediaeval society. Later, influenced more particularly by the German writer Theodor Fontane, he effected a transition to a more realistic method and devoted himself chiefly to descriptions of Tallinn life at the end of the century. Lastly, he must be given his due as one of the founders of Estonian travel literature, especially in his book "Following the Footsteps of the Pilgrims" (1899).

Another author of historical narratives and novels, widely read in his time was Andres Saal (1861—1931), whose central achievement was the adventurous trilogy "Vambola" (1889), "Aita" (1891) and "Leili" (1893), which deals with the subjugation of the Livonian and Estonian tribes at the end of the 12th century and beginning of the 13th. In addition to these three novels he produced a similar work "Hilda" (1890), which is concerned with the 1343 uprising, and a number of other historical tales. All of them are marked by their complicated and mysterious plots; they all deliberately set out to thrill, and they combine exciting adventures with an appropriate dose of sentimentalism in a manner that was well calculated to appeal to the taste of the uncritical reader. On the whole Saal fell short of the artistic level attained by Bornhöhe, and in comparison with the succeeding phase of realistic description his somewhat affected manner seemed of still more dubious value. However, his contribution to Estonian literature was not confined to his historical romances. At the end of the century he removed to Java, recording his experiences in a series of descriptive sketches that opened the eyes of the Estonian reader to the unfamiliar setting of the Far East, with its

luxuriant scenery and age-old culture. He also produced a few exotic novels in which he did not conceal his disapproval of the colonial powers, and in which, if he created little of a lasting literary value, he at least succeeded in introducing some new subjects and problems.

Here, too, belongs Jaak Järv (1852—1920), mentioned above in his capacity as newspaper editor. His chief work is the historical novel "The Maid of Vallimägi" (1885), which is concerned with the period of the Northern War and contains an impressive account of the agony of Tallinn labouring in the grip of the plague. Järv's remaining works, including the historical narratives "Goddaughter" and "Karolus", are of minor importance. But other names, such as A. Kitzberg, G. E. Luiga, K. A. Hermann, etc., might be added to the list, so that it would be no exaggeration to say that, for a while at least, historical themes occupied first place in the prose literature of the time. True, this outburst of national romanticism was somewhat belated, and suffered, moreover, from limitations, not only of form but also of content. Nevertheless it echoed to a certain extent the patriotic aspirations of the masses, and at the same time helped to keep them alive. Their influence from this point of view did not escape notice; and in 1893 the Czarist censor's office was instructed to put an end to all such types of "seditious" agitation.

Stories of contemporary life and the drama. In those prose works which dealt with contemporary life or with the recent past a certain shift in the direction of realism took place in the eighteen-eighties as compared, for example, with the works of Pärn written a few years earlier. Many of these stories belonged to the category of entertainment fiction in which humorous details and an informal, conversational manner tended to substitute the sentimental tone of an earlier day. But the somewhat superficial plot was made more substantial by the addition of a concrete, detailed and carefully filled-in background. At the same time more attention was paid to the inner life of the characters and a conscious effort was made to avoid the use of stereotyped situations followed by a conventional happy ending. All this amounted to a tentative advance towards a more realistic treatment of everyday life, however superficial and inconsistent it might appear to be at first sight. The authors who represented this tendency served, in a sense, to

pave the way for the triumph of critical realism in the succeeding decade.

One writer of this type was Maximilian P õ d d e r (1852—1905) whose story "Bob Ellerhein" (1884) may be regarded as characteristic of the new fashion in prose literature. This life story of a young Estonian intellectual is thoroughly authentic in both background and — to a lesser extent — characterisation, although it must be admitted that the plot and the emotional atmosphere are still basically romantic in character. A more talented writer was Elisabeth A s p e (1860—1927), whose stories "The Stepsister" (1887) and "Ain of Ennosaare" (1888) achieved a fairly high level of psychological realism in its treatment of human relationships and the inner world of the main characters. In the last-mentioned story Aspe touches on a number of problems connected with the national movement, but the tone of her work has utterly changed as compared with that of an earlier period. She also produced a narrative "Anna Dorothea" (1891), which depicts the life of the Baltic Germans round about the beginning of the 18th century.

Apart from Põdder and Aspe a number of other writers reflect, to a greater or lesser degree, the same urge to achieve an authentic reproduction of contemporary life. All of them were surpassed by Eduard Vilde, who in the eighteen-eighties stood on the threshold of his literary career, and whose narrative zest and remarkable fecundity were to make him the central literary figure of the following epoch.

Meanwhile the development of the drama was retarded by the fact that the reduced facilities and the primitive technique of the amateur troupes continued to prohibit the creation of serious or profound works. The only semi-professional troupe — that of the *Vanemuine* society — succeeded in staging one or two classic plays (Shakespeare, Molière), but most of the time it expended its energies on the production of translated farces, ballad operas and operettas calculated to appeal to the tastes of the petty-bourgeois audience. Consequently neither the incentive nor the conditions existed for the development of a serious original drama: the time was not yet ripe for problem plays. But even the light comedies of the time offer striking analogies with the realistic sketches mentioned earlier. They reveal the same desire to create authentic scenes of popular life, to portray convincing types and to reproduce the living

speech of the people. In some ways this was only to be expected, since the Estonian theatre had retained from the beginning an observant, down-to-earth attitude to the world around it.

This quality, which was already present in Koidula's plays, was still more prominent in the works of Juhan Kunder (1855—1888), especially in his comedy "The Old-Timer" (1885). Like Koidula, he drew his subject-matter from village life, but he had a keener eye for social problems. His play reveals a clear understanding of the differences in status and outlook between the rich farmer and the poor tenant. But the main line of the action, in which two young lovers are separated, is brought to a farcical conclusion by the robust intervention of the old-timer himself, a breezy, bragging veteran of the Turkish war. However, this character is an achievement in itself. It is not only Kunder's best, but also the finest of any play written at the time. Of Kunder's other plays the most remarkable is the drama "The Bride and the Ranters" (1887), in which he strikes out at the hypocrisy that is so often concealed beneath a mask of piety and religious fanaticism. Kunder, who was active as a poet and a writer of children's stories, also published a volume of carefully edited traditional legends and fairy-tales, as well as a number of useful school-books; and lastly he deserves notice as one of the first Estonian critics, in which capacity he stressed the importance of the national character of literature, its educational function and its value as a truthful reflection of life.

Another type of play was the sentimental romance, which with its supernatural element and pseudo-mythological imagery offered a sort of parallel to the romantic historical novel. These works pandered to the post-romantic tastes of a large section of the public, and for a time enjoyed considerable success; but from a literary point of view they formed a sort of blind alley, and they added little or nothing to the development of the drama.

The dramatic output of Jakob Liiv (1859—1938) was both extensive and varied, but of his best works written at the time — such as the social drama "To a Waste Land", the verse tragedy "Knight Commander", and the comedy "Village Elder for the Third Time" — not one succeeded in passing the censorship, nor before some time had elapsed, in finding its

way into print. Nevertheless they were circulated in manuscript form, and the last particularly, which sharply satirises the corrupt practices of the local administration, was performed on the public stage. About the same time August Kitzberg was already attracting attention with his plays about rural life and it was he who was to become the leading exponent of critical realism in the theatre at the beginning of the following century.

Poetry. Whereas poetry had indisputably occupied a leading position in literature during the rise of the national movement, it now — from about the beginning of the 'eighties, and precisely at a time when the output of verse was growing by leaps and bounds — lost much of its former importance and a sort of inflation set in. Many were tempted to express themselves in rhyme; but most of what they produced was dull and unoriginal. Of the new names which now made their appearance quite a number were men from the university. But they were sadly lacking in poetic talent, and it was only rarely that they succeeded in rising above mere pedantic mediocrity or freeing themselves from the jaded tradition of late German romanticism. The conventional themes of patriotism, nature and love were treated in a perfunctory, impersonal fashion, and philosophical poetry became a vehicle for trite petty-bourgeois moralising and religious meditation.

Fortunately there were other types of verse in addition to the ubiquitous romantic poem and ballad — racy narratives and fables which smacked of the soil and stemmed directly from the folk tradition. These introduced new traits which became especially pronounced in the 'nineties. Poetry gradually became aware of the endless worries and drudgery of peasant life, and here and there amidst the spate of patriotic rhetoric a note of scepticism and anxiety could be heard, tempering the general optimism with a sense of apprehension for the future. At the same time a more sensitive feeling for nature might be discerned. Thus the close of the century was marked by the interplay of different styles and tendencies — very often intermingled in the work of one and the same author.

Among the poets of this generation mention should he made of Jaan Bergmann (1856—1916), who was known particularly for his ballads on various episodes of the long struggle for liberation as well as on subjects drawn from

Estonian folklore. Bergmann, who was one of the best metrists of his day, also did much to enrich the poetic language. We should also recall the name of M. J. Eisen, already mentioned as one of the leading organisers of folklore collection, whose epic poems are mainly based on events of the distant past or legends from folk poetry.

Peeter Jakobson (1854—1899) recorded in his works his reminiscences of the Russo-Turkish War and the liberation of Bulgaria, but also found time to treat topics of everyday life and the sufferings of the poor. An elegiac note, often bordering on the deepest pessimism, made itself heard in the poetry of Elise Aun (1863—1932), whose own tragic experiences led her to sympathise with the victims and outcasts of society. Jakob Liiv, already mentioned as a dramatist, left his mark as a writer of domestic verse, and especially, during the last decade of the century, with a series of allegorical poems. He also produced a considerable quantity of epic poetry, drawing his subjects now from folk poetry, now from modern life.

The general rise into prominence of the lyrico-epic style found its expression in the work of Jakob Tamm (1861—1907), many of whose poems also sounded a note of protest against feudal tyranny. On the whole he was more conscious than his predecessors of the changes in social life and the new class antagonisms then maturing in the countryside. He was influenced not only by Estonian folklore and poetry but also by the Russians Krylov, Pushkin, Lermontov, Nekrassov and others, whose work he knew well and had partly translated. All in all, he did much to free poetry from the stagnant conventions of the post-romantic epoch. His most characteristic works were perhaps his popular ballads, long narrative poems and fables, in which he successfully united motives drawn from folklore with pictures of village life. These were decidedly more realistic than the fashionable mythological romances of the period, and Tamm's democratic sympathies find full expression in his effective, well-chosen situations, his colourful social types and significant details, all of which combine to impart to his best works a vigorous social message. Tamm was also the author of many deeply-felt nature poems, a few fresh and sincere verses on the themes of home and childhood, and a certain amount of love poetry. He stands out among the figures

of his generation with his concrete imagery, his natural, unaffected style and his creative attitude to the folk sources by which he was so strongly influenced.

Among the poets who make their debut about this time are some of the outstanding names of Estonian literature: Anna Haava, Juhan Liiv and Karl Eduard Sööt; but discussion of their contribution must be reserved for the following period, to which they more properly belong.

Literary criticism. The eighteen-eighties brought a sharp increase in critical activity, which had as yet remained more or less in abeyance. The growth of the periodical press afforded wider opportunities for critical expression, and discussions of the general state of literature now became more frequent, the views put forward being often highly critical and occasionally even downright pessimistic. Here, too, we may discern the need to replace the exalted rhapsodies of the national movement at its height with a more even and sober appraisement. Now that Estonian literature had come to be regarded as an accepted fact, the more educated people became more painfully conscious of its poverty and primitive stage of development as compared with the achievements of other countries. Most disquieting and disappointing of all was the growing conviction that the attainments of Kreutzwald and Koidula had been followed by a phase of confusion and stagnation, if not one of actual retrogression. Year after year these problems were aired in the newspapers with a view to discovering the reasons for the depression and finding a way out of it. The most active participants in the controversy were the writers of the younger generation, such as Eduard Vilde and Juhan Liiv. Both of them were later to become outstanding realists and both already felt a sharp dissatisfaction with the existing state of affairs and an urgent need to strike out in a new direction. Although these young writers failed to agree on any conscious, clear-cut line of action, they were all convinced, each in his own way, that the time was ripe for a radical change.

In these conditions, the two dominant currents of Estonian literature in the past — the instructive or edifying trend and the school of national romanticism — had reached a point at which they were no longer able to persist in their familiar forms. They had been outstripped by the needs of everyday life

and were unable to satisfy the quest for new methods and principles. The whole question of the aims and functions of literature led to the problem of the relations between the truth and the ideal. This was the problem of realism itself; and the struggle between its supporters and opponents was now joined, and was destined to continue unabated for several years. In the prevailing atmosphere of discontent, controversy and experiment there was a general feeling that literature had reached a state of crisis. But from it emerged the new trends that were finally to bring Estonian literature into direct contact with the cultural movements of the modern world.

CRITICAL REALISM AND THE NEW CURRENTS IN ESTONIAN LITERATURE

THE PRECONDITIONS FOR THE TRIUMPH OF REALISM

Every young national literature experiences a natural urge to achieve a deeper and more varied representation of reality. Although it has grown out of the conditions and needs of its own people and is addressed primarily to the local reader, it is constantly subjected to outside influence; and deep down in its consciousness it cherishes the ambition of surmounting its limitations and making its own specific contribution to the broader fund of international culture. This tendency was present in Estonian literature from the time when it first attempted to stand on its own feet; but it became more noticeable towards the end of the nineteenth century and was especially pronounced at the beginning of the twentieth. Indeed, one of the characteristic features of this time was the desire to break free from the narrow sphere of local problems and interests, and to establish contact with the literature of other countries. One of the first important steps in this direction was the acceptance of realism and its application as a creative method in Estonian literature.

The development of literature in the direction of richness of content and authenticity of reproduction leads naturally to realism. But it can only attain its goal when the necessary objective conditions are present both in social life and in literature itself. As far as Estonian literature was concerned, these conditions were satisfied towards the end of the 19th century. By that time the wave of romanticism had more or less exhausted its progressive mission; so, too, had the parallel stream of "pre-realism" with its primarily educational aims and resulting didactic character. The growing demand for a deeper and more consistent realism was strengthened by the example of foreign literature, especially in the field of prose fiction. From truth of detail literature turned to the creation of typical situations and typical characters. The realistic treatment of the setting grew step by step into a broad and comprehensive panorama of contemporary life. Abstract moral-

ising was replaced more and more by the study of concrete social problems. In this way, although examples of romanticism continued to appear in poetry and in the historical novel, Estonian literature in the eighteen-nineties effected a gradual but steady transition to realism.

This change in literary method was dictated by a change of outlook, which, in its turn, was fundamentally the result of a readjustment of the social structure. The development of democratic ideas had entered a new phase. The formation of the Estonian nation was now complete, and the ideology which had been nurtured by this process, persisted mainly as a form of reaction to the national oppression which still continued. At the same time a new process of differentiation set in. The class distinctions within the Estonian population itself were accentuated and the new-born concept of bourgeois nationality was split by internal contradictions. New social problems arose, giving rise to new ideas. The simple principle of nationalism no longer seemed adequate and was now buttressed by a more broad-minded and far-reaching outlook. The growth of industry led to the birth of the Estonian working-class movement in the eighteen-eighties, and the first socialist study circles made their appearance. Materialist and atheist views gained ground among the more progressive sections of the intelligentsia. The rapidly growing interest in science stimulated a new approach to the external world. Naturally enough, in the conditions of the ultra-reactionary Czarist regime, the intellectual ferment had to be carefully camouflaged and was restricted at first to individuals and tiny groups. But as time went by a certain fraction of it was echoed in the periodical press, where it attracted the notice of a wider public. Literature, too, in its own way and through its specific problems, played its part in the general movement.

An important factor in these changes in attitude and aesthetic ideas was the influence of foreign literature (a knowledge of German and Russian was taken for granted by every educated Estonian), while the steadily increasing output of translations also played its part. Literary arguments and statements were interspersed with growing numbers of references not only to German and Russian, but also to French, Hungarian, Scandinavian and Finnish works, all of which testified eloquently to the expansion of the literary horizon. By the end of the century a large number of the outstanding monuments

of world literature had already appeared in the Estonian language. Particularly significant was the role of realistic prose fiction, which contributed so much to the moulding of public taste. The works translated included many novels by the Russian realists Turgenev and Leo Tolstoi (two separate editions of "War and Peace" were published in the 'nineties) as well as Pushkin, Gogol, Dostoevski, Korolenko and others. Recent German literature was plentifully represented by the works of B. Auerbach, P. Heyse, H. Sudermann and the Austrian writer P. Rosegger. French literature contributed the short stories of Maupassant, and in the 'nineties an extensive selection of Zola's novels. Other foreign authors who became favourites of the Estonian reading public were Mark Twain, the Hungarian Mór Jókai and the Norwegian B. Bjørnson. The translation of these, and other outstanding writers helped considerably to raise the general level of literary culture in Estonia. Moreover, by introducing new means of expression and thereby enriching the literary language, it served as an important stimulus to the creation of original works in the Estonian language.

The spread of the new ideas and the new outlook, together with the influence of foreign realistic literature, opened up far more encouraging prospects than had hitherto existed for the comprehension and representation of contemporary life. This was especially true of the most promising and receptive writers of the younger generation headed by Eduard Vilde, who with his exceptional talent and formidable productivity, was admirably equipped to carry Estonian literature forward into a new epoch. This progressive quality did not escape the notice of the conservative opposition: as early as 1886, following the publication of one of Vilde's first books, a reactionary newspaper serving the interests of the landed gentry, associated him with the political propaganda of the social-democratic movement abroad. This was an exaggeration at the time, but it was not long before the course of events brought Vilde to an acceptance of socialist principles. In view of his prestige as the acknowledged leader of the rising school of critical realism Vilde's conversion to socialism did much to determine the range of social ideas in the movement. In form and execution there was still room for improvement, but in this respect, too, a considerable advance had been made as compared with the style of the previous generation.

The struggle for realism. But critical realism could not triumph without a struggle. It had first to overcome the accepted tastes and conceptions of the day. Before it could pass on to the exposure of social evils and the seamy side of life it had to challenge and dethrone the pedantic, moralising heritage of the past. The most sharply divergent views were expressed concerning the functions and aims of literature; and these divergencies clearly expressed the antagonism between two contradictory attitudes: Should literature be purely 'exemplary' in character? Or should it be an unvarnished reflection of the truth? Other voices were raised in defence of the golden mean. They believed that literature should combine a faithful reproduction of popular life with an element of poetry or nobility of tone, basing their claims on the example of such writers as Bjørnson and Auerbach. In fact there was a general feeling that it was necessary at all costs to avoid acute social issues. One reason for this negative attitude to critical realism was undoubtedly the fact that it was strongly influenced by naturalism, the methods and subject-matter of which were particularly offensive to the fashionable taste. Thus Vilde was reproached for writing immoral works and creating petty, unscrupulous characters, while he took no pains to ensure that virtue should finally be victorious. Retorting to these accusations, Vilde himself in 1887 openly proclaimed his adherence to the principle of realism — though he was by no means yet able to apply it consistently in his works, — defining the method as "the portrayal of the times, life and people as they really are".

In 1888 a widespread and violent controversy broke out in the periodical press concerning the assessment of the ideological heritage of the mature national movement. For the first time it was suggested — not without a certain one-sidedness — that the traditional subjects of the past had already lost much of their significance and the mechanical repetition of patriotic sentiments was in danger of degenerating into empty verbiage. Such harsh judgments undoubtedly had their effect in drawing the reader's attention to the existence of new vital problems and in promoting a more sensible and practical attitude to life, thus considerably strengthening the cause of realism. In this connection it may be noted that in 1890 a certain newspaper, which had condemned Zola on all points a few

years previously, actually set him up as a model to the younger generation of Estonian writers.

However this did not yet signify the final triumph of critical realism and the attacks on Vilde as the leader of the new school continued unabated almost up to the very end of the century. The conservative and clerical opposition dismissed him as "frivolous" and "licentious". For them realism was merely a vulgar predilection for the unsavoury aspects of life. Objectively, the demand that literature should make a "positive contribution" was a deliberate and systematic attempt to minimise the burning social problems of the day and expel them from literature. In the eyes of the more conservative writers realism was a sign of decadence, an evil tendency which had invaded Estonian literature from abroad. It was the intrinsic antithesis of the old ideal in which the traditional patriarchal conception of peasant life had become part and parcel of bourgeois and clerical ideology. No less outraged was the simpering "Biedermeyer" code of morality, which reduced the educational function of literature to didacticism and which was prepared to tolerate only the most discreet references to social evils — always provided that vice was duly punished, and virtue rewarded. It was only to be expected that such critics — who were incidentally in the majority — could not bring themselves to approve of such things as the materialist conception of life, the discussion of social questions, the reflection of class antagonisms and the exposure of the hypocrisy of conventional morals — in short any of the characteristic features of critical realism. As a result the advance of realism in Estonian literature was a protracted process, disputed at every stage of its growth.

The successes and superiority of realism were most conspicuous in the domain of prose — thanks largely to Vilde, who already achieved in the 'nineties results of outstanding and lasting value. His work gradually took hold on the public and won an increasing number of supporters for the current he represented. Soon he was joined by another gifted writer — E. Peterson-Särgava, while A. Kitzberg extended realism to the drama. Similar tendencies established themselves in the poetry of J. Tamm, as well as K. E. Sööt, A. Haava and Juhan Liiv.

The transition to realism might have been swifter and more effective if its theoretical foundations had been stronger and

the movement had been more united. Actually the new generation was muddled and confused. It felt its way intuitively, following the most devious routes. It was by no means unanimous on questions of principle, and was distracted by social illusions and the residues of romanticism. Not all of its members saw the contradictions of contemporary society so sharply as Vilde did. But in spite of everything the change in literary method that took place in the 'nineties marked a great advance. It enabled Estonian literature for the first time to react directly — in both treatment and subject-matter — to the cultural tendencies of the modern world, and by the turn of the century it had created a certain number of works that were not unworthy to take their place beside the achievements of other nations.

EDUARD VILDE

The task of ensuring the victory of realism in Estonian literature devolved largely on the shoulders of Eduard Vilde (1865—1933). This fluent story-teller was not only a prolific writer; he was keenly receptive to the advanced social and philosophical ideas of his time. He was also the first great Estonian writer who lived entirely by his pen, working in the fields of both journalism and literature proper, and never falling back on any other profession. This quality was not without its drawbacks and his work is occasionally marred, especially in the early stages, by a certain excessive facility of production and superficiality of treatment. Yet it was precisely this businesslike, hard-working attitude to the process of literary creation that stimulated his development, fostered his talent and made possible his finest achievements. But what was perhaps most characteristic of all was the fact that Vilde simply ignored the traditional limitations of Estonian literature, stepping beyond them as though he was hardly aware of their existence, and applying his enterprising mind and sensitive nature to the exploration of new trends and horizons. In this way he broke down the barrier of provincialism and peasant outlook, and opened the eyes of Estonian writers to the intellectual movements of the surrounding world.

Vilde plunged into literature at an early date and with perhaps more enthusiasm than discrimination. By the time he

was twenty-seven he had published no less than fifteen books — novels, collections of stories, humorous tales and discourses — besides filling the columns of the periodical press. All this brought him a certain undeniable popularity. Most of these early works can be safely dismissed as comparatively unpretentious entertainment fiction. Their characters are for the most part dull, but their plots are spectacular, full of unexpected situations, thrilling episodes and dexterous comic effects. Nevertheless one or two more convincing types detach themselves from this somewhat strained background with its exaggeratedly dramatic developments and evince a deeper perception of social values, usually in the form of their opposition to class distinctions or, still more, of their firm resistance to the degrading influence of the prestige of money and the cult of property. This critical tendency was to grow steadily stronger in the course of time; and even those works which can hardly be said to attain a consistent standard of realism reveal unmistakable and characteristic elements of realism as, for example in the psychological novel "Two Fingers" (1887). The juvenile humorous skits, too, for all their absurd situations and grotesque characters, reveal an awareness of social problems combined with certain traces of satire which point to a clear affinity with Mark Twain (some of whose sketches Vilde, incidentally, translated into Estonian). One of the best of them, "Our Fellow-countryman Johannes" (1891) significantly ridicules the cloying excesses of conventional post-romantic verse.

Partly urged by his youthful impatience with the affectation and sentimentality of the preceding generation, and partly actuated by the conscious principles of his own programme of literary reform, then gradually taking shape, Vilde boldly extended the sphere of the novel to embrace a number of new and acute social and ethical problems. It was, therefore, not surprising that so prolific and readable an author should stir the Estonian literary world to its very foundations. And although the ease with which success was attained often led to superficiality, Vilde was clearly moving closer to real life. Groping in the direction of a greater realism, he was gradually deepening his content and perfecting his formal mastery of his medium.

An essential part in the formation of Vilde's views was played by his stay in Berlin 1891—1892. Here he read widely among the outstanding realists of West-European literature



Eduard Vilde

and followed with interest the performance of the new, realistic plays. The literary aims and opinions towards which he had been feeling his way more or less intuitively now assumed a more deliberate and theoretical character. At the same time his outlook was broadened by the agitated political and scientific life of the German capital. He acquired a better grasp of the

structure of modern society and his first encounter with the doctrine of socialism opened up new prospects for his future development. After he returned to Estonia his work as a newspaperman brought him into close contact with the illegal student study circles. Through these he assimilated the basic principles of socialism, which were henceforth to determine his evolution as a writer. This was the decisive factor which conditioned his emergence as a critical realist and enabled him to treat social problems far more profoundly than the majority of his contemporaries.

The following years are marked by a sharp rise in quality, of both form and content. The problems of social inequality now occupy a central place in his writing. In a number of stories he returns to his earlier theme of the moral degradation inherent in the cult of property, but now with a much keener eye for the realism of the background and the psychological truth of the characters. The novel "The Poisoned Chalice" (1893) is in every essential respect a consistently critical social study, of which the dark atmosphere and drastic events tear the mask of urbane respectability from the cynicism and brutal inhumanity of the capitalist class. The novel "To the Frozen North" (1896) is a remarkable achievement, showing the bitter class antagonisms resulting from the differentiation of the peasantry and drawing a tragic picture of the sufferings of the rural proletariat. The basic theme of the book is the inevitable decline of an essentially honest and high-principled young cottager, driven relentlessly to a life of crime by his own poverty and the prejudices and heartlessness of the well-to-do farmers. The whole novel breathes a spirit of moral condemnation directed against a society which is unable to provide food and work for all, which places its victims in a false position, hounds them with all the forces of law and justice, and brands them as criminals. With its authentic setting, powerful characterisation and impelling narrative "To the Frozen North" must be regarded as one of the finest achievements of early critical realism in Estonian literature. Another novel "Iron Hands" (1898) widened the scope of realistic prose to include the life of the industrial working class, more particularly the textile workers in the mills at Narva. Although it falls short of the artistic level attained by its predecessor, it is ennobled by its unequivocal spirit of solidarity with the factory hands — whose

merciless exploitation at the hands of capitalism in the iron grip of the thundering machinery of the factories is described with genuine sympathy.

The afore-mentioned novels raised Vilde to a leading position in the Estonian literary world, which he used to good purpose. Now boldly tackling fundamental social issues, now broaching the narrower problems of human relationships, he covered a wide range of questions, including ethical principles and the emancipation of women, e.g. in the stories "Against the Pricks" and "At Dawn". By the turn of the century he had forced Estonian literature to come to grips with reality, teaching realist prose fiction to bring to the surface a number of vital aspects of contemporary life, throwing a bright penetrating light on what had previously been shrouded in obscurity.

Vilde's central achievement was to be his epic trilogy dealing with the life and struggles of the North-Estonian peasantry in the 'fifties and 'sixties of the 19th century. Whereas the romantic historical novel had drawn its subject-matter from the remote past, Vilde concentrated on the events of yesterday, singling out the bitter social antagonisms of quite recent times that had driven the peasantry to a resistance born of despair. Nor did he confine himself to the scraps of information contained in a few ancient chronicles: instead he collected and studied a vast amount of material, including the court archives and legal documents of the period, the statements of participants and witnesses, the findings of historical research and even the personal reminiscences of people who were still alive in his own day. Thanks to this formidable preparatory work, Vilde was able to achieve a convincing reconstruction of the whole period in question, graphically evoking the whole atmosphere of the spontaneous peasant outbreaks and creating a vast and comprehensive panorama of the Estonian midcentury, illuminating every component of the social fabric. Moreover, the fact that this great cycle was written during the years immediately preceding the revolution of 1905 endowed it with a weightier social impact of which the spearhead was directed against those feudal survivals that still persisted in the modern world.

Vilde's historical novels are not connected by the possession of characters in common; they are bound together by the common background and their common themes. At the same time

each work is, in the events described and the range of types portrayed, complete in itself. "The Peasant War at Mahtra" (1902) deals with one of the best-known of the numerous peasant revolts, which broke out in 1858 and involved a violent clash with a troop of the regular army and the looting and burning of a local manor. The writer gives more than a detailed and convincing account of these events. Interested not only in the results but also in the causes, he makes a thorough study of the antecedents. His leading characters are chosen freely, but many of his subordinate figures are drawn from real life, as is also the case in the other parts of the trilogy. The second novel "When the Men of Anija Went to Tallinn" (1903) is chiefly concerned with the life of the Estonians in the towns, which were then under the domination of the Baltic-German patricians. Through the eyes of a young man who becomes an artisan in the town, the author draws a detailed picture of the customs and traditions of the guilds, mercilessly exposing the seamy side of these survivals of the feudal order, the degrading, humiliating influence of which is reflected both in the tragic fate of the hero and in the savage public scourging in the market-place of the peasant delegation which came to Tallinn in order to seek justice from the authorities. The third part of the trilogy "Prophet Maltsvet" (1905—1908) touches on other aspects of the peasant movement in the middle of the 19th century, particularly the extremist sects and religious fanaticism produced by the intolerable condition of the peasants, and their mass emigration to the Crimea.

Vilde correctly understood the agrarian disorders of the midcentury to be manifestations of the class struggle, and set himself the aim of drawing up an all-round and authentic survey of the relations between the exploited peasants and their feudal oppressors. Thanks to his genius he succeeded in doing so, in the main, by purely literary means, i.e. by the realistic representation of vital experience. But at the same time, especially in the last novel of the trilogy, he made free use of factual data and documentary sources. As a vast social epic based on the principles of historical materialism Vilde's peasant novels are worthy of a place in European literature as a whole at the beginning of the present century. Of all the novels of the trilogy, the richest in content and most compact in form is "The Peasant War at Mahtra" which, with its complex range of problems, vivid

characterisation and unity of composition, remains one of the finest social novels in Estonian literature. Regarded as a single achievement, the trilogy marks the final triumph of realism and the attainment by the Estonian novel of a genuinely epic scope and breadth of vision.

The year 1905 found Vilde working on the editorial staff of a social-democratic newspaper in Tartu, where he plunged into the revolutionary struggle. When the forces of reaction launched their counter-offensive he fled abroad. In 1906 he wrote a series of articles on the state of affairs in Estonia for the German social-democratic paper "*Die Neue Zeit*", and published some stories describing the suppression of the revolutionary movement. At the same time he edited a few issues of the satirical political magazine "*Kaak*" ("The Gallows") in Helsingfors (Helsinki) and contributed to other proletarian publications. His tales of the atrocities committed by the Black Hundreds are written in a spirit of revolutionary fervour and the tragic episodes depicted are magnificently generalised.

During the following period of self-imposed exile, which lasted till 1917, Vilde, in spite of the unfavourable circumstances in which he worked, produced a large quantity of new works, all of which were printed in Estonia. Chief among them are the novel "Redemption" (1909), which deals with the labour movement in Denmark and the life of the Danish workers, and the writings on America, which include the travel notes, an account of the author's three-weeks' detention on Ellis Island and a few short stories featuring some of the negative aspects of the American way of life. To these should be added a number of other short stories in which the inhumanity of the bourgeois order is portrayed with a sharpness verging on the grotesque.

But Vilde's most remarkable contribution to the development of Estonian literature during the years of emigration must be sought for in his dramatic works. He had always been attracted to the theatre. Now his first attempts were crowned with success and he revealed himself at one stroke as a mature playwright. His play "The Inscrutable Mystery" (1912) is an attack on the snobbish prejudices of Estonian bourgeois culture and the urge to 'discover' at any price a great national musician, with the result that a mediocre pianist overstrains himself and loses his reason. The subject was so topical that it created a sen-



"The Dairyman of Mäeküla"
(cover by O. Kallis, 1916)

sation and sparked off an impassioned controversy. This was probably one of the reasons which spurred Vilde to follow it up with another broadside against the vulgarity of the newly-rich. His second play "The Hobgoblin" (1913) trounces both their lack of culture and the dubious methods by which their fortunes were made. It has, moreover, the specifically literary distinction of being the first Estonian drawing-room comedy, establishing the genre in every essential respect — plot, characters and dialogue. Both plays occupy a permanent place in Estonian dramatic literature; both have been repeatedly staged, and "The Hobgoblin", at least, has been frequently performed in other countries.

Vilde's last outstanding novel is "The Dairyman of Mäeküla" (1916), which returns to the subject of the relations between landlord and peasant, but at a still more recent period, when the whole problem is seen in quite a different light. The



Monument to E. Vilde in Tallinn *(A. Murdmaa, 1965)*

countryside is now — at the close of the century — rapidly becoming capitalised. In these new conditions an eccentric old squire purchases from a poor farmer, for certain business considerations, the right to make love to his young wife. Infected by the new slogan of 'money at all costs', the farmer agrees. Later on, however, he becomes aware of his mistake and the

self-degradation it brings in its train. But though he rejects his former greed of commercial success, he is unable to avoid the consequences and is finally reduced to utter bankruptcy, both material and moral. Here, as in Vilde's plays, the realistic treatment is more subtle and complex than in his earlier works. This change corresponds to the general evolution of critical realism at the beginning of the 20th century. Whereas the earlier novels are dominated by a clear-cut social thesis, the emphasis now shifts to the domain of psychological analysis, and the style is correspondingly more sensitive and refined.

Vilde's position and importance in the development of Estonian literature can only be compared, if at all, with those of Kreutzwald. If the latter laid the foundations of Estonian literature, it fell to Vilde with his vigorous realism and broad range of subject-matter to carry it over the threshold of maturity, to assimilate the vital cultural and ideological trends of the modern world and to raise it to an equal footing with contemporary European literature in general. With their profound analysis of the social issues involved and the rich variety of their types and characters, Vilde's novels embrace many of the essential aspects of the national life. From this point of view they may be said to introduce a valuable tradition. They are the corner-stone on which the whole subsequent development of realism was based. Above all, in his best works, Vilde succeeded in raising the standard of Estonian prose fiction to a level which rendered it capable of coping with any of the multitudinous social, ethical and intellectual problems of the modern age. Popular from the beginning, Vilde has become still more widely read in Soviet times. Now for the first time he has acquired a genuine international reputation, and his works have been frequently translated into Russian and other Soviet languages, in addition to the foreign translations that have been published abroad.

OTHER EARLY REALISTS AND THEIR FOLLOWERS

As we have remarked above, Vilde was not alone in his striving towards realism. By the end of the century he was supported by a number of other writers who were moving basically in the same direction. They failed to equal him in

many respects: none of them were so clear or forceful in their social and literary ideas, none were so fertile and few so talented. Nevertheless, each in his way, made his contribution to the further enrichment of Estonian literature.

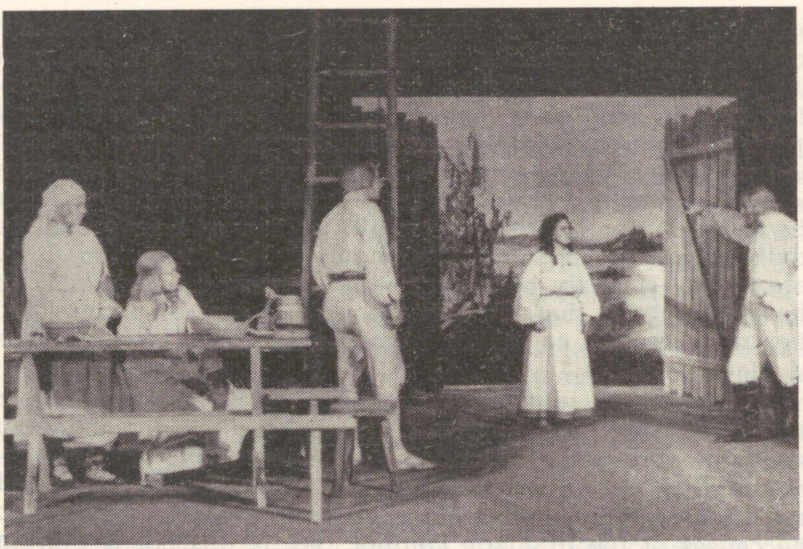
August Kitzberg. The outstanding dramatist of the period was August Kitzberg (1855—1927), who also produced a certain quantity of prose fiction. Indeed, he made his debut as a story-writer, his maiden effort "Maimu" (1892) keeping to the well-beaten path of the historical romance. It was followed by a whole series of stories, both long and short, and a number of plays, carefully limiting themselves as yet to the modest resources of the amateur troupes, but eloquently demonstrating the author's ability to reproduce the representative types and the characteristic relations of contemporary rural life. Whereas Vilde was primarily interested in the towns, villages and manors of North Estonia, Kitzberg concentrated his attention on the south, especially on his own home place, the comparatively prosperous agricultural region known as *Mulgimaa* to the south of Viljandi. Realist as he was, he was acutely conscious of the problem of social inequality and did not hesitate to condemn the



August Kitzberg

brutality and avarice of the rich farmer. Nor did he attempt to conceal his sympathies, which lay invariably with the poor and oppressed. Nevertheless he shrank from the idea of conflict and his picture of the countryside is tinged by the rosy spectacles of sentimentality or good-natured humour. Though he was, on the whole, a man of liberal views, he was far more conservative than Vilde. As a result he seldom quite overcomes the contradiction between the reality he saw so keenly and the idyllic world of his subjective impulses. He attained maturity late in life — partly because it was not until the beginning of the 20th century that the appearance of a serious professional theatre in Estonia called for a deeper and more realistic type of play.

Kitzberg's first outstanding modern drama was "Caught in the Whirlwind" (1906), which has the further distinction of being the first play performed at the important new "Vanemuine" theatre in Tartu. Not only was the problem it raised true to life, but it attempted to penetrate more deeply into the causes of the dramatic conflict. Yet it was not free from contradictions and the basic message itself left room for ambiguous interpretations (especially in the closing scene where the events depicted are linked up with the revolution of 1905). As a result the interplay of psychological motives — partly, too, the social ideas, which are somewhat artificially imposed from without — never quite fuse into one organical whole. Next followed one or two minor works, after which Kitzberg created his masterpiece in the tragedy "The Werewolf" (1912), one of the greatest achievements of the Estonian classical theatre. Here he shows the clash between two outlooks, or two mentalities in the far-off days of feudal serfdom. Tiina, the central figure, is the daughter of a condemned "witch", she refuses to submit to the oppressive tyranny of church and manor. Her passionate spirit revolts against her fate. She rejects both the humiliating and inhuman conditions in which she is forced to live, and the prejudices engendered by them. As a result she comes into conflict not only with her immediate environment, but also with the entire social order on which it rests. Her only weapons are her youthful rebelliousness and her open, high-strung temperament, but these cannot avert her tragic destiny. She is branded as a werewolf by her jealous step-sister, ostracised by the community



A scene from the performance of "The Werewolf" *(in Tallinn, 1954)*

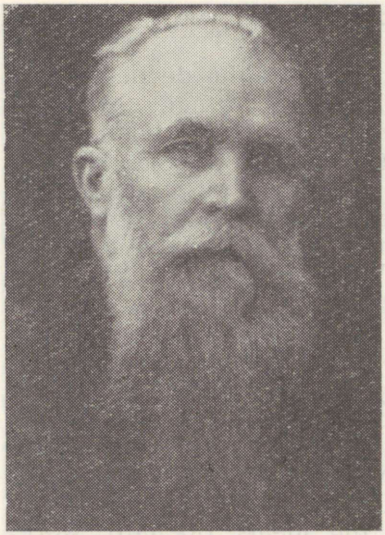
and finally destroyed. Her revolt and her premature death have the force of an indictment of servility and obscurantism. With all its vividly romantic traits, "The Werewolf" is splendidly tense and complete, in both structure and characterisation. We move closer to modern times in the drama "The God of Lucre" (1915), which denounces the power of money and its degrading and brutalising influence on character. Here Kitzberg's study of a coarse and violent old farmer, who rides roughshod over both strangers and his own kith and kin and cynically prides himself on his own tight-fistedness, attains the dimensions of a powerful social generalisation.

Kitzberg's later dramas are similarly concerned with vital social and ethical problems, but are markedly weaker in form and structure. "The Incendiary" (1919), which deals with the opening years of the present century, shows the process of moral corruption that tainted the Estonian bourgeoisie ever since its emergence as a distinct class, dominated by its lust for wealth and power. The comedy "The Cursed Farmstead" (1923)

ridicules the grotesque attitudes produced by rustic imitations of the *dolce vita* of the urban middle class.

Kitzberg's social views stopped short of the deeper radical implications to which they pointed. But for all that, he must be classed as an outstanding realist whose profound humanism led him to protest against all distortions of social justice and human dignity. His finest plays, together with those of Vilde, helped to raise the Estonian national theatre to the general level of the contemporary European drama. They, too, have retained their vitality — especially "The Werewolf", which has since been performed in such distant countries as Hungary and Italy.

Ernst Peterson-Särgava (1868—1958) evoked a widespread response at the turn of the century as the author of a series of uncompromisingly realistic prose narratives. His literary views were deeply influenced by the Russian school, particularly Gogol, Leo Tolstoi, and later, Gorki. His early stories still retain a certain naive belief that the unpleasant aspects of life can be overcome by inculcating the ideals of hard work, sobriety and honesty. But by the end of the 'nineties he was already able to lay his finger on the deeper class antagonisms, to reveal the real causes of the poverty and suffering of the masses of the people and to strike at the roots of social evil. This advance to maturity is impressively illustrated by the series "Ulcers" (1899—1901), which paints a relentlessly authentic picture of contemporary conditions, underscored by the democratic and critical spirit in which it is conceived. These stories — "The Life of an Ox", "Trachoma", "Praise Be to God", "Come to the Rescue!" — are built up on dramatic and pregnant situations showing vividly how the manor, the church and the whole social order are designed to squeeze the maximum profit out of the exploited masses, and indicating the irreconcilable contradictions separating the wealthy farmer from the rural proletarian. The novel "The Teacher of the People" (1904) is a picture of parochial life in a country village that has the force of a deftly generalised ironical study of Estonian social life at the end of the century, exposing the encroachments of petty-bourgeois mentality, the doctrine of acceptance, the readiness to compromise that was already beginning to infect the educated classes. In all these works the author's forcefulness and ability to strike home are derived from his implacable truthful-



Ernst Peterson-Särgava

ness and his incorruptible social conscience; never are we aware of any deliberate striving after artistic perfection. Yet his rough-hewn, popular idiom makes compulsive reading and is distinguished not only by its ideological content, but also by its emotional tension.

With these few works the brief climax of Peterson-Särgava's literary career came to an end; but he had already achieved enough to ensure for himself a permanent place among the pioneers of Estonian critical realism. Later he added a few stories and plays of a more modest character. It was not until the closing years of his long life that he set to work on his lengthy historical novel "Let Us Go to Town!" (published posthumously in 1968), which describes the neighbourhood of his homestead at Vändra in the 'forties and 'fifties of the preceding century and is partly based on family tradition. Here he creates a vast and intensely felt panorama of the Estonian countryside in the grip of social and economic crisis, showing how the peasants, vainly hoping to ameliorate their conditions through conversion to the Greek Orthodox Church — "the faith of the Czar" — set in motion a ferment that affects the whole fabric of society. In so doing he effectively extends the scope

of the traditional peasant novel and adds an essential episode to the treatment of Estonian history in literature.

Juhan Liiv (1864—1913), whose tragic life was overshadowed by mental suffering, is one of the most sensitive personalities among the classic writers of Estonia. He made his literary debut in the 'eighties with a number of mediocre poems in the late-romantic tradition which had little to distinguish them from the conventional verse-making of the day. But turning to prose in the first half of the following decade, he scored a series of remarkable achievements, though he could hardly be ranked with the conscious and deliberate exponents of critical realism. His collection of sketches "Ten Tales" (1893) revealed a striking ability to capture the representative types of village life and to bring them to life in a series of brilliant thumb-nail sketches often animated with a touch of earthy peasant humour. The longer story "The Shadow" (1894) takes us back to the middle of the 19th century, but is none the less fraught with genuine personal experience, and we feel that the tragic fate of the central character, a sensitive and gifted young man, is the inevitable result of the social injustice in the countryside. The same idea is echoed in "The Cuckoo of Käkimäe", another tale in which we are poignantly reminded of the author himself; while "The Witch's Daughter" (1895) shows us the suffering caused by prejudice, superstition and class antagonisms.

But it was as a poet that Liiv was destined to achieve greatness, and the darkest period of his life produced a flower of unique beauty, unequal perhaps in execution, but unequalled in the depth of its thought and in the intensity of its emotional appeal. This was poetry created in the most tragic conditions — at a time when Liiv was homeless, cut off from the world of literature, stricken by mental disease, broken by adversity in both body and spirit. Nothing could impair the purity of its spontaneous self-expression. It was not written with a view to publication, and in fact only a part was printed at the very end of the author's life, thanks to the initiative of the younger generation of poets. Nor was anything like a complete edition to see the light of day until Liiv himself had ceased to be.

Himself broken by ill health and on the verge of destitution, Liiv was quick to see the poverty and misery of his fellow Estonians, the sores of political and national oppression, the growing inequality and the prevailing indifference to genuine

human values. His love for his country and his people was less profuse but deeper than that of his predecessors of the national awakening. If theirs was expressed in the poetic images of a romantically idealised conception, his was aware of all the grim facts of reality. There is a striking difference between the emotional rhetoric of the early generation and the bitter, searching spirit of Liiv's poetry, his preoccupation with the most painful problems of the surrounding world, his sense of frustration, of being hemmed in by gloomy mediocrity and narrow-minded prejudice. The hopelessness of his own life seemed to reflect the dreary prospects of his country and gave rise to a mood of dejection at cross-purposes with itself:

My native land!	Isamaa!
With thee I am unhappy,	Sinuga olen õnnetu ma,
Without thee sadder still!	õnnetum ilma sinuta!

His forebodings for the future fluctuate between faith and scepticism, joy and suffering. One moment he is the prey of black despair; the next we discern a ray of comfort, an indomitable, even heroic, reiteration of the poet's belief in a brighter future. Perhaps nowhere is this determination to hope against hope more movingly expressed than in the poem "However long the darkness may endure . . ."

Many of his poems turn on the antagonisms of class society. In a world ruled by self-interest and injustice he identifies himself with the victims of the established order, with the downtrodden and oppressed. Speaking of his own poetry, he compares himself to a bird stricken in the wing — one of the unforgettable images of his personal elegies. His nature poems have a unique quality for which it is difficult, perhaps impossible, to find a parallel. He evokes the Estonian countryside, particularly of his home-place on the shores of Lake Peipsi, in a haunting spirit of intimate self-identification, infusing every detail with an astonishing immediacy of appeal in which the element of external description is inseparably fused with the fugitive impulses of his own personal experience.

As was inevitable under the circumstances, much of Liiv's poetry — of which only part has survived — remains in a fragmentary condition and is uneven in quality. Illness and worry left him little time to polish up or revise his verse. He abounds in awkward expressions and at times it is even difficult

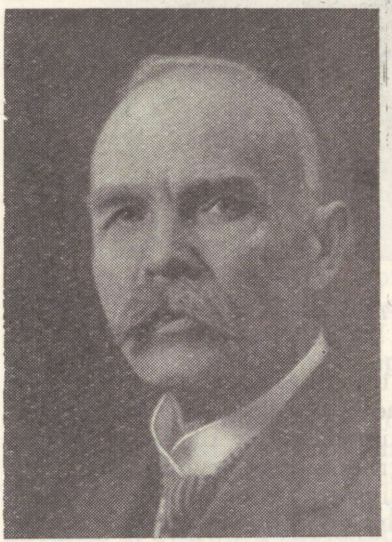


Juhan Liiv *(N. Triik, 1909)*

to follow his train of thought. But this does not impair the striking cogency of his work. In some ways his very strangeness raises him far above the conventional poetry of the day. The traditional metres seem to disintegrate in his nervous grasp, and without aim or example he attains many of the innovations of modern verse in his ruthless omission of superfluous gram-

matical verbiage, his broken utterance, the concealed logic of his impetuous thought leaping from height to height, his bold use of contrast and dissonance, his intuitive approach and all the consequent intensification of the process of poetic transformation. As compared to his predecessors, Liiv is more charged with energy, more saturated in feeling. He offers more than the mere description of experience: the thrill of the direct communication of the experience itself with the inner musical rhythm that lends it life. In this way he broke down the bounds of convention, shook off the impediment of tradition and achieved something intrinsically new, something permanent, of which the impact was to grow steadily larger, thus testifying to the presence of real genius and of a deeply national quality in the truest sense of the word.

Karl Eduard Sööt (1862—1950) was by temperament a romantic, although his activities as a poet began precisely at the time when critical realism was in the ascendancy. Yet he must be classed as one of those writers whose emotional sincerity and firm grip on reality helped to bring Estonian poetry out of the morass of conventional post-romanticism. In fact his work exhibits many of the characteristic features of realism,



Karl Eduard Sööt

and it is the combination of these with the element of romanticism which determines his literary personality.

Sööt's best early verses belong mainly to the field of intimate domestic poetry. His love songs are freshened by a touch of whimsical humour. Nor are social motives neglected, even at this early stage. In the nineties he — like Liiv — already appreciated the tragic implications of the antagonisms underlying the social fabric. He expressed the conflict between the national aspirations of the Estonian people and the Czarist policy of Russification in the form of romantic elegies and allegories where social themes and personal feeling are often fused into a mood of bitter protest against any attempt to impose by brute force alien conceptions on ideas and associations made sacred by memory and tradition. By the turn of the century he had become one of the initiators of realistic social criticism in Estonian lyric poetry and his writing is charged with a profound sympathy for the victims of injustice and the outcasts of society. To the bleakness and inhumanity of the modern age he opposes a world of childhood memories, a world that is close to nature, a world of patriarchal kindliness, simplicity and cheerful toil.

Sööt, who was a man of conservative leanings, failed to understand the revolution of 1905 and later, carried away by the stream of bourgeois propaganda, he was inevitably opposed to the most progressive social ideas of his day. For all that, his finest work is ennobled by a spirit of true humanity. He added a touch of variety to Estonian poetry with his compelling and tensely knit ballads, of which the subjects are drawn from traditional folk legends. He is also strikingly successful as a writer for children and his charming nursery songs, with their mellifluous language and haunting recurrent motives, are admirably suited to captivate the imagination of the youngest readers.

Anna Haava. One of the most popular of Estonian lyric poets is Anna Haava (1864—1957), whose literary career was of remarkably protracted duration: she first attracted notice with her verses on the death of Lydia Koidula in 1886, and was still publishing new poems on her ninetieth birthday. From the work that accumulated over this long period of time there emerges a recognisable and consistent personality — a character tempered by labour and hardship, the figure of a woman



Anna Haava

whose thoughts and feelings are closely bound up with the fate of her people, though she was never to take up her stand, as Koidula did, in the very heart of the maelstrom of social struggle.

Over Anna Haava's early verse a veil of wistfulness is cast and her mood is predominantly romantic. Her love poems, which are impregnated with the purity and austerity of the northern peoples, occupy a place apart with their sincerity, spontaneity and gentle intimacy. The element of subjective personal experience is expressed in the form of a calm, radiant yearning after spiritual joy and beauty. Lyrical meditations, with their flashes of poetic intuition, alternate with subdued soliloquies or impulsive confessions. In their brevity, clearness and immediacy of appeal they remind us of Estonian folk poetry, while at the same time they have something in common with Heine's youthful lyrics, though they fall short of the latter's brilliance of form. As in Heine, the emotional impulse is often derived from a motive drawn from nature and invested with a spirit of romantic fervour, as for example when the poet identifies herself with the simple wild flower growing on the heath. Everywhere she is hauntingly musical and it is significant that

many of her poems have been since set to music and have become widely known in the form of songs.

In the early years of the new century, when social contradictions were deepening and social struggles were becoming more acute, Anna Haava's poetry was characterised by an increased objectivity in treatment and a more realistic conception of life. Her poems — some of which were now written in free verse — revealed a more critical attitude to the negative aspects of society, while at the same time she warmly proclaims her sympathies with those who toil and suffer. A new, more urgent note makes itself heard, defending the rights of the masses, their will to shape the course of their own destiny. Now she writes in tones of the deepest respect of those who boldly speak out in the name of truth and progress; now she meditates on the bitter injustice of the world. By this time she has moved far beyond the patriotic rhetoric of the national awakening, as we see from the anguished cry, torn from the depths of her being:

> Nought but a roof overhead and work for one's hands,
> a mouthful of bread and a foot of earth,
> — my country!
>
> Ainult peale varju ja kätele tööd,
> üks suutäis leiba, üks jalatäis maad —
> oh kodumaa!

In addition to her words of despair, protest and irony, she has lively and good-humoured descriptions of village life, full of convincing types and revealing details. The same might be said of her short prose sketches, written about the same time.

During the following period of political reaction, and still later in the initial phase of the bourgeois republic, Anna Haava became yet more critical in her attitude to society. As the hopes roused by the achievement of national independence gradually gave way to a sense of disappointment, the moods of loneliness and abandonment are intensified and her poetry becomes tinged with sadness. She seeks to escape from her feeling of frustration by asserting her moral independence, her determination fo follow her own path without making concessions to "the myriad-headed falseness of the world". Although it cannot be denied that her later work fails to keep pace with the rapid development of the Estonian poetry about this time, its sincere and profound reflection of the poet's own fate endue it with an indisputable human appeal.

Social trends at the beginning of the century. Estonia, like other countries, crossed the threshold of the 20th century in conditions of a growing complexity of social and cultural life, conditions in which an increasing role was played by economic, political and ideological influences of an international character. By this time the Baltic countries, with their extensive and varied industries and their dense network of railways, had become one of the most developed parts of the Russian Empire. They possessed a large proletariat, a growing national bourgeoisie and an almost completely literate population that was highly susceptible to the political and cultural movements of the day. The role played by the towns had sharply increased in importance. During the last quarter of the 19th century the population of Tallinn had doubled and ninety per cent of the inhabitants were Estonians. But at the same time powerful elements of feudalism still survived, in addition to the general social and political backwardness of the Russian state. There was a dual system of national oppression implemented by the Czarist administration and the German landed aristocracy and urban nobility, and certain semi-colonial forms of exploitation existed. As a result the social antagonisms in Estonia were particularly acute and, moreover, of a highly complex nature. The masses of the people were affected by a seething spirit of restlessness. This wave of discontent was directed primarily against the German landowners and the Russian autocracy, but there was also a widening gulf between the aims and interests of the Estonian bourgeoisie and the working people of the towns and countryside.

The new capitalist class, together with the bourgeois intelligentsia which voiced its ideas, now prepared to fight for the consolidation of its economic and political gains, appropriating to that end the slogans of the national movement. The two chief centres of this ideological and cultural propaganda were the Estonian Students' Society and the Tartu "*Postimees*" ("Courier") edited by J. Tõnisson, which catered for the rural bourgeoisie and the middle strata of the population of the towns. These elements, it is true, were opposed to the government policy of Russification and to the domination of the Baltic-German aristocracy, but their narrow-minded conservatism and

Lutheran background made them instinctively hostile to the new progressive currents of materialism in philosophy, socialism in politics and critical realism in literature. At the turn of the century this diehard mentality met with the resolute condemnation not only of the Marxist circles and their sympathisers, but also of the more democratic intellectuals and the radical elements in the towns. The latter were more particularly represented by the "*Teataja*" ("Bulletin"), a new Tallinn daily, edited by K. Päts, which began to appear in 1901 and was much more realistic and democratic in its treatment of social questions. This newspaper secured the services of a number of journalists noted for their progressive views, of whom the most distinguished was Vilde himself, and as the social activity of the masses grew steadily in volume, its keen and alert political attitude made it widely popular with the general public.

In actual fact socialist ideas had already begun to spread in Estonia in the 'eighties, with the appearance of a few small nuclei in Tallinn and Tartu. In the latter town there was also a group of intellectuals led by R. Aavakivi which propagated a materialist conception of natural science and was not far removed from the doctrine of socialism. By the beginning of the new century revolutionary working-class study circles already existed in some of the larger towns. An important part in linking the ideas of Marxism to the labour movement was played by the outstanding Russian revolutionary M. Kalinin, whose activities in Tallinn from 1901 to 1904 led to the formation of a local social-democratic organisation. Another group of the party came into existence at Tartu, where the student movement was again gaining impetus. In 1903 the socialist newspaper "*Uudised*" ("News") was launched in Tartu by P. A. Speek, M. Martna and R. Aavakivi, joined shortly afterwards by Vilde. The spreading of Marxist ideas and the growth of revolutionary activities set new and far-reaching aims to the social trends that were then taking shape in Estonia; and these, in their turn, could not fail to leave their imprint on the cultural life of the period.

During the upheaval of 1905, events in Estonia followed the general pattern of events in Russia, with which they were inseparably connected. But to the general economic and political demands of the revolutionary movement were added in Estonia the factors of the struggle against national oppression

and the campaign to win equal rights for the Estonian language in the schools and all public offices. In so far as the revolution was called on to achieve a number of aims of a broad democratic character, it carried with it to a certain extent both the national bourgeoisie and the professional and intellectual classes. But at the peak of the revolutionary movement in the autumn and winter of 1905 it became clear that there was in fact a sharp cleavage between the interests of the working people and those of the capitalist class. The Estonian bourgeoisie accepted the October manifesto of the Czarist government and formed its first political party under the leadership of J. Tõnisson. On the other hand the working people, far from abating their efforts, redoubled them and the revolutionary movement continued to spread among the masses, breaking out occasionally in the form of spontaneous open clashes (the burning of manors, etc.). But at the end of the year the forces of reaction launched their counter-offensive. Martial law was declared, most of the newspapers were closed down, punitive detachments terrorised the population and were largely assisted in their murderous activities by the German landowners and clergy, the prisons were filled with revolutionaries. The movement did not yet come to an end; but it had spent its force and the years 1906 and 1907 marked a period of obvious decline.

The revolution had been defeated. Nevertheless it was a period of radical social change of which it is impossible to overestimate the importance. It stirred the broad masses of the people to play a more conscious part in social and political life and deeply influenced the whole future development of Estonian culture. Both before and during the revolution, cultural life had become decisively more varied and intense. Estonian journalism had grown beyond all recognition. Not only had the first Estonian social-democratic newspapers sprung into being — if only for a brief period, — but they were reinforced by a large number of satiric publications of a revolutionary character. The most progressive writers and artists threw themselves into the movement, or at least — explicitly or implicitly — expressed their solidarity with its aims. Even the new developments initiated at this time by various sections of the Estonian bourgeoisie — such as the opening of the first public theatres, the foundation of the Estonian Literary Society (*Eesti*

Kirjanduse Selts) in 1907, etc. — were later destined to play a conspicuous role in the subsequent growth of the national culture.

Cultural and literary life before and during the revolution. The revivification of the intellectual atmosphere in the opening years of the 20th century brought in its train an effervescence of cultural life, which became both more comprehensive and more complex, rallying its forces for a further advance and in some respects achieving a decisive step forward. The stagnation of the concluding decades of the preceding century had given way to an intense intellectual fermentation which tended more and more to find an outlet in cultural activity.

The number of Estonian publications increased rapidly, exceeding 400 per year on the eve of the revolution. A characteristic feature of the period was the growing demand for works popularising science and publications of a practical, informative nature. The work of translation proceeded with undiminished zeal and did much to raise the general cultural level of the public. A closer acquaintance was made with Russian literature, the most translated authors being Leo Tolstoi, Chekhov and Gorki, while the revolutionary element in the works of the last-mentioned met with a lively response. There was also a growing interest in Finnish and Scandinavian literature (Aho, Ibsen, Minna Canth, Selma Lagerlöf, Knut Hamsun, etc.), and from this time onwards many Estonian authors entered into a close personal contact with Finnish cultural life. Now too, for the first time, Polish literature became more or less accessible to the Estonian reader (Sienkiewicz, Zeromski, Prus), together with — it need scarcely be added — a steadily increasing number of West-European classics (Zola, Hugo, Maupassant, Dickens, Hauptmann, etc.).

The beginning of the century also brought appreciable advances in Estonian music, art and the theatre. As a result of the growth in the numbers of educated people and the influx of the population into the towns, people were less willing to tolerate the incompetent amateurism that had previously been the rule. Professional standards were introduced by men who had studied at St. Petersburg or abroad. The popular choirs and brass bands were now supplemented by other, more refined forms of music. Highly trained composers and interpreters set a new level of composition and performance. The first Estonian

symphony orchestra was formed and the choirs were now capable of performing classical cantatas and oratorios. Estonian artists and musicians, who had been obliged to transfer the field of their activities to St. Petersburg or abroad, were determined to create the necessary facilities in their own country, drawing on the resources of local talent. The first Estonian art exhibition, held at Tartu in 1906, marked the beginning of a persistent tradition. The need for a professional national theatre could no longer be ignored, as the existing amateur or semi-professional troupes were clearly unable to satisfy the more sophisticated requirements of the public. The actors themselves were turning their attention to serious plays of foreign origin; and the growing number of realistic performances, coupled with the upsurge of local talent and the assurance of greater financial security, all contributed to the birth of the Estonian national theatre. The "Vanemuine" at Tartu threw open to the public the doors of its new building in 1906 — in the very days of the revolution — and the Tallinn "Estonia" followed suit in the same year, now becoming a professional theatre.

At the beginning of the century literature, like all the other manifestations of Estonian culture, became at once more active and more conscious. There was a spirit of searching restlessness and everywhere one could feel the emergence of new and promising creative forces. A brief discussion of these forces, of their activities, aims and achievements, will be found in the following pages. But it should not be forgotten that most of the writers of the realist generation mentioned above were especially productive during this very period, while some of them, Vilde in particular, attained the height of their creative powers precisely during the years immediately preceding the revolution and in the course of the revolution itself. The movement carried with it all the democratic elements of Estonian literature. A number of writers intervened directly in the political struggle, while others — the majority — drew from it their inspiration and subject-matter not only during the period of open conflict, but long afterwards during the succeeding years. The moods, liberating ideas and tense atmosphere of the social upheaval exerted a far-reaching and stimulating influence on literature, although this influence manifested itself in a variety of forms, at different levels and with varying degrees of intensity. Clarion appeals, echoes of heroic and tragic events,

gropings after experimental techniques and a new system of aesthetics — all are interwoven in the fabric of contemporary Estonian literature. New heroes — men dedicated to the revolutionary cause — made their appearance. Many writers, even some of those who were conservative in their views, condemned the atrocities committed by the punitive detachments. Side by side with the growth of critical realism, a new wave of romanticism gathered force, and at the height of the storm this current of revolutionary romanticism served as a connecting link between the new proletarian authors and the chief representatives of the literary coterie of *Noor-Eesti* (Young Estonia), which sprang into existence at the same time. Since, however, these two groups later parted ways and their respective roles in the subsequent development of Estonian literature proved to be widely different, we shall discuss them under separate heads, while bearing in mind that both were products of the upsurge of the revolution.

The beginnings of Estonian proletarian literature. Proletarian literature, which in 1905 had just begun to assert its existence, set itself the aim of becoming the most consistent spokesman of the revolutionary ideas and aspirations of the working class. It drew its inspiration from the mass struggle for freedom; it was made possible by the creation of a local workers' press; and Russian proletarian literature served as its model. Lenin's article "The Party Organisation and Party Literature", which was published about this time, had defined the aims and formulated the principles that were accepted as a guide to action by the proletarian writers of Estonia. In their contributions to the organs of the labour movement as well as to the democratic newspapers of the years of the revolution and the ensuing period, the latter approached art and literature from the strict standpoint of the class interests involved and were uncompromisingly opposed to the cultural policy of the bourgeoisie. The vast majority of their works were of an agitational or polemical character and they had little time or inclination to devote to pure fiction. Even when they were directly concerned with the aesthetic aspects of literature, they tended to simplify them, stressing the social message or propagandistic content.

Not only did the proletarian writers take their stand on the democratic traditions of earlier literature, they worked in

close contact with the more progressive writers of their own age. Particularly close were their relations with Vilde, who contributed freely to the proletarian publications of the day and was held by them in the greatest esteem. This was only natural, since at the turn of the century critical realism, with its keen interest in social problems, stood nearest to the literature of the working class and Vilde himself was known as a socialist who had openly raised his voice in support of the labour movement during the days of the revolution.

The need to react swiftly to abrupt and unexpected changes in the situation, the demand for urgent, topical subjects, the very conditions of proletarian publication and the temperament and interests of the writers themselves forced them to concentrate their activities in the fields of exhortatory poetry and political satire. To these may be added a certain quantity of narrative verse and short stories or sketches with a pronounced sociological slant. All were equally convinced of the need for a revolutionary transformation of the social system. Their authors had no other aim but to awaken the class-consciousness of the reader and arouse in him a spirit of revolutionary enthusiasm. Poetry was harnessed entirely in the service of the working-class struggle and its main task was to expose the crimes and machinations of the oppressor and call on the masses to cast off their fetters. Here propagandistic poems occurred side by side with verses overloaded with romantic metaphor, allegory and symbolism (especially in those works which passed through the hands of the censor). The basic conception was invariably a generalised, aggregate social idea which left little room for the expression of poetic individuality. Literature was expected to be militant, popular and easy to understand. One of the most characteristic types of poetry took the form of a parody or adaptation of some well-known song.

Proletarian literature quite successfully overcame the obstacles that lay in its path, resisted the persecution of the authorities and achieved its primary object of rousing the revolutionary fervour of the working masses and confirming their faith in the future. This is particularly true of the outstanding proletarian poet and controversialist Hans P ö ö g e l m a n n (1875—1938), who was later to become one of the leaders of the revolutionary struggle of the Estonian working class and a prominent figure of the international communist movement.



Hans Pöögelmann

Pöögelmann's treatment of the theme of revolution is essentially romantic, and the images and comparisons of his best poems are infused with a compulsive symbolism. He will always be remembered for his serviceable translations, made during the decisive days of 1905, of some of the best-known songs of the international working-class movement; and his Estonian renderings of the "Workers' Marseillaise"*, the "Internationale», the "Varsovienne" and the "Funeral March of a Fallen Revolutionary" rapidly became part of the living culture of the toiling masses. In his original verses, too, Pöögelmann was at his best when he extolled the proletariat and its struggle for freedom, or voiced its indomitable will to conquer whatever the odds. These poems breathe a spirit of irresistible courage and determination which carries the reader forward with the force of its internal pressure. Later on, when Pöögelmann lived and worked in Leningrad, he published his poems and translations in a collection "Spring Winds" (1926) and a book of lyrico-epic poems (1936) in which he attempted once again to evoke the highlights

* A popular short version of the "Marseillaise", widely used in Russia and Germany.

of the revolutionary movement in the form of generalised poetic symbols.

The other outstanding proletarian author was Juhan Lilienbach (1870—1928) who, quite apart from his original writings, deserved to be mentioned as the chief organiser and publisher of proletarian literature. In this capacity, working often in the most difficult conditions, he left an inspiring example of resourcefulness, practical ability and unswerving devotion to the socialist cause. The works he published



The workers' album "Forward" *(cover by A. Laikmaa, 1905)*

included working-class albums ("Forward" and others), political lampoons and symposia, fiction and poetry, educational books and a number of social and political studies. During the interim between the two revolutions of 1905 and 1917, such literature contributed an essential element to the reading materials of the working people. In the 1920s Lilienbach transferred the field of his activities to Leningrad, where he founded an Estonian publishing house. As a poet he was at his best in his contentious, derisive mood, turning out laconic and forceful satires, parodies and epigrams in which he mercilessly castigated the adherents of the established order. Of the remaining earlier proletarian authors we should mention at least the names of Vassili Mölder, whose verses record the bitter lot of the farm labourer, Villem Buk, who produced articles, tales, sketches and poems, and Otto Münther, who was both a critic and an author of short stories. Taken as a whole, proletarian literature not only emerged as a vigorous renovating force during the days of the revolution by which it had been created, but also helped to carry forward the ideas of struggle and resistance during the period of reaction right up to the next great revolutionary upsurge. It is of undeniable historical importance inasmuch as it represents the initial stage of Estonian socialist literature.

NOOR-EESTI

The movement known to history as *Noor-Eesti* (Young Estonia) played such a decisive role in the whole subsequent development of Estonian literature and culture, and is at the same time of such a complex nature that it calls for separate and special discussion.

The general cultural background to the Noor-Eesti group. This group of writers, which first appeared before the public in 1905, had already passed through a preliminary stage leading back to the very beginning of the century. It had taken the form of a network of conspiratorial circles in the schools whose oppositional attitude was primarily nationalist in character, while at the same time it clearly reflected the gradual intensification of social activities. In 1901 and 1902 three literary

albums were published under the title of "*Kiired*" ("Rays") by Gustav Suits, then a pupil at a Tartu *gymnasium* or grammar school. Their declared aim of promoting Estonian literature was couched in general patriotic and liberal terms. But some of these young people, who were more radical in their views, were keenly interested in the latest political developments and in the world outlook of historical materialism. The next album, compiled in 1904, was given the significant title of "*Noor-Eesti*", which was evidently partly inspired by the names of similar movements in other countries — though it also recalled the title of a school magazine "*Nooreestlane*" ("Young Estonian") published by the pupils of the Kuressaare grammar school in Saaremaa — while at the same time it clearly expressed the determination of the younger generation to break away from the fossilised, conservative leadership of the national movement. From this it was but a step to the formation of a literary society and the foundation of a publishing house, as in addition to albums it was intended to publish more ambitious works of a cultural or literary nature. Yet it was not until eight years later that the group finally emerged into the light of day as a legal organisation.

Publication of the first "*Noor-Eesti*" album was delayed by the censor and when it finally appeared in the summer of 1905 it had already been outdistanced, to a certain extent, by the rapid march of events. In the leading article, which had the force of a manifesto, Suits, the founder of the group, condemned the lack of ideals and the prevailing atmosphere of pessimism and indifference, and called upon the younger generation to play its full part in social life. Perhaps the main idea expressed here was the slogan of building up a European type of culture, and this remained one of the basic and characteristic aims of the group. But it was necessary to catch up with the whirlwind of political struggle and in the autumn of 1905 a new collection "In the Days of Combat", edited by F. Tuglas, managed to slip into print without preliminary censorship. This new publication was — and remained — the most revolutionary of all. It regarded literature as an essential link in the chain of social struggle, whose duty it was to overcome everything that was outmoded and retrograde, and to defend everything that was new. The second "*Noor-Eesti*" album, published in 1907, reflects the ebb of the revolutionary



The album "*Noor-Eesti*", I
(binding cover by N. Triik, 1905)

tide and combines motives of romantic unrest with the moods of failing hopes and the tragic sense of defeat.

The stormy atmosphere of the revolutionary period exercised a stimulating and encouraging effect on the group, calling it into existence and inspiring its earliest works. The idea of general emancipation found its outlet in a youthful spirit of romantic lyricism. But the individual members of the group were by no means unanimous in their literary tastes, nor yet in their social and political views, and in the kaleidoscope of conflicting trends and influences they were unable to formulate a clear common statement of aims. While they themselves were struggling to give expression to a new type of emotional content and searching for new media and techniques, they remained in contact with the older generation of writers and willingly found space for them in their own publications. Neither had the group any objection to the critical realists, whose services in exposing the evils of the old regime it readily acknowledged. Its aim was rather to extend the achievements

of its predecessors and contemporaries, voicing the moods of a new generation, impelled by a romantic desire for renovation. It had established certain contacts with the proletarian publications (to which mainly Tuglas contributed), but was not prepared to collaborate with them on a broader scale. To the Young-Estonians the literary platform of the proletarian writers seemed too biassed and restricted, while the latter, for their part, disapproved of the attempts made by one of the leaders of the group — Gustav Suits — to criticise Marxism. Yet at the same time they had no sympathy for the didactic moralising tone of conventional bourgeois literature. As a result they were at odds with both left and right. In the course of time these antagonisms became more and more acute. From the outset the group had been separated from the exponents of critical realism by differences of aesthetic principles and this rift, too, steadily widened until it ended in direct conflict. Thus the aims and methods of *Noor-Eesti*, its own published works and its criticism of its rivals, soon converted the group into the centre of a complex and heated literary controversy.

It was not until the revolution had been suppressed and the ensuing period of political reaction had begun that *Noor-Eesti* finally succeeded in elaborating anything like a concrete and coherent programme of action; and by the time it did so it had considerably modified its outlook. Estonian literature — like that of the Russians themselves, and the other peoples which belonged to the Czarist Empire — lived through a stage of deepening pessimism marked by the growing influence of idealist trends in philosophy. As writers and thinkers the members of the group were young and inexperienced. The revolution had broken out before their ideas on life and literature had matured and they were united by little more than a general youthful dissatisfaction with the parochial and retrograde character of Estonian literature, coupled with a certain Nietzschean spirit of protest against the smug complacency of the church and state. True, some of them had responded to the new social ideas and sympathised with the revolution, but this attitude had been more of a subjective emotional reaction than the expression of a political creed. In short the group was primarily concerned with the problem of raising the artistic level of art and literature, and in one way or another all of its efforts were directed towards this

basic end. Moreover this tendency was confirmed by the foreign models to which it turned for guidance and inspiration.

Anxious to overcome the narrow provincialism that stifled the growth of Estonian culture, the followers of *Noor-Eesti* endeavoured to get into touch with the latest developments in modern West-European literature, especially French literature. In formulating an aesthetic programme of their own, they were particularly influenced by the current of neo-romanticism, which in many respects set itself up as the antithesis of realism. Above all they were actuated by an impatient desire to escape from the banality and stagnation of the humdrum workaday world, to discard the tedious verbiage of the conventional descriptive technique, to plunge beneath the surface and achieve something that was to be both more intense and more distilled, to set in vibration the whole transient scale of moods and impressions produced by the endless variations of experience, or to create transcendental romantic myths, symbols and generalisations. In this frame of mind they adopted an entirely new approach to the reader. It was their aim to evolve an intellectual type of literature, similar to those of the West, catering for a refined and highly educated public. This form of aesthetic maximalism was vastly different from the attitude of the critical realists, who made concessions to the masses and who were mainly concerned with exposing social evils and explaining their origin. The Young-Estonians were never tired of proclaiming the principle that social and ethical conceptions can only take effect in art and literature by aesthetic means. Fired by this idea, they launched a fierce, often intolerant, campaign against everything that seemed superficial, primitive or commonplace.

Furthermore, in singling out incompetence, vulgarity and lack of artistry as the chief targets of their indignation, the supporters of the *Noor-Eesti* group laid — both in their criticism and in their original work — the main stress on the aspects of artistic perfection, aesthetic value and individuality of style, while they relegated to a secondary position the problems of content and of the social functions of literature. In the heat of controversy they overstepped the bounds of aestheticism, isolated themselves from the remaining currents of Estonian literature and set themselves up in opposition to them. This was particularly true of albums III (1909) and IV

(1912), and of the magazine "*Noor-Eesti*" (1910—1911). These affirmed, on the authority of modern theories of art, the significance of the literary personalities represented and upheld their achievements. But the capacities of the group were not equal to its self-imposed aims, all the more so if we take into account the general level of Estonian culture at the time. Whereas the realists had found their way to the masses of the people, the Young-Estonians failed to do so, and even failed to make the attempt. But the exclusive, intellectual public to whom their work was primarily addressed was as yet too small and too scattered to assume the burden of a sustained cultural movement.

Thus the group was clearly heading for a crisis when its perplexities were brusquely accentuated by the outbreak of the First World War. Its characteristic mood was now one of pessimism and disillusionment. Under the impact of the brutal reality of war its fond slogans of a higher form of art rising above the vulgar interests of everyday social life were dashed to the ground, as it was bitterly forced to acknowledge. Its admired West-European culture was submerged in the chaos of an indiscriminate slaughter which its members could contemplate only with horror. Nor was there any hope of a revivification of social ideas since, torn by conflicting pressures from without and by its own inner disunity, the group was on the verge of disintegration. Certainly in 1912, after a number of unsuccessful applications, the group had been finally granted the official status of a recognised literary body. But it was able to function as such for only a few years, though the publishing house bearing the same name continued to exist for some time longer. The last publications of the group were its album V (1915) and the magazine "*Vaba Sõna*" ("Free Word" 1914—1916), in which the tragic moods of the war period were partially redeemed by a growing interest in social problems and an underlying determination to salvage the cultural traditions of humanism in the teeth of universal catastrophe.

As may be deduced from the foregoing, the movement known as *Noor-Eesti* was full of contradictions, both in its aims and in its activities. On the one hand we have to give it credit for its attempt to broaden the horizons of Estonian culture, for its conscious struggle to renovate aesthetical conceptions and introduce a more modern attitude to life, and

for its determination to raise the criteria of art and literature. In all these respects it played an unquestionably progressive role in the evolution of Estonian culture. On the other hand it broke away from the popular stream, regarding the peasant tradition in literature merely as an expression of provincial backwardness and tending (particularly in its theoretical statements, essays and critical articles) to underestimate the social functions of literature in deference to its purely aesthetic aspects. As for its original work, this could hardly be called extensive, but it was rich in novel elements which left a deep and lasting imprint on literary life. Nor should we forget that the *Noor-Eesti* group included a number of outstanding artists (K. Mägi, N. Triik, J. Koort and others), who brought Estonian painting and sculpture up to date and in so doing created works of permanent value. Another important facet of the movement is to be sought in the linguistic reforms propagated by J. Aavik, whose innovations, though artificial, helped to make the literary language more mature, flexible and expressive. Here, too, in spite of certain excesses, a new stimulus was added to the further development of Estonian literature.

To sum up, the new and progressive contributions of *Noor-Eesti* clearly outweigh its weaknesses. It succeeded in bringing about a genuine revolution in taste and artistic standards, and the output of its leading representatives, with all its novelty, its unmistakable modernity, its freshness and its individuality, constitutes one of the significant chapters in the history of Estonian culture.

Gustav Suits (1883—1956), the leader of the *Noor-Eesti* movement, is an author whose work may be said to open the 20th century in Estonian poetry. We must bear in mind that at the time when Suits emerged as a writer the poems of Juhan Liiv were still unknown. Indeed it was the Young-Estonians who brought him before the public notice, just as they revived the poetical heritage of K. J. Peterson, who had meanwhile lapsed into oblivion. At the end of the 19th century poetry suffered from a certain lack of fervour, whether this was expressed in the form of idle decoration or languid nostalgia. Against this background the contentious manner of the youthful Suits, his manly diction, insistent rhythms and the metallic ring of his verse acquired the force of a poetic revelation. His



Gustav Suits

first collection "The Fire of Life" (1905), appearing as it did in the highly charged atmosphere of the revolution, was more than a literary phenomenon: it was a social event. Taking over the theme of patriotism from his predecessors at the height of the national movement, Suits endowed it with a new spirit of

heroism and a more compact form, thus becoming at once the spokesman of the younger generation.

Suits' literary views were influenced to some extent by Georg Brandes, whom he had met personally and with whom he continued to correspond, and his verses testify to his close contact with those of his friend, the distinguished Finnish poet Eino Leino. At the same time he was fascinated by Nietzsche, in whom he saw the herald of individual liberty and the apostle of a courage that challenged destiny, while he was also indebted to Carlyle's critique of bourgeois civilisation. The most powerful items in his first collection took the form of stirring romantic appeals calling on the younger generation to join in the struggle for truth and freedom. These poems are remarkable for their vividly symbolical images, their vibrancy, their lofty principles, their youthful thirst for experience and their masterful expression of the surging restlessness of the epoch. Moreover Suits skilfully exploits the rhythmic possibilities of accentual verse. No less effectively does he vary his moods, and serene love poems alternate with philosophical meditations in a sceptical and sarcastic mood.

As a poet Suits is distinguished by his modernity, his intuition, his sensitive response to the pulse of the moment and his exceptional power of identifying himself with his subject. His poetry is an expression of the tragic cleavages and profound social contradictions of his age. He assimilates the eddying currents of social life and invests them with the authenticity of personal experience. The current of neo-romantic lyricism and the examples of French, German, Russian and Scandinavian impressionist and symbolist poetry all impelled him to adopt a more dialectical approach to the problem of experience. He is a poet of sharply contrasted moods, a poet whose delicate sensibility is held in check by his keen intellect. The exalted tone of his first poems was followed by a darker mood of spiritual torment and a growing anxiety for the fate of his country and his people. True, his early work also has its tragic moments. But after the suppression of the revolution these fits of bitterness and gloom gain the upper hand. His poetry becomes more despondent and occasionally lapses into utter despair. No other Estonian poet — not even Juhan Liiv in his sombre visions — had painted so black a picture of his homeland as we find in the "Song of Estonia" and elsewhere.



"The Land of Winds"
(cover by N. Triik, 1913)

Suits' second collection "The Land of Winds" (1913) echoes the painful reveries and grim experiences of these years of depression, reflecting the moods of the epoch through the prism of a modern intellect, with all its sharpened perception and nervous tension. To quote the poet's own words:

I sing a changed song in a time of eclipse.	Ma laulan muutunud laulu vaatepiiri varjutuste all.

Nature motives are predominant, but they are full of philosophical implications. The sense of the incompatibility of human ideals with the inhumanity of social life produces an atmosphere of intense mental anguish accentuated by violent contrasts. Such poetry reflects a passionate desire to become one with the universe; but this urge is frustrated by the contradiction between the inadequacy of human existence and the self-complete harmony of nature. As a result of the increased use of nature motives Suits' symbols and images have become

concrete and realistic. His love poetry has also attained a new quality, now registering the most subtle impulses of his mind, now forming a compound of burning sensuality and chaste spirituality.

"The Land of Winds" marks a new stage in the evolution of Estonian poetry, a stage in which the thought load is increased and both form and outlook are fresher, more up to date. The excursions into European literature have been fully and deeply assimilated, becoming part and parcel of Suits' poetic individuality. His work is no longer based exclusively on Estonian tradition, but presupposes a far wider range of associations. Crystallising his personal experience, he usually succeeds in creating a form of classical regularity, yet varied; deliberately removed from the colloquial idiom, yet deriving its very effectiveness from this apposition.

In this way the First World War and the social upheavals attendant upon it broadened the subject-matter of Suits' poetry and drew his attention to problems of a more general nature. His hatred of war and violence found expression in his frequent outbursts of bitter sarcasm. The collapse of the hopes he had pinned on the proclamation of the national republic made him deeply sceptical. His third collection of poems "The Whole of Life is but a Dream" (1922) completes the cycle, bringing him back to his earlier seclusion and introspection, obsessed by the haunting fear that existence itself was meaningless, that the only reality was that of the universal futility of life.

Suits' poetry had always borne a marked intellectual character. His style now became still more complicated, his language still more abstract. In attempting to record in all their complexity the mental processes of the contemporary world, he was unable to avoid, here and there, a certain dryness; and carried away by the heat of his argumentation, he occasionally drew perilously near to the confines of prose. Responding to the violent dissonances of his time, he introduced a dissonant note into both content and form. His verse took on an expressionist brittleness under the influence of which the qualities of classical harmony and stylistic perfection seemed to disintegrate. Yet he still had his moments of serene lyric beauty; the ballad "Childbirth" is written in the manner of a traditional folk song.

Suits was also the first Estonian professor of literature at Tartu University, an appointment which diverted his energy into the channels of theoretical and educational activity. In this capacity he did much to promote the development of Estonian literary research and criticism, and helped to bring into existence a whole new school of literary thought. But as a poet he lapsed into an almost unbroken silence. It was not until after the Second World War that he published a new collection of verse, this time in emigration. A part of his later work is not only marred by its political bias, but is also markedly inferior in its stylistic quality. But there still remains a large residue, consisting mainly of pieces on recent events, memories of childhood and home, and the tragedy of self-imposed exile, which retain much of the expressive power of a great poet. The contradictions of the path he was destined to follow had led him into an impasse. But this has not tarnished his fame as a leading renovator of Estonian verse and the better part of his work has not only been widely translated but is read with undiminished interest by the poetry-lover of a later day.

Friedebert Tuglas (born in 1886), the other leader of the *Noor-Eesti* movement, devoted himself mainly to the less extensive prose genres and incidentally raised the Estonian neo-romantic short story of the first quarter of the century to a remarkably high level.

His first literary gropings and experiments, which go back to the opening years of the century, point simultaneously in a number of different directions; and this is also true of his work during the period of the revolution. At first he seemed to prefer sober descriptions of everyday milieux after the manner of the realists, as for example in his amusing but instructive story of rustic life "The Wolf" and — with a remarkable increase in dramatic power due to the emotional impact of the events of 1905 — in the story "His Own Plot of Land", which gives a socially alert picture of the intolerable conditions of the rural proletariat. On the other hand he produced delicate studies in which tender dreams are mingled with romantic visions and the heroic theme of revolutionary struggle alternates with the pathos of loss and defeat, as in his elegy "The Sea", his prose miniatures and "The Island of God", a tale of the past, fraught with a sense of restless foreboding.

Then, in 1908, came the collection of short stories "Two Together", which marks a step towards maturity and a conscious effort to work out an original individual style. These tales are remarkable for their delicate interplay of emotions, their subtle intimacy, their shimmering impressionistic background in which nature motives and human feelings are inextricably interwoven with no loss of psychological truth or accuracy ("Birdcherry Blossoms", "A Summer Night's Love", etc.) The following years of emigration in Western Europe and Scandinavia endowed Tuglas with a new fund of literary experience. From this time on he was distinguished by his skilful use of words and a certain deliberate cultivation of form to which he was encouraged by the example of such writers as O. Wilde, G. Rodenbach and J. P. Jacobsen. This was not only to remain his characteristic trait: it made him the reformer of modern Estonian prose style.

In the novel "Felix Ormusson", published during the war in 1915, Tuglas seems to regard himself and his companions with a tinge of irony and regret. The central character is a writer and something of an aesthete, conscious of the insubstantiality of his ideas and interests but lacking the moral strength to come to grips with life. Here, too, we find ourselves in a shadowy, intuitive world masterfully evoked in an iridescent, discreetly modulated reconstruction of which the concentrated, all but aphoristic, phraseology reflects the nervous susceptibility of the modern age. On the whole the novel may be regarded as one of the most consistent examples of impressionist technique in Estonian prose.

Tuglas' wartime stories were gathered in the collections "Destiny" (1917) and "The Spirit of Gloom" (1920), in which the indirect influence of the catastrophe and its attendant atrocities is reflected in a sort of visionary symbolism. There is a distinct tendency to raise the treatment of the fundamental human instincts and passions — fear, the striving for liberation, the enticements of sensual pleasure — to the level of myth creation. Fantastic and supernatural elements invade the real world; living persons are confronted with symbolic figures; the relations of everyday life are distorted and individual traits are magnified to the point of horror. At the same time the shift away from the ordinary world is carefully motivated, the fusion of the real and the unreal is made

credible by a startling psychological verisimilitude, the wealth of ornamental images is invested with an intense emotional significance. Such stories as "Popi and Huhuu", "At the End of the World", "Freedom and Death", and "The Golden Hoop" have an undeniable value as expressions of contemporary feeling. All the monstrous tragedy of the war is condensed in "The Shadow of a Man", and "The Vision" is one of the first works to reflect the events of the revolution in Estonian literature. Tuglas kept to the same course in the early twenties, as may be seen from the story "The Poet and the Idiot", and the collection "The Transmigration of Souls". At the same time he published a series of refined and sensitive miniatures, ranging from prose poems and lyrical nature stud-

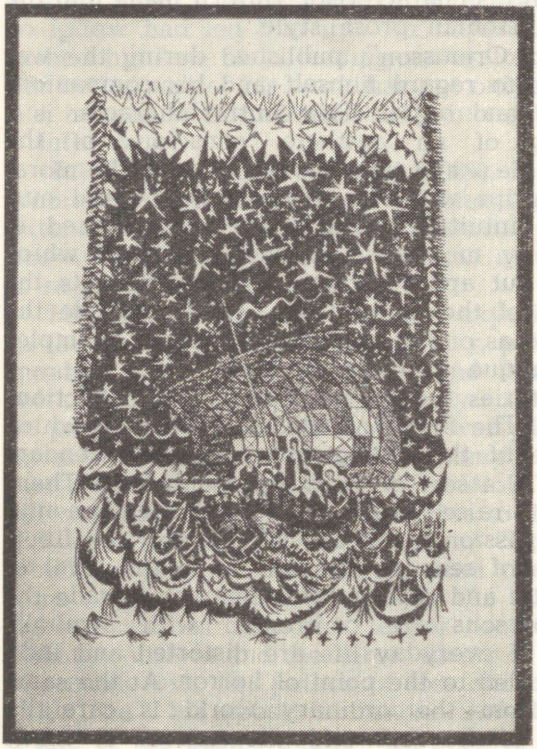


Illustration to the novelette "At the End of the World" *(A. Vabbe, 1920)*

ies to philosophical reflections and marginal notes on the psychology of literary creation and the relations between art and life.

Tuglas the critic has influenced Estonian literature no less profoundly than Tuglas the writer. With his imposing erudition and his formidable analytical and controversial talent he struggled persistently to raise the aesthetic standards of the national culture. When he made his debut as a critic in the days of the *Noor-Eesti* movement he was mainly an adherent of the school of Georg Brandes, though for a brief space of time — especially on the eve of the war — his views were somewhat modified by the theory and practice of aestheticism. In a series of essays and articles of a sharply polemical character he attacked the characteristic weaknesses of Estonian literature (including the critical realists): its slovenly and superficial approach, its dilettantism and provincial narrowness, its improvised methods and confusion of styles. Later on, in his appreciations of individual authors and in the numerous annual surveys and theoretical discussions of the twenties and thirties, he reveals both a clear critical perception and a fine sense of the broader trends of cultural development. His thorough and authoritative investigations of the cultural life of the period of the national movement and his brilliant study of Juhan Liiv must be regarded as major contributions to the growing body of Estonian literary research.

But in his original work there is a long intermission (if we are to discount his travel books — which contain, apart from his stimulating personal impressions, a large amount of interesting information on various aspects of culture and history). When he eventually broke silence in 1937, it was to publish his second novel "Little Illimar", in which he returns to the days of his boyhood. This work, in spite of its strongly lyrical and subjective undertones, is notably more realistic than its predecessors. Scenes of the bygone life of the manor, with all its picturesque gallery of human types, are called back to life through the eyes of a small boy in whose childish cogitations there is much of the worldly wisdom and somewhat rueful humour of the author himself. This device imparts to the work its emotional warmth, just as it largely accounts for the peculiar, many-faceted variety of interest and delicate artistry that have gained it so wide and lasting a reputation. Tuglas now also



Friedebert Tuglas

resumed his work in the field of the shorter narrative, and "Last Greeting", written at the time of the fascist occupation, is one of the most powerful stories he ever wrote. His memoirs, too, are of great personal and literary interest. It should be added that he has continued to publish marginalia and short prose pieces in Soviet times in spite of his advanced age.

In the course of his long and productive career Tuglas has exerted a steady and profound influence on the whole evolution of Estonian literature during the 20th century. Nor is his reputation confined to his native country, for translations of his chief works have found their way into many other parts of Europe.

Other followers of Noor-Eesti. As we have seen, the writers who rallied round the *Noor-Eesti* banner and groped forward in the direction of a new, more modern conception of literature and art were by no means unanimous in their aesthetic views, to say nothing of their philosophical and political ideas. They themselves were still in a stage of growth and experiment, and although their general aims were similar there were differences of opinion, and even of principle, that were later destined to carry them apart and sow the seeds of dissension among them. Passing on to deal with the secondary writers whose names have been associated with the *Noor-Eesti* movement, we do not propose to dwell on the nature of this relationship: suffice it to state at this point that, whereas a few of them belonged, so to speak, to the active nucleus of the group, others confined themselves to contributing to its publications, while the rest were little more than mere sympathisers.

The poet Ernst Enno (1875—1934) was in many respects an exceptional and isolated figure. Neither can he fairly be described as a member of the *Noor-Eesti* group, although in method and aim he undoubtedly reveals certain affinities with his younger contemporaries. At the beginning of the century he was one of the most consistent symbolists in Estonian poetry, but his attitude to life, expressed in terms of the urge of the individual to become one with the absolute, is modelled on a concept drawn from Indian philosophy. His work is charged with a spirit of profound and ardent pantheism, a sense of the indivisible oneness of nature with which the poet longs to identify himself in the last haven of consciousness. His collections — "New Poems" (1909), "Dreary Songs" (1910), etc. — are pervaded with a passionate yearning; his songs of wandering and desire have a deep inner music of their own, rendered doubly evocative by their subtly echoing phrases and their iridescent changes of mood. Unfortunately, only too often Enno's obsession with his fixed ideas leads him into a

confused maze of symbols in which he tends to repeat himself or becomes excessively vague. He is at his best when he draws on the tender memories of his childhood or produces pictures of real life in which the vivid succession of scenes and characters leaves him less opportunity to indulge in abstract philosophical generalisation. He must also be accorded part of the credit for helping to introduce free verse into Estonian literature.

Villem R i d a l a (his real name was Villem Grünthal, 1885—1942) is known chiefly as a nature poet, famous for his pictures of the Estonian coast and the islands in the western straits ("Songs", 1908; "Distant Shores", 1914, etc.). His evening landscapes are both sensitive and emotional, and few have captured so spontaneously the fickle changefulness of the spring. The tone of many of his poems is subdued and introspective; he is haunted by a feeling of loneliness that often deepens into pessimism. Later he wrote historical narrative poems, romantic legends and long epics drawn from Estonian folksong and popular tradition. He also deserves mention as a student of literature and folklore. In 1923 he passed to Finland, where he spent the rest of his life working as a lecturer at Helsinki University.

Of the prose writers A. H. Tammsaare (see p. 208 *et seq.*), who had begun as a realist at the beginning of the century, drew near to the aesthetic ideals of *Noor-Eesti* in his impressionistic stories, most of which deal with problems of student life and the world of the Bohemian intelligentsia, interspersed with a few original fairy tales, sketches and miniatures. Aleksander Tassa was the author of myth-like extravaganzas combining elements taken from folklore, the Bible and mediaeval history. The critic Bernhard Linde contributed a number of essays, in addition to his multifarious activities as one of the leading organisers and publishers of the *Noor-Eesti* group.

Amongst the members and satellites of this literary generation we also find the name of the poetess Marie Heiberg, whose tragic life and desperate struggle to exceed her creative potentiality cut short her career and left her a mental wreck. We must bear in mind, too, that some of the most prominent writers of the following period — figures such as Marie Under, H. Visnapuu, J. Semper and J. Barbarus — first appeared in

print in the publications of *Noor-Eesti*, whose role as the sponsor of new initiative can scarcely be overestimated.

But we must confine ourselves to the mention of two more names — those of Jaan Oks and Aino Kallas, both of whom were connected in one way or another with the *Noor-Eesti* group, although they were poles apart in literary temperament and followed widely divergent paths.

Jaan O k s (1884—1918) was one of those writers whose literary talent found only partial expression in his work. His period of productivity was brief (he early succumbed to a mental depression that paralysed his work); little more than a tiny fraction of his disorderly output in both prose and verse ever appeared in print. Yet the small quantity of writing that has survived contains pages of unforgettable power, filled with the spiritual anguish and oppressive contradictions of his time. His naturalistic sketches of rural life, set mainly in Saaremaa Is. and West Estonia, express an attitude of passionate protest, of scorn and hatred both for the social prejudices of his day, with their bitter cost in human degradation and humiliation, and often, too, for those who tolerate them ("The Village", "Land of Sorrows"). The drab reality he describes is sometimes treated with an air of affected cynicism. The apparent absence of ideals occasionally leaves a painful impression of flouting indifference or even unnatural delight. But elsewhere none can mistake the fierce, irrepressible spirit of defiance, the instinctive yearning for liberty ("An Obtuse Soul"), the burning desire to change society and transform humanity itself. The writer's composition and treatment are as disintegrated and contradictory as his outlook on life. He has moments of an astonishing illumination, scenes fraught with a symbolic significance, amazingly original flights of thought, culminations of a unique dramatic intensity, images pregnant with a sense of tragedy that borders on nightmare. But these purple passages alternate with obscure tirades, sequences almost devoid of logical argumentation and shapeless undigested masses of chaotic raw material. Oks also tried his hand at literary criticism, and in his essays we find the same impatient rejection of the old and restless groping for the new.

Aino K a l l a s (1878—1956) moved in vastly different circles and represents a cultural environment of quite another order. She was the daughter of a Finnish professor and the wife of

an Estonian journalist and philologist through whose intermediation she entered the literary world of her adopted homeland at the beginning of the century. She has her place in the history of both Estonian and Finnish literature. She wrote in Finnish (at first most of her works were translated by Tuglas, later on many were translated by the author herself), but she mainly describes life in Estonia — especially in the islands — and the history and folk traditions of the Estonian people. Everywhere in her stories we feel the need to rise above the humdrum everyday world, to create powerful characters exemplifying in concentrated form the typical traits of the national temperament and the dominant qualities of the epoch and social group depicted. Her quest for psychological truth is also a quest for formal perfection and refinement of style. Especially remarkable are the historical romances of the 1920s ("Barbara von Tisenhusen", "The Vicar of Reigi", "The Bride of the Wolf", "The Revenge of the Holy River"), in which she succeeds in fusing together fact and legend, the detailed concrete reality of history and the elements of folklore. The basic conception belongs to the world of myth, but it harmonises superbly with the manner of narration, which is skilfully



Aino Kallas

modelled on the style of the ancient chronicles. On the whole Aino Kallas is a highly individual writer, and moreover capable of handling the most general human problems. There is, therefore, nothing surprising in the fact that her works have been translated into many European languages. As a result she has done much to introduce Estonia to a wide international reading public. She has published travel books, studies of the *Noor-Eesti* writers and a life of Koidula. She has converted many of her early stories into plays. Moreover she continued to work steadily right up to the end of her long career, publishing poetry, stories, memoirs and a sensitive and revealing diary during the years she spent in Sweden and Finland after the Second World War. Not the least valuable aspect of her achievement is the fact that it constitutes a bridge uniting the two sister literatures of Estonia and Finland. In this respect she may be compared to her contemporary H. Murrik-Wuolijoki, in whose work the same two cultures meet.

THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL REALISM

The cultural movement launched by *Noor-Eesti* and the consequent transformation of aesthetic values had been the most novel and at the same time the most striking landmark on the literary horizon on the eve of the First World War. But it was by no means the only determining factor of the literary scene taken as a whole. The latter had become considerably more diverse and multiplex than before. Side by side with the *Noor-Eesti* group the critical realists continued to produce, especially Vilde and Kitzberg, who scored a number of remarkable achievements precisely at this time. The proletarian authors also continued their activities. Nor should we forget the nationalist and conservative group of writers who were gathered round the "*Postimees*" and the Estonian Literary Society, with its magazine "*Eesti Kirjandus*" ("Estonian Literature") founded in 1906.

Noor-Eesti, with its new and more exacting aesthetic standards, roused the opposition of both right and left. A violent controversy ensued which was prolonged over a number of years. Nevertheless a certain measure of support was forth-

coming from some quarters. The conservative group reacted favourably to many of the criticisms levelled against the realists and naturally shared the negative attitude of the Young-Estonians with regard to the proletarian writers. The latter, for their part, respected the realists (particularly Vilde and Peterson-Särgava), but were sharply critical of both the conservative nationalist trend and the aesthetic programme of the *Noor-Eesti* group.

Meanwhile the realist movement was gathering strength, giving proof of its faculty for development and for extending the range of its subject-matter. Vilde himself, though he openly derided the extreme forms of experimentation, was clearly influenced by *Noor-Eesti* in the sense that he set himself markedly higher standards of craftsmanship in the 1910s, particularly in his last outstanding novel "The Dairyman of Mäeküla". Kitzberg, too, never ceased to sympathise with the younger generation and even to co-operate with them, and his finest play "The Werewolf" testifies to his efforts to approach the new demands. The younger writers also maintained close ties with Sööt, and especially Juhan Liiv, retrieving and propagating his works and treating him in a sense as one of themselves. If we add to this the fact that one of their recruits — Tammsaare — had begun as a realist and was later to become the greatest realist in the whole of Estonian literature, we shall realise that the quest for a new synthesis had begun already before the war. Critical realism, which at the turn of the century had been characterised by a certain documentary mode of presentation concentrating its attention on the external aspects of social life, was now obliged to raise its standards and to assimilate the achievements of neo-romanticism with the object of attaining greater subtlety, condensation and psychological depth.

In the early stages all this was naturally limited to certain gestures in the direction indicated, combined with one or two outstanding performances on the part of the leading writers. Most of the younger realists, or those who could be roughly grouped as such, were still far from being conscious of — still less consistent in — their artistic aims, and in different works, or even in one and the same work, were liable to vacillate fitfully between naturalism and symbolism. Moreover, the realists had as yet little to boast of in the way of brilliant fresh talent, apart from Oskar Luts.

Jakob Mändmets (1871—1930), who appeared on the literary scene at the beginning of the century, was essentially a descriptive writer of the old type. His stories of village life, mostly set in his home district on the island of Saaremaa, faithfully record the unwilling retreat of the time-honoured patriarchal relations and customs before the advancing ideas and problems of the modern world. True to his mellow temperament, he avoids the sharper social issues. But for all that he is anxious to broaden his scope and keep abreast of the times, making occasional excursions — though with little success — into the field of the fashionable psychological story. Far more congenial to his subdued, contemplative manner is the old, familiar setting of rural life, as reflected in such collections as "My Father's Farm", "The Village", "The Sea", etc., all of which appeared between 1913 and 1915. It is in the last mentioned of these that he appears at his best as a story-teller who possesses the art of colouring and vitalising his realistic background by introducing an occasional element of neo-romanticism.

Jaan Lintrop (1885—1962) was the second representative of the realistic short prose genre on the threshold of the new century. He, too, recorded typical scenes of village life or the suburbs of provincial towns, as we see from his titles: "Everyday Life" and "Tears and Laughter". But he himself is hardly more than an impartial observer who dispassionately registers the symptomatic negative aspects of his age. Lintrop's strong points are his ability to bring his subject-matter into focus, the concrete precision of his background, his dry humour and his skilful accentuation of the revealing details that give point to his all but anecdotal situations.

To these we should add the names of G. E. Luiga, who wrote tales of the Estonian settlers in Siberia; Ansomardi (the pseudonym of P. A. Pitka, an officer in the Czarist army), who contributed some critical sketches of military life; K. Kotsar, who had been jailed for his revolutionary activities and whose stories describe the experiences of the political prisoners. Much the same type of realism — marred, however, by their comparatively crude technique — is to be found in the theatre, in the plays of C. Rutoff (Rajasaare) and H. Anto.

Mention should also be made of Mait Metsanurk, whose novels and short stories had already attracted attention before

the outbreak of the war, although — like Tammsaare — he did not rise to the height of his powers until the 'twenties and 'thirties. To the same category, in this respect, belongs Oskar Luts, who had achieved considerable success with his short plays and humorous sketches of school life.

Another writer whose career was to culminate in the 'thirties was Hella Wuolijoki (1886—1954), — but by that time she already belonged to Finnish literature. Her first works, however, were written in Estonian, her native language, and her subject-matter was then inseparably bound up with Estonian life. Her first play "The Children on the Farm" (1912), which deals with the growth of a new generation of young intellectuals, was denied performance on the stage for political reasons. The novel "Screened by the Mist" (1914) describes the life and people on a typical large farm in the south — an environment that was familiar to the author from the days of her childhood. In later years she wrote mainly for the stage. "Koidula" (1932), with its romantic undertones, portrays the life of the poetess against the background of the national awakening. This play was still written in Estonian. But then, after she had lived many



Hella Wuolijoki

years in Finland, Wuolijoki finally passed to Finnish, although even now she continued at first to depict Estonian life, as for example in the plays "Burning Land" and "The Minister and the Communist". However, it was through her studies of conditions on the big Finnish farms that she was eventually to claim international recognition as a playwright and her fame today rests mainly on the great Niskavuori cycle. In these and other plays she reveals a consistently democratic attitude. This turn of mind is effectively illustrated by her subsequent collaboration with Bertolt Brecht, one result of which is the latter's popular folk comedy "Mr. Puntila and His Farm-Hand Matti". Hella Wuolijoki's plays have been repeatedly performed on the Estonian stage and the place she occupies in both Finnish and Estonian literature is in itself an eloquent expression of the existence of long-standing and close cultural ties between the two peoples.

To sum up, Estonian literature had by the beginning of the present century — especially during the period between 1905 and the war — become considerably more complex and diverse than it had been hitherto. Its characteristic trends were now more sharply differentiated and the relations between them were more intricate. Estonian culture was now becoming the culture of a nation with a developed class structure, and as such had acquired a number of new features, including livelier and more varied forms of contact with foreign countries. This culture was still immature, its resources were limited and its prospects of growth within the framework of the Russian Empire were seriously restricted. Yet it had given proof of its vitality and seemed capable, in spite of all obstacles, of consolidating its achievements and progressing further along the road to maturity.

Thus at the end of the preceding century critical realism had at one stroke vastly broadened the subject-matter of Estonian literature, heightened its perceptivity and introduced a new level of professional competence. The revolution of 1905 had given birth to the proletarian writers and at the same time unleashed a general wave of revolutionary romanticism. Then the *Noor-Eesti* movement had put forward the slogan of raising the aesthetic standards of Estonian literature, attacking under

the banner of stylistic perfection every manifestation of superficiality, carelessness, vulgarity and dilettantism, and incidentally stimulating the entire literary world by bringing it into touch with new foreign influences, especially with recent developments in Western Europe and the Scandinavian countries. In the ensuing criss-cross of conflicting currents and theories, impressionism and symbolism also played their part, enriching literature with new tones and shades of colour, and adding fresh variety to its arsenal of artistic conceptions and technical devices.

In this way, by the beginning of the First World War, Estonian literature — or at least its finest achievements — had attained results that might stand comparison with the general level of execution of contemporary European literature. It could count on a large number of writers of widely different types and temperaments, production was increasing and standards were rising. During the war itself there was an inevitable interim of stagnation and retrogression. But this was due to external circumstances and there was no reason to doubt that Estonian literature had accumulated a sufficient stock of internal resources to ensure its continued growth during the following period.

LITERATURE IN THE PERIOD OF REVOLUTIONS AND CIVIL WAR

The February Revolution of 1917 resulted in the overthrow of Czarism, which was welcomed by all democratically-minded Estonian writers. Writers who had spent many years in political exile abroad now returned home. Literary activities which had all but died out during the war years were revived as social and political life was relieved of the burden of oppression.

The leaders of the Estonian bourgeoisie were satisfied when the Russian Provisional Government allowed Estonia to be united as one *gubernia* with a certain limited internal autonomy. They supported the Provisional Government when it proclaimed that the revolution in Russia had come to an end and when it called for continued participation in the disastrous World War. In actual fact, however, a dual power had come into being in the country — the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies functioned alongside the organs of power of the bourgeoisie. Under the leadership of the Communist Party the Soviets began to prepare for a Socialist revolution aimed at overthrowing the power of the bourgeoisie and establishing a dictatorship of the proletariat. In such a situation the political and ideological struggle became particularly violent.

In Estonia, which was one of the most highly developed regions of the Czarist Empire, and which was moreover in the immediate proximity of the capital, the momentous events of 1917 left an imprint on public life as a whole. As a result of the activity of different forces the literary life of the period became complex and contradictory. Proletarian writers rallied around the workers' newspapers which had now attained a legal standing. They propagated the principles of the Communist Party and the aims of the Socialist revolution in their publicistic writings and works of fiction. A number of writers (including such notable authors as E. Vilde and G. Suits), however, supported the Social-Democrat Mensheviks or Social-Revolutionaries, cherishing abstract illusions about a general democracy and emphasising the need for national self-deter-

mination. The sentiments of bourgeois circles were expressed mainly by some writers of the older generation. There were also writers whose position on political matters remained vague or hesitant and others who considered the complete sovereignty of artistic self-expression to be not only possible but also the only proper course to follow. The latter attitude was especially characteristic of a new literary group *Siuru* which came into being in the spring of 1917.

As a result of the Great October Socialist Revolution all power in Estonia passed into the hands of the Soviets and profound social changes got under way. A section of the intelligentsia did not comprehend the true meaning of the October Revolution, and the majority of writers assumed an attitude of aloofness or came under the influence of petty-bourgeois democracy.

Taking advantage of a situation where German forces had occupied the Estonian islands, the bourgeois politicians concluded a deal with the Germans. In February 1918, simultaneously with the invasion of the Estonian mainland by German troops, the bourgeoisie issued a manifesto on Estonian independence. Units of the Red Guard valiantly resisted the advance of German imperialism, but being greatly outnumbered they were forced to retreat to Soviet Russia. The German authorities imposed a harsh regime of occupation and ignored the "independence" that had been proclaimed at the moment. It was only the German revolution in November 1918 that compelled the Germans to hand over the functions of administration in Tallinn to the Estonian Provisional Government. But at the same time the Estonian Working People's Commune (Estonian Soviet Republic) was proclaimed in Narva and Soviet power was re-established throughout the greater part of Estonian territory. The class struggle became extremely acute and turned into outright civil war. Having joined the anti-Soviet intervention, the Estonian bourgeoisie launched a counter-offensive early in 1919 with military aid received from Britain, Finland, etc. The Red Army units defending Soviet power were forced to withdraw from the country. In February 1920, a peace treaty was signed at Tartu between the Estonian bourgeois republic and Soviet Russia. In the existing international and domestic situation the period of revolutions and civil war in Estonia ended with the coming to power of the bourgeoisie.

The literary life of those tumultous years was rent by such deep contradictions that it would be difficult to speak of any single internal process. One can only attempt to outline the activities of the different groups and movements.

Proletarian literature and publicistic writings. During the period of revolutions and civil war the working-class press became the principal medium for the publication of works of fiction by proletarian writers as well as of their publicistic writings: the newspaper "*Kiir*" ("The Ray") and its successor "*Tööline*" ("The Worker") in Tallinn, the newspaper "*Maatamees*" ("The Landless Countryman"), the newspapers put out by the local Soviets in Tartu, Viljandi, Võru, etc. 1917—1918 also saw the publication of the socio-political and literary journal "*Tapper*" ("The Battle-Axe").

These publications devoted much attention to literature and art as well as to broader issues of cultural life and education. The topics discussed included the ways and means of developing a new literature and art at the service of the working people, the national and ideological character of creative activity, the attitude towards the artistic heritage of the past, the propagation of art among the masses. At the same time the Communist publications severely criticised writers who avoided committing themselves on current issues or who assumed a hesitant or prejudiced stand with regard to Soviet power. The number of proletarian authors at the time was fairly large and the ranks of well-known writers (H. Pöögelmann, J. Lilienbach, V. Buk, V. Mölder) were replenished by many young ones.

Poetry predominated in the field of creative literature. Now as in the proletarian poetry of the 1905 revolution, the specific features were topicality of content and an agitational manner, as well as the special importance attached to political declarations and to a publicistic element. The proletarian literature of the time was orientated towards a poetry of struggle and agitation that was readily understandable, straightforward and simple in form. There were also poems of a contemplative nature based on lyrical symbolic imagery and imbued with revolutionary romance. Satirical verse directed against the counter-revolution was published on a large scale and satirical paraphrases of well-known popular or even religious songs spread among the population. Such proletarian poetry was

consistent in its striving to be national in character and this made it popular among the working-people.

In the field of prose this troubled and relatively short period was on the whole less productive and the output of proletarian authors remained scanty. The literary prose of the period consisted mainly of short stories published in periodicals. Alongside a realistic depiction of life there was an allegorical-fantastic and romantic trend. An author of outstanding ability was Eessaare Aadu. This was the pen-name of Jaan Anvelt (1884—1937), one of the leaders of the revolutionary struggle of the Estonian working-people. In his collection of short stories "The Eaves" (1916) and in his story "Naked" (1917), the author depicts oppressed working-people whose alert sense of justice and defiant spirit of protest bring them into conflict (often through a contrivedly aggravated inner struggle) with the beliefs current in a class society. In his later short stories Eessaare Aadu described the strengthening of class consciousness in the days of the civil war. His novel "The Outlawed", published in working-class periodicals in 1922—1923, deals with underground revolutionary activities in bourgeois Estonia. Another leading Estonian communist Viktor Kingissepp (1888—1922) was a frequent contributor to proletarian newspapers. In addition to numerous articles he published the polemic books "Independence for Some and a Yoke for Others" (1918) and "Under the Yoke of Independence" (1920), in which he passionately attacked the reactionary policies of the bourgeoisie.

The Siuru group. Soon after the overthrow of Czarism a search began for ways and means of uniting Estonian writers into a single organisation in order to stimulate literary thought and to give a new impetus to publishing activities. The most zealous protagonist of this undertaking was Friedebert Tuglas. It proved difficult, however, to find a joint platform for writers with different socio-political views and literary convictions. The association of writers *Siuru* was formed in the spring of 1917. Its original purpose was to unite the majority of creatively active authors. In actual fact, however, it took the form of a narrow Bohemian circle whose members, with the exception of F. Tuglas, were exclusively newcomers in literature (M. Under, H. Visnapuu, J. Semper, A. Gailit, A. Adson), who were later joined by some others (A. Alle, J. Barbarus).

In order to attract attention and gain a standing in literary life the *Siuru* group went in for blatant publicity-making and engaged in defiant polemics directed primarily against the literature and way of life of the "good bourgeois" section of society. The books, literary evenings and tours of its members were remarkably successful with the younger generation in particular. A youthful subjectivism, vitality and desire for relief from the harsh realities of life were characteristic features of the *Siuru* authors which appealed to broad sections of the war-weary population who thirsted after something totally different from the drab conditions in which they found themselves. The confrontation of beauty and poetry with humdrum everyday life was, however, attended by indifference to decisive social events and movements. Such a non-political attitude could not be maintained for very long at that critical time. Lyrics about momentary pleasures and verses of a voluptuous quality or which described feelings of abject frustration were indeed unprecedented in Estonian poetry and they created something of a sensation. The period, however, soon compelled the authors concerned, who were highly gifted and capable of development, to seek new ideas and new paths of poetic self-expression.

It was already in 1918 that closer contacts were established with German expressionism and this gave an additional impetus



The emblem of *Siuru (N. Triik, 1917)*

to the change in the spirit of Estonian literature. The change is noticeable first and foremost in poetry throughout 1919, when a transition took place both to new subject-matter and a completely different system of imagery. Attention shifted to social ills, the horrors of war and the tragedy of human suffering. The verses of M. Under, H. Visnapuu, J. Barbarus, A. Alle, etc. in those days are full of distressing visions of disaster and horror. But, as in a certain section of German expressionism, this anguished humanistic pathos remained too general and helplessly abstract in character. If some attempts were made to point the way to a better and more just future (J. Semper), this was done only by means of vaguely symbolic and visionary images. An analogical mood found expression in prose, mainly in the short stories of F. Tuglas and to a certain extent also in the stories of A. Gailit, A. Kivikas and R. Roht.

It is characteristic that during the civil war quite a few writers vacillated between the two irreconcilably hostile camps or attempted to rise above the struggle that was in progress. But as they lived and worked on one side of the front-line, producing commentaries and publicistic writings for the bourgeois press, they could not maintain an objective impartiality.

Towards the end of 1919, the *Siuru* group broke up as a result of internal dissensions and wide differences of opinion. In addition to criticism from predominantly realistic writers there also appeared some topical satires by authors who were former members or sympathisers of the group (A. Gailit, A. Alle), and bitter controversy flared up. The neo-romantic aestheticism that had been inherited from the *Noor-Eesti* group and which was subsequently developed to original extremes, now proved inappropriate in the face of the seriousness of the period.

The literature of the years of revolution and civil war was not, of course, confined to the work of the authors mentioned above. In comparison with the stimulating novelty of the *Siuru* group the more traditional output of the representatives of critical realism attracted less attention. Unlike proletarian authors such writers did not have much to say directly about current events, but in historical retrospect the volume and even the level of their work is noteworthy. A number of new books (most of them written in the preceding years) were published

by A. H. Tammsaare, M. Metsanurk, O. Luts, J. Mändmets, and others. It was not until many years later that attempts were made to give a broader interpretation and depiction in realistic prose of the events of the period in question.

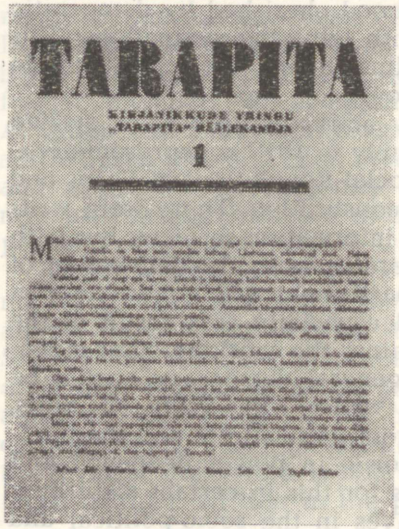
LITERATURE IN BOURGEOIS ESTONIA IN THE 1920s

Illusions and reality. The October Revolution that shook the old world order to its foundations and the subsequent revolutions in a number of countries led, among other things, to the establishment of several new national states in Eastern Europe, including the Baltic area. The achievement of the right to self-determination as a sovereign state was approved of by the majority of the intellectuals in the countries concerned, as it created long-term prospects for cultural development. But the social and political situation was influenced by the fact that the attainment of sovereignty took place on an anti-communist platform and entailed participation in a reactionary front directed against Soviet Russia. Upon the establishment of bourgeois power in Estonia it soon became evident that the aims and activities of the government circles differed entirely from the illusions about independent statehood cherished by democratic intellectuals, including writers with left-wing sympathies. This meant that an atmosphere of disillusionment became inevitable from the very beginning of the bourgeois republic.

Quite a number of politically active writers were elected to the Estonian Constituent Assembly in 1919 as representatives of the Social-Democrat or the Social-Revolutionary Party and they participated in drafting the constitution. There were writers likewise in the diplomatic and information services. But with the development of the state apparatus, with the delineation of the policies to be followed by parliament and government in foreign and domestic affairs, and especially as a result of the oppressive measures directed against the working-class movement, it became clear that no "general democracy" could be expected. Progressively-minded writers (E. Vilde, G. Suits, J. Semper, J. Kärner) withdrew from political life and the intellectual opposition to the bourgeoisie in power deepened and spread. There were ample reasons for this in certain disturbing tendencies that revealed themselves in the socio-political and

economic life of the young republic. As a result of separation from Russia, Estonia had lost her sources of industrial raw material and fuel as well as her principal market. The West-European capitalist countries were not interested in the development of Estonian industry. The provision of state credits for industry led to financial speculation but did not prevent the ruin of large-scale industry. The labour problem was not solved in the conditions of bourgeois statehood and the class struggle grew more fierce. The Estonian bourgeoisie sought to consolidate the social basis of its power by an agrarian reform. The state subsidies for cultural and literary activities were of a random and limited character.

The deepening dissatisfaction of literary circles with social and political affairs and with the neglect of cultural life in particular gave rise in 1921 to a new literary association. Whereas the earlier *Noor-Eesti* and *Siuru* groups had come into being for aesthetic and creative reasons, the new movement had a broader basis. The group came to be known as *Tarapita* and it included J. Semper, J. Barbarus, G. Suits, F. Tuglas, M. Under, A. Alle, J. Kärner, A. Adson, A. Kivikas and A. Tassa. This was no Bohemian circle of friends like the *Siuru* group nor did it


TARAPITA

KIRJANIKKUDE YRINGU
„TARAPITA" RÄÄLEKANDJA

1

The journal "*Tarapita*"

confine itself merely to literary discussions and statements of opinion. Now it was a question of the writer's attitude to the social situation and to the cultural policy of the state. The leaders of *Tarapita*, J. Semper and J. Barbarus, in particular, had been strongly influenced by the *Clarté* group founded on the initiative of H. Barbusse. In 1921 the Estonian writers who had united in opposition began to publish the journal *Tarapita* in which they bluntly declared their condemnation of the squandermania as well as hostility to progress and culture of the upstart bourgeoisie. They also stressed the importance of the ideas of social justice and the ideals of democratic culture. The bourgeois press for its part demagogically accused the writers of a lack of patriotism and of communist influences. Actually the *Tarapita* group was not revolutionary in its views and did not attack the capitalist social order as such, but only some of its extreme aspects. This intellectual opposition could not have any direct socio-political results, but its sense of discontent and frustration is very characteristic of Estonian literature in the early 'twenties. Moreover, such a joint campaign of authors exerted some influence on the subsequent development of cultural and literary life.

The contradictions in the social and political field continued to grow sharper especially in connection with the economic crisis of 1923—24, and the influence of the illegal Communist Party spread among the working people. The bourgeoisie attempted to consolidate its position by police raids on working-class organisations, the arrest of labour leaders and a series of political trials. The answer was an armed rising of the proletariat on December 1, 1924. The bourgeoisie managed to suppress the rising and a new wave of unprecedented repressions swept the country. The extremely strained internal situation and the violently anti-Soviet foreign policy of the bourgeoisie placed the representatives of the democratic trend in cultural life in a very complicated position. At that time the ruling circles of Estonia oriented themselves mainly on Britain from whom they had received military aid and who provided them with a market for agricultural products. The bourgeoisie laid special emphasis on the development of agriculture and this involved the increasing dependence of Estonia on foreign capital and on the fluctuations of the world market. Already at the end of the 1920s a new and severe economic crisis hit the whole nation.

With its unsolvable social contradictions, the vociferous strife of bourgeois parties and the economic hardships of the masses, the republic turned out to be quite different from what democratic intellectuals had imagined and expected it to be.

Objectivity requires that the principal achievements of the period in the field of culture should be pointed out. During the revolution the Soviet authorities had for the first time in the history of the country proclaimed a complete system of education with the mother tongue as the language of instruction from primary school to the university. The bourgeoisie adopted this demand and put it into practice in its own spirit. National literature also found a worthy place in the curricula. Thanks to the efforts of progressively-minded scientists and scholars considerable headway was made in science and learning. This was especially true in such fields as philology and history. The arts and music also forged ahead. The opera and ballet came into being alongside drama. The Estonian periodical press and the amount of publications in general grew to an unprecedented extent. All this — occurring in the conditions of a continuous struggle between a reactionary bourgeois culture and a culture reflecting the interests of the masses — created an atmosphere that was considerably more favourable for the development of literature than that of the preceding period.

Organisational forms of literary life. The earlier literary groups, including *Tarapita,* had united only a part of the total number of writers and they were only more or less temporary associations of persons holding the same views. The need now arose for a permanent professional association of all writers which would be authorised to act in their interests and to represent them in dealings with government institutions and cultural organisations, also to foster literary ties with neighbouring countries. The Estonian Writers' Union was founded in October 1922, largely on the initiative of F. Tuglas and M. Metsanurk. In the following years these two writers were alternately elected to the post of chairman of the Board of the Union.

Because of the differing views of its members on matters of world outlook and aesthetics, the Writers' Union could hardly become a centre for the discussion of creative problems. The principal function of the Union was to help frame literary policy

and to seek better working conditions for its members. Through its own organisation the body of writers could to a certain extent regulate the allocation of annual grants from the State Culture Fund*. Despite their modest nature, these grants made it possible for the first time ever in Estonia for the most prominent writers to devote themselves almost exclusively to creative work as truly professional authors. The government, of course, expected such grants to become a means of forcing recalcitrant writers to toe the official line. The majority of writers, however, did not allow themselves to be influenced by material means and remained faithful to their democratic aspirations.

In the early 1920s numerous publishing companies were founded, but most of them did not prove viable. As the reading public was small and the number of copies sold limited, royalties were very low. The publication of short stories and verse was difficult even for well-known authors because publishers were not interested in books belonging to a genre with a restricted appeal. This is why in 1926, the Writers' Union began publishing on a small scale with the help of a state subsidy. The works published were significant in content, but unprofitable in the economic sense.

An important undertaking of the Writers' Union was the publication of a respectable literary journal. Financial aid from the state was needed for this purpose (earlier literary magazines, such as "*Odamees*", "*Ilo*", "*Murrang*", had stopped publication after a few issues mainly because of the lack of money). The first number of the monthly "*Looming*" ("Creation") appeared in the spring of 1923, and the journal immediately became an acknowledged forum for the writers of Estonia. The first editors of the new periodical were F. Tuglas (1923—26) and J. Kärner (1927—28). Being a well-edited journal, "*Looming*" gained a lasting place in the literary life of the country and has appeared for almost half a century (with a break during the fascist occupation in 1941—44).

The Estonian Literary Society also played an important role in literary life and its activities steadily gained momentum. The journal of the Society "*Eesti Kirjandus*" ("Estonian Litera-

* A fund set up by the state in 1925 to provide financial support for cultural organisations and creative intellectuals.



The journal "*Looming*"

ture") continued to appear. Beginning with 1922 the Society began to publish intensively with some financial support from the government. Estonian classical literature was published and much foreign literature (mostly by French, English and Finnish authors) was brought out in good translations. Private publishers also continued to bring out more translations, but very often business considerations led them to publish material of inferior quality.

General trends in the development of literature. The keynote of the literature in the early 'twenties was anything but exultant or heroically pathetic as the bourgeoisie would have wished it to be. Only a few poets of the elder generation with their minds still in the aftermath of the national movement of the late 19th century, produced some verses of this kind, but their output was insignificant in the literary context of the period. The attitude of the writers whose work gave the period its own character was entirely different as a rule. The poetry of the early 1920s was first and foremost a poetry of social protest, a condemnation of the evils and rampant injustice of the time. After this the majority of poets, disappointed and sceptical, no longer dealt with social problems, and their predominantly melancholy

verses are of a personal and contemplative character, full of struggle against doubts and contradictions. The revival of social activity towards the close of the decade was attended by a renewed sharpness of critical tone and a strengthening of the mood of protest and discontent. An analogical tendency, although in a more subdued form, may be detected in the other main branches of literature. The more valuable part of prose fiction was fairly scanty in the early 1920s. Sombre colours and a sense of fatality or scepticism prevailed in the treatment of war and social upheavals. This general impression is not substantially modified by some attempts to depict rural life and the changes occurring in it. During the second half of the decade a tendency manifested itself towards a broader and deeper analysis of contemporary problems and this brought with it a more vivid treatment of social contradictions and of the ruthlessness and injustice of life. In some cases such a treatment transcended a mood of frustration and turned into a total negation of the bourgeois social order. A criticism of the prevailing mentality and of the relations of everyday life is likewise characteristic of the best plays of the period.

The striving for a true-to-life and critical depiction of actual life in most works of literature indicates that the realistic method was once again coming to its own. The influence of expressionism which had been particularly clearly felt in poetry and to a lesser extent in prose and drama began to recede after a few years. Even more transitory and mostly not serious in character were a few experiments along futurist lines and some attempts to write cubo-constructivist verse. The aftereffects of the neo-romantic and symbolist trend lingered on somewhat more persistently in shorter works of prose in the early 1920s and in the case of some authors even later. Towards the end of the decade naturalistic tendencies made themselves felt in connection with a growing interest in urban working-class life.

Realism was the principal creative method employed in prose and poetry as well as in the more significant works written for the stage in the latter half of the 1920s. Several novel features characterised this 20th-century realism in Estonia as they did in other countries. Its treatment of life was broader and, especially in prose, a frankly critical tendency receded and was replaced by a growing interest in psychological

analysis, in man's inner world and in the processes within his conscious and even subconscious mind. There is likewise a striving for greater versatility in the depiction of subject-matter and its modulated treatment in accordance with the author's frame of mind. At the same time one can discern a more highly developed consciousness of style. This shows that good use was made of the new means of expression which writers had come to know and handle flexibly as a result of their previous acquaintance with other literary movements and currents. In the poetry of the middle of the decade one notices a wider range of subject-matter and a simplification of the means of expression as compared with the superabundance of rhetoric that is characteristic of expressionist verse.

In the early 1920s as in the preceding years poetry was the principal branch of literature. From the middle of the decade the balance shifted in favour of prose and the reading public took an increasing interest especially in the novel. The predominance of prose is convincingly shown by the appearance of several big novels that give a profound and many-sided depiction of life, and by the development of the realistic short story. Poetry, however, was far from neglected. Drama also revived at the end of the 1920s and the relative importance of original plays increased in the theatrical repertory.

Considerable changes occurred within the ranks of Estonian writers in 1917—1920: a large number of young authors made their debut once the stagnation of the war years came to an end, and at least ten of these young writers, mostly poets, were destined to play an important part in Estonian literature. It was their output and that of middle-aged authors who had embarked on a literary career at the beginning of the century which formed the bulk of literary production in the 1920s. The representatives of the elder generation contributed hardly anything of value. Although the influx of new authors was not so rapid as in the immediate post-revolutionary period, it was nevertheless continuous. It is characteristic that the early 1920s saw the rise mainly of new poets whereas relatively more prose writers appeared towards the end of the decade. On the whole, the number of Estonian writers had increased several fold in comparison with the pre-revolutionary period.

The civil war in Estonia ended with the coming to power of the bourgeoisie and this placed socialist literature in a difficult position. The class policy of the bourgeoisie expressed itself in a complete ban on every kind of revolutionary literature. After the end of the civil war the best-known proletarian writers had to remain in Soviet Russia. They included H. Pöögelmann, Eessaare Aadu (J. Anvelt), J. Lilienbach and V. Buk, the first two being at the same time the leaders of the political struggle of the Estonian working people and its Communist vanguard. In Estonia itself there was next to no opportunity for new proletarian writers to emerge because every means was employed to suppress the labour movement and working-class publications were prohibited as "hostile to the state". Consequently it was Petrograd, later Leningrad, which became the principal centre of Estonian revolutionary literature. The Communist activists who had been evacuated from Estonia gathered in a city where thousands of Estonian worker's families had been living already before the revolution. New educational establishments were opened, Estonian-language newspapers and magazines were started, and a publishing house was founded. It was around these institutions that people with literary interests began to gather. They included former Red Army soldiers, young intellectuals from Estonian settlements in Russia and revolutionaries who had left bourgeois Estonia illegally. At first in anticipation of what was believed to be the imminent world revolution they expected to see the collapse of bourgeois power in their native land. After the failure of the December rising in 1924, however, Estonian proletarian writers joined more actively in the work of socialist construction.

A total of 160,000 Estonians lived in the Land of Soviets at that time. They constituted a potential reading public, but were scattered throughout a wide territory (in addition to Leningrad, for instance in the Caucasus, the Crimea and in Siberia). Estonian-language publications (hitherto such publications had been received from Estonia) had a fairly wide circulation and the editions of the few books printed were even bigger than those appearing in bourgeois Estonia. The possibility of some publications reaching Estonia was also borne in mind, but this hardly

ever happened because of the stringent precautions taken by the bourgeoisie. As a first attempt to create a literature of the victorious proletariat the material under discussion is of some historical interest. Estonian proletarian literature in Soviet Russia was closely connected with Soviet literature in general. The latter was still in the process of formation and Estonian revolutionary literature shared its peculiarities in the choice of subject-matter and manner of presentation.

In the 1920s the Estonian writers in Soviet Russia rallied mainly around small journals which appeared irregularly: "*Noored Kommunaarid*" ("The Young Communards"), "*Oras*" ("Green Shoots of Corn"), "*Säde*" ("The Spark") and around the "*Uus Küla*" ("New Countryside"), a supplement to the newspaper "*Siberi Teataja*" ("Siberian Reporter"). The poetry that appeared in these publications was characterised by high-flown glorification of the socialist revolution, romantic and abstract visions of the building of a new world and by a wealth of symbols. Later the subject-matter drew closer to life and the treatment became more concrete. The stories of varying length which were published in magazines and journals dealt for the most part with events of the Civil War, episodes in the class struggle in bourgeois Estonia or with life in the Estonian settlements in Soviet Russia.

In 1926, the Estonian Proletarian Writers' Association was founded as a section of the Leningrad Proletarian Writers' Association, and it existed till 1932. When the USSR Writers' Union was founded in 1934, the Estonian authors organised a section of their own within the Leningrad branch of the Union. Several new periodicals were published — "*Leegid*" ("Flames"), "*Kommunismi Teel*" ("On the Path to Communism") — and the Estonian publishing house brought out numerous almanacs, verse collections, and works of prose. The poetry of this period was already near to actual life, and publicistic in the manner in which it served concrete social and political aims. A poet of relatively more outstanding individuality and lyrical talent was Ain Rannaleet (1904—1943). In prose one finds the same basic themes and manner of treatment as before. In addition to short stories several longer narratives were published in periodicals or as separate books and some of them amounted almost to novels. The more productive prose writers included Karl Trein, Valter Juhkum and Peeter Meisel.



The journal "*Leegid*"

The majority of the Estonian writers living in Leningrad perished in 1937 as victims of groundless accusations. Two authors who began their career in Leningrad — Felix Kotta and Hugo Angervaks — later continued their literary activities in Soviet Estonia.

It has already been pointed out that conditions for the development of revolutionary literature in bourgeois Estonia were not only unfavourable, but almost intolerable. It is indicative that the proletarian literature of the time was for the most part produced under prison conditions. The political prisoner Vassili Mölder was known as a writer already before he was jailed. While in prison Paul Keerdo produced several short prose works and Leena Parker wrote some poetry. The most distinguished proletarian author of the period, Juhan Madarik, wrote his main works while a prisoner of the bourgeoisie.

Johannes Lauristin (1899—1941), known in literature by his pen-name of Juhan M a d a r i k, was one of the leaders of the

revolutionary movement of the Estonian working-class. He was endowed with the qualities of an outstanding writer, but the extremely difficult conditions in which he lived did not permit him to develop his talent to the full. He published his first short stories in 1922 in a workers' magazine which he edited on behalf of the Communist Party. Arrested in the following year, he secretly wrote the novel "Subverters of the State" while in jail. The manuscript was smuggled out of prison and taken to Leningrad where it was brought out by the Estonian publishing centre in 1929. The novel is an account of the revolutionary struggle against the bourgeoisie that the Estonian working people waged under the leadership of the Communist Party in the early 1920s. Subsequently Madarik wrote a number of short stories and in 1936 he began working on a lengthy novel "The Republic". This novel was planned to include five parts and it was the author's intention to present a cross-section of the development of the Estonian working-class and of its struggle from the end of the 19th century to the present time. The rough copy of the novel was finished in prison and upon his release from jail in 1938, Madarik began to work on the final version. He completed the first part of the novel, which is written in a convincing true-to-life manner and in a readable popular style. It deals with life in Estonia at the turn of the century and is the story of a young man from the country who develops into a class-conscious factory worker. The second and fourth parts of Madarik's novel were posthumously published on the basis of the draft manuscript written in prison. The manuscripts of the other parts were lost during the war.

The verse of Valter Kaaver (1904—1946) appeared in left-wing publications, mostly in the almanac "*Aktsioon*" ("Action"). This author showed every promise of becoming an outstanding revolutionary poet. He prepared several collections of verse but could not print them in bourgeois Estonia. In danger of arrest because of his political activities, Kaaver secretly crossed the frontier into the Soviet Union in 1930. But he was imprisoned on a false charge and thereby lost any opportunity of continuing his literary career.

The development of proletarian literature in the period under discussion is characterised by great contradictions in

aims and circumstances as well as in aspirations and possibilities. As a result the endeavours to create a literature that was ideologically of a new quality called for exceptional self-denial and entailed excessive sacrifices.

LITERATURE IN THE 1930s

Social and political conditions. The general economic crisis which gripped the whole of the capitalist world at the end of the 1920s also made itself felt in Estonia where it affected the internal political situation and also the intellectual movements of the period. The sudden deterioration of economic conditions led to dissatisfaction among the masses and especially among the more class-conscious workers. Left-wing moods spread within the ranks of the intellectuals. On the other hand, however, local fascist elements became more active after 1930. They looked for support among the petty-bourgeois strata which had been hit by the economic depression. Taking their cue from the unbridled demagogy of the German Nazis, the fascists in Estonia promised to rid the country of the crisis of parliamentarism and of party antagonisms. The fascist movement had a certain appeal and it attracted a large number of supporters since the other bourgeois parties had nothing tangible to offer. The Communist Party, on the other hand had been driven deep underground and its anti-fascist struggle was hampered.

The politically more farsighted intellectuals came out against the danger of fascism. They regarded it as their duty to warn the people and to unmask the extremely reactionary nature of the rapidly spreading fascist movement. In October 1933, a collection of articles entitled "A Time of Grave Responsibility" was published. In these articles the writers E. Vilde, J. Barbarus, J. Semper, the literary critic N. Andresen and some left-wing journalists pointed out the affinity of the Estonian fascists to those of Germany and Italy; they also drew attention to the fascists' lust for power and its causes. Several other well-known writers (G. Suits, A. H. Tammsaare, A. Alle, J. Sütiste) likewise condemned fascism in their works and public statements. Soon after the hitlerites came to power in Germany, the Estonian Writers' Union, acting on the initi-

ative of J. Barbarus, adopted a memorandum at an extraordinary general meeting on April 30, 1933, in which it protested against the suppression of the freedom of thought in Germany. At the same time the Union also expressed its support for those progressive German cultural workers who had been forced to flee abroad.

The course of political events in Estonia, a country whose democratic traditions were still weak and underdeveloped, took an ominous turn. The fascists succeeded in having their constitutional reform bill approved by a referendum. In order to anticipate the seizure of power by the German-oriented local fascists, the then prime minister K. Päts, leader of the rich farmers' party, carried out a coup d'état from above on March 12, 1934. This move established a profascist regime under the pretence of protecting democracy. In the autumn of the same year parliament was dissolved and in the following year all political parties were abolished. Their place was taken by the *Isamaaliit* ("Fatherland League"), an organisation that united all the right-wing forces in the country, including a large number of former local fascists. The fundamental democratic rights were severely curtailed and a state of emergency came into force for years. In consequence a "period of silence" descended on the domestic political scene.

Not all basically progressive writers at first grasped the true significance of what had happened. Quite a number of them allowed themselves to be temporarily misled by the seemingly antifascist nature of the coup d'état and the illusion of a presumable salvation of democracy. The following years, however, soon dispelled this illusion. The state authority tried to force intellectuals into obedience and to make them serve a "program in the interests of the fatherland". Such a policy of coercion met with growing opposition. Only a few writers agreed to toe the official line while the majority of well-known authors sought to pursue their own democratic course of action.

The conditions of domestic political life and certain shifts in foreign policy resulting from changes in the international situation in the latter half of the 1930s did not augur well for bourgeois Estonia. The president concentrated almost unlimited power into his own hands and the new parliament became more of a "talking-shop" than a genuine representative assembly of the people. In its economic relations Estonia drew closer to

fascist Germany whose war preparations created a temporarily expanding market. Although the Nazi plans for the annexation of the Baltic countries were an open secret, a certain rapprochement took place in the political sphere. The continuous diplomatic retreat of the Western Powers in the face of growing German aggression left the Estonian bourgeoisie without their usual support and resulted in a marked shift in political orientation.

At the same time it is possible to discern a certain growth of the influence of the illegal Estonian Communist Party which had formed a common front with left-wing Socialists in 1935 and which also began to employ more flexible tactics with regard to intellectuals. There was also a considerable increase in the influence of the Soviet Union, the vanguard of the struggle against fascism. This growth of influence occurred despite the fact that bourgeois propaganda went all out to make political capital of the violations of legality in the Soviet Union in the latter half of the 1930s.

Immediately after the outbreak of the Second World War the Soviet Union proposed that Estonia should conclude a pact of mutual assistance and permit military bases to be set up on its territory. The anti-bourgeois activities of the working-people gained momentum and this disrupted the "period of silence" in domestic political life. Because of its dealings with Nazi Germany the Estonian bourgeoisie had compromised and isolated itself in foreign policy. Having come into being in the aftermath of the First World War as a link in the anti-Soviet *cordon sanitaire* designed by the Western Powers, the bourgeois Estonian state now found itself in a political impasse as a new revolutionary situation developed.

The condition of writers and literature. The economic depression, the ensuing internal political crisis and the establishment of a profascist regime had both a direct and an indirect influence on the general state of literature as well as on the various movements and conflicts within it. The economic crisis led to a marked decrease in the size of editions (only a few hundred copies) and this meant that what had been modest royalties now shrank still further. There were serious difficulties in allotting the grants provided by the State Culture Fund, especially as the Fund itself had been curtailed. It goes without saying that the government circles were eager to use

state subsidies for the purpose of influencing literary activities in their own interests. At the same time it was not possible to ignore public opinion or to overlook artistic merit. Consequently the recipients of the grants were as a rule the most distinguished authors, who were thus enabled to concentrate on their work. Some of the money of the Culture Fund also went to the Writers' Union and the Estonian Literary Society for the publication of their journals "*Looming*" and "*Eesti Kirjandus*" respectively. The more progressive writers did not allow themselves to be ideologically influenced by financial support from the state. Some other less outstanding authors did, however, tend towards the "positive nationalism" demanded by the bourgeoisie. This was the case especially after the coup d'état of 1934 when the authorities began to play an increasingly direct part in the distribution of prizes and grants.

A reactionary organisation called the "Estonian Nationalists' Clubs", which had been formed in the early 1930s, sought to force its own programme on the Writers' Union and the journal of the Union. The organisation accused a number of writers and the journal "*Looming*" (edited in the 1930s by J. Semper) of left-wing and internationalist leanings. The local fascists attacked progressive writers on the same grounds. "*Looming*" had to parry repeated attempts to influence it which were undertaken by government circles supported by some writers with right-wing views. A certain polarisation of forces took place among the writers of Estonia and this led to clashes on the question of who should occupy the leading posts within the Union. The writers who supported the government and had gathered in Tallinn, set up their own Tallinn Writers' Association and obtained financial help from the state for the purpose of launching a new publishing house. At the end of 1937 the association began to issue its own literary journal "*Varamu*" ("The Treasure-store", edited by H. Visnapuu), which entered into competition with "*Looming*". Despite various restrictions and pressures "*Looming*" remained an essentially democratic periodical with high standards. The journal "*Eesti Kirjandus*", organ of the Estonian Literary Society, continued to play an important role with its section devoted to literary criticism and history. The periodical "*Akadeemia*", started in Tartu by university circles in 1937, gave

much attention to literary matters. A more outspoken attitude of opposition characterised the journal "*Tänapäev*" ("The Present Day"), which was issued by the *Noor-Eesti* publishing company. This periodical was subjected to direct and repeated pressure by the authorities.

It has already been pointed out that in the second half of the 1930s the government circles wanted to have a greater say in the distribution of grants to writers without, however, being obliged to reveal their intentions openly. The awarding of the annual state literary prize (the president's prize) was considerably more tendentious: alongside works of real merit there were others which were singled out for their "nationalistic" and "positive" character.

The number of works of Estonian writers published in foreign languages remained very scanty, especially if one compares it with the growing number of literary works from foreign languages which appeared in Estonia at the time. There was little interest abroad in the literature of a small nation and the internal resources and incentives were lacking which could have helped to arouse such an interest. The Estonian P.E.N. Club (founded in 1927) issued a bulletin "*L'Estonie littéraire*" and a collection of short stories in French translation. Representatives of the Club attended international P.E.N. Club congresses. In 1937 M. Under and F. Tuglas were elected honorary members of the P.E.N. Club of London. The only writer, however, who had her books translated into English was the Finnish-Estonian author A. Kallas. Some outstanding prose works (by A. H. Tammsaare, A. Gailit and others) appeared in German, Finnish and Lettish, occasionally also in other languages. The amount of poetry that was translated was even smaller. All this was obviously not sufficient to gain a reading public abroad and to win recognition among literary circles elsewhere in Europe. In these circumstances literary relations inevitably remained one-sided. The literature of other countries became increasingly more familiar in Estonia (in the 1930s several lengthy and well-selected series of translations were published, e.g. "Nobel Prize-winners", "World Literature", "The Northern Novel", etc.) and a number of able specialists in the field of foreign literature appeared on the scene. For Western Europe, however, literary Estonia remained a remote, unfamiliar and presumably poor borderland.

Internal trends in the development of literature. Already in the 1920s there was a certain revival of realism. This meant that the stage of neo-romantic and symbolist quests and expressionist influences had been left behind. It was towards the end of the '20s and in the early '30s, however, that the problems of the relationship between literature and contemporary society became especially topical and controversial in connection with the so-called nearness-to-life movement launched by a group of writers and critics of the younger generation. This movement came into being as a result of the growing interest shown in the social ills exposed by the economic depression and in the nature and causes of the straitened circumstances in which the masses found themselves. In order to comprehend the essence of these phenomena it was necessary for the writer to study everyday life more closely. Similar literary developments also revealed themselves abroad, e.g. the movement in German literature known as "die neue Sachlichkeit" and the Finnish literary group *Tulenkantajat*. Information about the character of literary activities in the Soviet Union likewise contributed to a consolidation of the new movement.

As a result of these socio-ethical explorations there came into being a literary group which proclaimed the need for "nearness to life" (A. Jakobson, J. Sütiste, A. Kivikas, E. Hiir, D. Palgi, O. Urgart, etc.) and which began to publish a short-lived newspaper "*Kirjanduslik Orbiit*" ("Literary Orbit") in 1929—1930. This paper engaged in polemics with the individualism, aestheticism, imitation of foreign models, and detachment from actual life that was regarded as characteristic of the *Noor-Eesti* and *Siuru* groups (although the latter were no longer in vogue). As a counterbalance the new movement laid stress on native subject-matter as well as on contemporary issues, and, in general, it called for a more down-to-earth and unsophisticated attitude to the outside world. The ideological and aesthetic programme of the movement was not uniform. Alongside a vigorous socially critical trend one could also discern the influence of biologism-vitalism and a leaning towards naturalism. Some participants in the movement also showed signs of the officially endorsed "positive" attitude. The "nearness-to-life" movement soon turned into a struggle between literary generations that often found expression in attacks on former members of the *Noor-Eesti* and *Siuru* groups,

who held key-positions in the literary life of the country. Nevertheless, the movement provoked a lengthy and lively discussion of the relations between life and literature, i.e. one of the crucial problems of realism, and in this sense it played its part in stimulating creative endeavour.

The continuity of the democratic line of development is shown by the strengthening of social criticism in both prose and poetry, especially in the early 1930s. The picture of contemporary life given in the more significant part of literature was far from what the bourgeois ruling circles would have liked to see. Attention was focused on individuals engaged in a struggle with hardships, social injustice, the evils of life, and with their own inherent contradictions; they were human beings who saw the world around them mainly in a sombre light, whose fate was often disconsolate and whose future lay in a dead end. There were really not many authors closely linked with the struggle of the working people and who could envisage a dictatorship of the proletariat as a long-term prospect. The majority of writers placed their hopes in the traditions of Western bourgeois democracy. These hopes and aspirations, however, found hardly any encouragement from surrounding reality.

After the coup d'état of 1934 the increasingly peremptory demands for "positivity" contained in official statements and in speeches made by the pillars of the profascist regime brought direct and continuous pressure to bear on literature. A new publications law passed in 1935 placed restrictions on literary works of a "seditious" and "subversive" character. At the same time official approval was given to the glossing over of social contradictions and to the praise of the "joy of labour". Government circles began to insist openly on a new attitude to life and to demand literary characters that would be models of enterprise and heroism. There was a demand for books inculcating a spirit of violent nationalism in the youth of the country. As a result of this campaign some works appeared which idealised the bourgeois side in the civil war of 1918—1920, as well as some pseudo-historic novels exalting the valour of the ancient Estonians; a few opportunist poetasters engaged in quasi-patriotic phrasemongering. Relatively few of the better-known writers showed any readiness to oblige the authorities (A. Kivikas, H. Visnapuu, A. Gailit, etc.). The

cases of compliance on the part of some democratic authors remained isolated lapses and the majority strove to maintain their anti-bourgeois position. Speaking in general terms, the trend of social criticism did indeed lose some of its trenchancy for the time being and attention shifted from contemporary crucial issues to the field of psychological introspection or to past events and conditions. The prevalent type of poetry was either contemplative verse based on abstract humanism or verse in which an attitude of opposition was camouflaged by a descriptive-deliberative approach and the use of symbols. But there were also some writers (A. Jakobson, J. Barbarus, etc.) who struck out boldly in a direction diametrically opposed to that indicated by the bourgeoisie. The spirit of opposition in literature grew especially strong towards the end of the 1930s. It was then that several outstanding works appeared which constitute a merciless indictment of the way of life in bourgeois Estonia (A. H. Tammsaare).

The 1930s in Estonian literature may be regarded first and foremost as a period of prose. The novel was the most important and the most widely read genre. Poetry remained more in the background as the mentality of the period was in many respects less receptive to verse. It was only towards the end of the decade that one can detect a revival of interest in poetry. Drama continued to be a neglected branch of literature and it had no continuity of tradition although the demand for original plays was urgent. An independent type of literature came into being at the time, viz. children's literature, and a number of authors appeared who wrote almost exclusively for the young reader.

PROSE FICTION AND ITS PRINCIPAL REPRESENTATIVES

In the early 1920s as during the period of revolution and civil war the amount and influence of Estonian prose remained limited in comparison with that of poetry at the same time. Because of great differences in the creative approach of individual authors it is difficult to distinguish any trends of a more general character. In the field of the short story F. Tuglas continued the neo-romantic and symbolist line of development and, indeed, pursued it to its logical conclusion (in his anthol-

ogies "The Spirit of Gloom" and "The Transmigration of Souls"). The author was particularly successful in conveying a sense of the destruction and disaster of the war years. The underlying mood of other and younger short-story writers (A. Gailit, A. Kivikas, P. Vallak) was likewise predominantly gloomy and even fatalistic, and their sympathy with human suffering usually held out no promise of relief. The direct influence of expressionism also made itself felt in the prose of the period and again mainly in the treatment of the war theme (M. Metsanurk's story "The Search for God"). An outstanding novel of the period was A. H. Tammsaare's "The Master of Kõrboja Farm". In this work the author depicts contemporary life, but bypasses topical and superficial problems, taking up broader issues of general human interest instead. In their novels of the same period some other authors (A. Kivikas, R. Roht) sought to reflect the changes under way in Estonian country life and in doing so they tended to overrate the significance of the bourgeois agrarian reform.

In the middle and especially in the latter half of the 1920s, the activity of prose writers increased markedly. The epic genres once again became dominant in Estonian literature. The amount of prose written grew several times in a few years. This was largely due to an increase in the number of new novels, a development that was encouraged by the annual competition for the best novel sponsored by the *Loodus* publishing company. The revival of the novel was directly connected with the rise of a realistic trend in literature — it being common knowledge that realism finds its principal form of expression in prose and the novel in particular.

The Estonian novelists who rose to preeminence in this period were A. H. Tammsaare and M. Metsanurk. Their critical attitude and the intensity of their search for truth imparts a great power of generalisation to their depiction of life. Of the two it was M. Metsanurk who was the more violent in his protests against the dark sides of life, but he was also more of a moraliser; Metsanurk was more merciless in his analysis of reality, but also more inconstant, and his endeavours to be objective often led to contradictions. Tammsaare's strength lies in his broad philosophical range and the psychological depth of his character studies; he was also able to penetrate the superficiality of life and to tackle the essential and intrigu-

ing problems of the contradictions inherent in man's inner world.

As regards its treatment of life, the fiction of the period is written mainly in a minor key. Their humanistic sympathy with the victims of injustice, their anxiety about human troubles and misery very often led writers to depict cases of decline and ruin, and the seamy side of life in general. Their characters, unable to find a proper place in life, generally end up in an impasse or in a state of depression and resignation. Even such a writer as O. Luts, who had become popular mainly as an exuberant humourist, now turned largely to the depiction of cheerless destinies. This was even more true of R. Roht and P. Vallak. A peculiar aftermath of the neo-romantic trend was the contrasting of a capricious imaginary existence and a world of fantasy on the one hand, with drab everyday life on the other. Such an approach is exemplified, for instance, in the works of A. Gailit. Some young prose writers who appeared towards the end of the decade (A. Jakobson, R. Sirge) contributed new gloomy and incriminating notes with their naturalistic depiction of scenes from the life of working-people.

The preference for the novel continued to characterise the development of prose literature also in the 1930s. Society-criticising realism remained predominant and turned into a violent indictment of existing capitalist relations in some works (J. Kärner's "A Woman from the World of the Poor", R. Roht's "On the Path of Struggle"). There were also numerous realistic novels which recorded the misery and dark sides of life, and exposed the warping effect of contemporary conditions on human being. The depiction of the down-and-out members of society, of those condemned to drag out a hopeless existence in the conditions of economic depression or also in the conditions of petty-bourgeois vegetation and moral decay, displayed a powerful element of protest, but from the artistic viewpoint it was dull and monotonous. As a result of emphasis on the external aspects of life the psychological side was somewhat neglected. To counterbalance such a superficial closeness to life, a new trend appeared, which devoted itself entirely to the profound analysis of psychological processes (J. Semper's "Jealousy"; a number of works by younger authors), and which in its turn tended towards extremes, especially in the use of Freudian points of departure. In the latter half of the

1930s attempts were made to overcome such a lack of balance between objective and subjective elements in prose. In the novels of that period there is a greater harmony between the social criticism of prevailing conditions and psychological analysis. Alongside the authors mentioned earlier, several novelists who had made their debut in the preceding decade attracted particular attention. They included A. Mälk with his novels about life on the coast, M. Raud and R. Sirge. The more conspicuous newcomers were L. Kibuvits, A. Hint and K. Ristikivi.

The number of historical novels written at the time is quite striking. Attention focused largely on the same crucial periods in Estonian history (the defensive wars fought in the early 13th century, the Livonian and Northern wars, the uprising in 1343) as had been described in the romantic historical prose of the 19th century. The difference was that now the treatment was much broader in scope and was based on a more thorough knowledge of the past. A striving for historical objectivity is characteristic of the best works (despite a certain influence of bourgeois conceptions). There were authors, however, who began to stir up nationalistic passions (particularly in so-called Independence War novels), and who thus earned the special approval of the authorities.

The quantity of short stories written at the time was greatly inferior to that of novels, but their artistic level was high. The principal short story writers in the 1930s (P. Vallak, A. Jakobson, K. A. Hindrey) differed greatly as to their world outlook, the problems they dealt with, and to their individual artistic touch. This lent variety to their literary production which was relatively limited in extent. Several other writers, known chiefly for their novels, also produced short stories (A. Mälk, M. Metsanurk).

Travel books occupied a conspicuous place in prose literature and the works of F. Tuglas, J. Semper, A. Kallas, etc. in this genre were of high quality and greatly appreciated. The best-known authors of prose for the young reader were J. Parijõgi, M. Sillaots, J. Jaik, K. Ristikivi and R. Janno.

A closer examination of the work of leading writers shows that during the period under discussion Estonian prose fiction grew not only in bulk, but that it also became richer in content and could boast of a larger number of genuine achievements.

Anton Hansen Tammsaare. In the case of small nations, especially those whose culture is relatively young, the appearance of great writers is a much rarer event than in the case of nations with long-standing cultural traditions. If hitherto Estonian literature had been able to assign a place of honour in its national pantheon to several literary figures, above all to Kreutzwald and Vilde, then A. H. Tammsaare (1878—1940) was really a writer of both national as well as international stature.

A. H. Tammsaare made his literary debut in the early years of the century with short prose items depicting country life. The young writer seemed to continue the realistic trend familiar from the works of Vilde and Kitzberg. Nevertheless, already in his writings of that period there was something which was new and promising. This was a special striving and ability to see the complexity of and the contradictions inherent in human nature and to depict them in a subtly modulated manner. Inspired by the great Russian realists, Dostoevski in particular, Tammsaare saw his primary task in the true-to-life and manifold description of the psychology of his characters. In consequence Tammsaare deliberately concentrated all his attention on human strivings and aspirations with social conflicts forming a more remote background. Tammsaare's earlier stories do indeed contain some downright naturalistic descriptions of abject poverty and the reader can just sense its social causes. The author does not, however, confine himself to this, but lays special emphasis on something quite different: the coarseness and drabness of everyday drudgery and the tragicomical senselessness of continuous bickering ("Two Couples and the Single One", 1902), the tragic lack of understanding and the conflict between generations ("The Old and the Young", 1903). Some of his stories were written under the immediate influence of the revolutionary events of 1905.

Subsequently Tammsaare gravitated towards the *Noor-Eesti* group, although he never became one of the more active members. His interest now shifted to an analysis of the inner workings of the human soul. The more extensive stories of the period ("Long Steps", "Young Souls", "Across the Border") are concerned mainly with immature young intellectuals and their often ill-defined moods and cravings, their somewhat aimless aspirations and fanciful ratiocinations, their defiance

of a petty-bourgeois mode of life. In these stories everything external, even the plot, is neglected and the writer's entire attention is focused on the impressionistic rendering of the psychological background to various youthfully exuberant discussions. This necessary intermediate stage in the writer's evolution led to greater successes in the stories "Nuances" and "The Fly" (both in 1917). Here an impressionistic depiction of moods and feelings is synthesised with increasingly realistic character studies, thus providing a foretaste of the author's work in his prime. Tammsaare's artistic fairy tales and miniatures (in the anthology "The Boy and the Butterfly", 1915), written under the influence of O. Wilde, are among the finest achievements of Estonian neo-romantic literature.

A writer disposed to live like a philosopher-recluse, Tammsaare's poor health also compelled him to lead a life of retirement. During those long years full of mental tension and tireless self-development his epic talent matured. In his later years as well, Tammsaare remained aloof from political and social life, although he closely and critically followed events in Estonia and throughout the world. He sought to maintain his independence as a creative personality in order to serve only what he considered to be truly great literature and his own humanistic ideals in the field of art. The subsequent writings of the author, who had by then attained self-confidence and a high degree of mastery, constitute the best works of the period.

Known until then exclusively as a prose writer, Tammsaare surprised the reading public with a play "Judith" (1921), in which a biblical story repeatedly dealt with in world literature received a new, unexpected and contemporary interpretation. Unlike the heroine in the Bible (and also in F. Hebbel's tragedy of the same name) Tammsaare's Judith utters her patriotic phrases merely to camouflage her true motives. Frustrated in her feminine and maternal instincts, she is impelled to go over to the hostile camp by her ambition to win the love of the military hero Holofernes, and then to incite him to seek the royal throne, thus enabling her to become the ancestress of a new dynasty. It is only when the famous general, who has long felt a repugnance for power and glory, is sobered by the woman's ambitions and rejects her, that the jilted and enraged Judith decides to kill Holofernes in revenge. It is thus that



Anton Hansen Tammsaare

the writer deprived Judith of the aureole of heroism and, at the same time, produced a work that condemns speculation with ideas, a work with a humanitarian resonance directed against war, violence and despotism. With the diversity and psychological interest of its character studies and its precise as well as pithy wording, "Judith" is a work that could be

compared with some of the plays of G. B. Shaw, whom Tammsaare esteemed so highly.

In his novel "The Master of Kõrboja Farm" (1922) the author returned to a subject particularly close to his heart, namely to that of rural life, the mentality of country folk, the theme of struggle against the force of circumstances and against one's own inner nature. If in Tammsaare's stories about intellectuals the characters were usually removed from their social environment and placed, as it were, in a chamber for psychological experiments, then in this novel the evolution of human destinies is shown as the result of the dialectical interplay of external and internal forces. The novel is the tragic love story of a young man from the country, strong-willed and determined, but unrestrained in temperament and defiantly proud, and an educated young woman who longs to return to country life. The complex psychology of both characters is presented in a masterly fashion. The novel provides ample evidence of the extent to which the author's realism had become artistically more subtle and refined. Dealing as it does with problems of general human interest and owing to its inherent poetic tonality, "The Master of Kõrboja Farm" is one of the most charming novels in Estonian literature. It is here that the author's peculiar manner of expression with its suggestivity and abundant use of repetitions may be seen at its best.

After the success of "The Master of Kõrboja Farm" Tammsaare felt he could begin the realisation of a plan which had taken shape over the years, that of writing a lengthy epochal novel "Truth and Justice". This work in five volumes appeared in 1926—1933, and made the author a classic already in his life-time. It also permits him to be regarded as one of the most original thinkers and novelists in Europe during the period between the two World Wars. The novel "Truth and Justice" is more deeply rooted in Estonian life and reflects the Estonian character better than any previous work of literature. Despite its concrete local subject-matter the novel also deals with many of the crucial issues of our time. The latter include above all such problems as the essence and significance of the human struggle for existence, the foundations of and the preconditions for the development of a truly humanitarian culture, the possibilities of checking the erosion of human values by the evils of bourgeois civilisation.



"Truth and Justice", I (*cover by J. Vahtra, 1926*)

A close study of the life of his own people in all its manifestations led Tammsaare to the conclusion that culture cannot be mechanically taken over or copied, but that it has to be created independently. In order to do this the same intensity, earnestness and depth of thought, feeling and action are necessary as are characteristic of the more advanced nations of Europe. Tammsaare believed — somewhat idealistically, of course — that he could find all this above all in the peasantry which constituted the bulk of the Estonian nation, and which had until then been the embodiment of its vitality. It is from among the farmers and the intellectuals of rural stock that Tammsaare selected the protagonists of the ideas dearest to his heart; and whom he contrasted to characters warped by a capitalist sense of property or rendered shiftless and paltry by superficial urbanisation. Such contrasts are not the result of any dislike of progress or a nostalgia for the past. They are due first and foremost to the author's endeavour to ascertain the foundation on which the life of his people is

based and on which alone one could build something really lasting. This is the basic problem underlying all the parts of "Truth and Justice". In each volume, however, it is dealt with in a different setting and from a different aspect. Each volume, moreover, has its own special problems. The novel as a whole constitutes a broad panorama of the destinies and aspirations of several generations of rural and town life, peasants and intellectuals, revolutionary circles and the upstart bourgeoisie, the ideas and social relations of an entire period in all their complexity. The author, a keen observer of life, has also woven numerous comic threads into the serious web of the novel and there is room for humour and irony as well. Tammsaare appreciated wise scepticism, but he certainly did not disdain lyricism.

The first three volumes of "Truth and Justice" contain much that is autobiographical (early life on a farm, secondary school days in Tartu, the years spent as a journalist in Tallinn), whereas the last two volumes constitute a sequel based on more general observations of life. Nevertheless the author's imagination remoulded and enriched the subject-matter of the first volumes in accordance with the overall artistic conception of the work. Tammsaare himself characterised the different parts of the novel as follows: part one describes man's struggle with the land, part two — his struggle with God, part three — man's struggle with society, part four — his struggle with himself, and his search for happiness, part five depicts resignation. But Tammsaare also emphasised that this should be understood only as the domination of a certain idea in a given part of the novel, in reality all the ideas referred to are intertwined and they underlie the work as a whole.

The struggle with the swampy and stony land, the age-old struggle and endless toil of the peasant to wrest a living from the stingy soil, is interpreted in "Truth and Justice" as the primeval basis of all progress and culture. It is in this struggle that the writer sees true human depth and seriousness of purpose, as well as genuine intensity of feelings and aspirations. As a great realist and keen-sighted analyser Tammsaare also depicts the contradictions in the evolution of the personality of his hero Vargamäe Andres, the bitterness caused by excessive toil and boundary disputes with a spiteful neighbour, the stern reticence resulting from the incomplete realisation of

one's plans and from a variety of tribulations, estrangement from one's children as well as disillusionment with religion. Despite everything, however, the indefatigable workman remains true to his ideals; a society infected with the spirit of speculation and profiteering does not succeed in remoulding him. The knowledge that despite occasional lapses he has, on the whole, engaged in a righteous struggle for truth and justice gives the old farmer profound satisfaction and lends a noble poetic radiance to the decline of his life.

Matters are different in the case of those who lack a serious purpose in life and who are inwardly warped. These are people who do not seek truth but specious justice, and who do not value creative work but only property and the privileges it confers. Such traits are conspicuous in Andres's neighbour Oru Pearu. Tricky by nature and fond of litigation, he is one of the most complex and interesting characters in the novel whose ostentatious individualism and egocentricity drag him unawares towards an inevitable dead end. One cannot but feel downright pity for the floundering Maurus, the secondary school head-



Andres and Pearu (*H. Eelma, 1964*)

master, who has destroyed his own personality by adapting himself to the abnormal conditions created by reactionary Czardom and with whom equivocation and paradoxical utterances have become second nature. When depicting town life Tammsaare now draws downright sarcastic portraits of representatives of the upstart bourgeoisie who have lost touch with everything that is healthy and creative, and whose greed is as repellent as their wastefulness (especially in Part 4 which deals with the early period of the bourgeois republic).

The central character in "Truth and Justice" is Vargamäe Andres's son Indrek Paas, who leaves the countryside in pursuit of knowledge in town. The life story of this young man passes through the whole novel. In the course of his education Indrek overcomes the religious prejudices of the peasant environment in which he grew up and finds his way to materialism and atheism. Like the majority of his contemporaries Indrek is attracted by attempts to modernise society and he takes part in revolutionary events, being repelled, however, by violence and the spontaneous human urge to destroy. Indrek is not a man of action, but rather an introvert who tends to ponder over the meaning of life and to seek for truth and justice in the contradictions of the period in which he lives. His attempt to find shelter from the harsh realities of life in marriage and bourgeois prosperity proves illusory. It is inevitable that there can be no lasting trust or mutual understanding between a man of his kind and a woman that is restless and thirsty for life, and who is attracted by a society actuated by avarice, the pursuit of pleasure, corruption and careerism. Disillusioned and mentally unhinged, Indrek returns to his father's farm where in simple labour and direct contact with the land he endeavours to find himself anew and gathers strength to resist the ravaging influence of a profit-seeking society that has rejected the true values of life.

A. H. Tammsaare's "Truth and Justice" with its search for humanist ideals may be included among the period novels of the early 20th century, the most outstanding of which were written by R. Rolland, Th. Mann and J. Galsworthy. There are certain differences as regards artistic perfection (e.g. parts of the novel are marred by prolix discussions and the verbosity of some of the characters); on the other hand, however, the Estonian writer has drawn on his own life experience and

introduced a great deal of such material that is lacking in the works of the urbanised West-European authors.

Immediately after completing his main work, Tammsaare produced two more novels ("Life and Love", "I Loved a German Girl") in which a psychological study of love is interwoven with social as well as ethical problems and with a criticism of bourgeois morality and culture. The last period of the writer's life is marked by new ideas and a new artistic quality in the play "The King Feels Cold" (1936) and in the novel "The New Vanapagan* of Põrgupõhja" (1939). In these works Tammsaare's philosophy and criticism of society assume a conventional and allegorical guise which lends them greater force and broader applicability. Developing the biblical theme of an old king who suffers from the cold, Tammsaare in his satirical play transfers him to a non-existent European state and turns him into a symbol of the crisis of the bourgeois social system and in human relations generally. In the shape of a new religious movement, whose idol is a double-headed calf, the author provides a grotesque generalisation of fascist demagogy and its influence. This witty satire of various anti-democratic manifestations is evidence that Tammsaare embarked on a new course in drama at the same time as B. Brecht. Tammsaare's critical pathos reached its culmination in the novel "The New Vanapagan of Põrgupõhja". This book is a merciless indictment of bourgeois society with its injustice, selfishness and demagogy. A peculiarity of the work is the ingenious manner in which it makes use of elements of folklore and mythology. Such an approach reinforces the tone of the novel and gives the latter the semblance of a myth that generalises the fundamental conflicts of the period. The author succeeded in showing that even a trustful and simple-minded drudge endowed with superhuman physical strength finally recognises who is his real enemy in this world full of lies, injustice and hypocrisy, and that all the moralising as well as religious and patriotic demagogy of the oppressors cannot save them from their doom. The lasting popularity of this novel is due to its originality of treatment, masterly delineation of characters, interplay of scathing satire and inimitable humour, as well as

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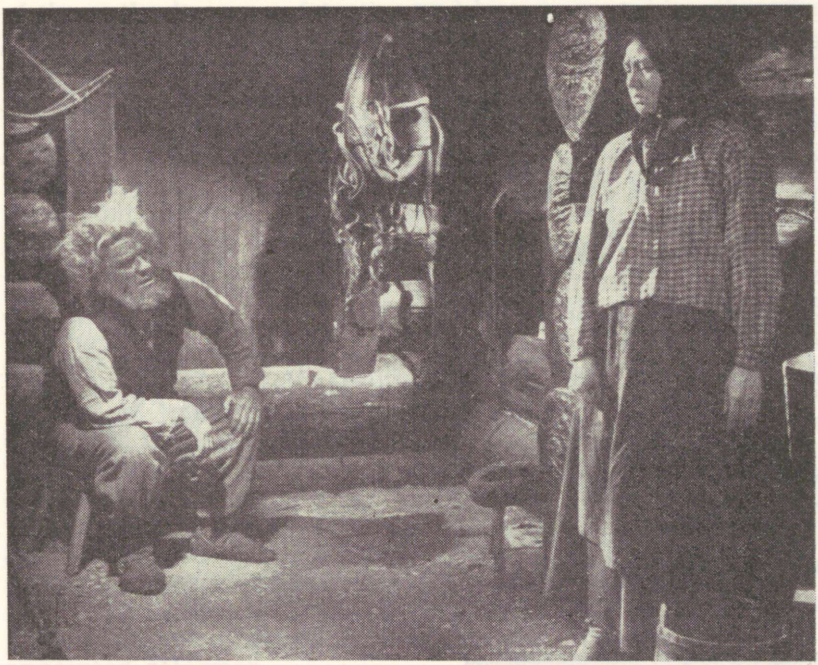
* *Vanapagan* — literally "Old Heathen", a stupid hulking devil of human shape and great physical strength in Estonian folklore.



A scene from the film "The New Vanapagan of Põrgupõhja" (*Studio Tallinnfilm, 1964*)

to its underlying keen sense of justice and profound humaneness.

In addition to his work as a writer of fiction Tammsaare was also for many decades a prolific publicist and essayist. He wrote a large number of articles on the most varied subjects. In these articles he developed the democratic and humanitarian ideas on which his entire literary production is based, and he did this with characteristic thoughtfulness, a marked capacity for dialectical analysis and a wittiness interspersed with paradoxes.

A. H. Tammsaare is the greatest epic talent that Estonian literature has ever known. He gave much serious thought to the crucial problems confronting mankind, he possessed extraordinary powers of discernment and literary self-expression.

He carried on from where E. Vilde, the first distinguished Estonian critical realist, had left off; he received impulses from the neo-romantic trend and from various movements that sought to develop realism in other countries. It was thus that Tammsaare led Estonian critical realism to its culmination in the '20s and '30s of this century, and his literary heritage has continuously gained in significance ever since both at home and abroad.

Mait Metsanurk. The most noteworthy writer alongside A. H. Tammsaare to continue and develop critical realism in Estonian prose was Mait Metsanurk (1879—1957). Even his initial period belongs to the realism of the early 20th century. He was also considerably influenced by the Russian realists with their intellectual manner and characteristic way of raising problems. The influence of Leo Tolstoi was especially strong and lasting in Metsanurk's approach to life and literature. Already at that time the author's characteristic features, specific conflicts and general attitude can be discerned. As a rule Metsanurk's characters were vacillating, inefficient and unstable characters whose dissatisfaction with and protest against their environment was all the more violent. Because



Mait Metsanurk

of the author's sense of justice and humaneness, his adherence to strict ethic principles which are largely disregarded by actual life, the work of Metsanurk possesses a dominantly pessimistic keynote.

M. Metsanurk's first real success was the novel "Villem from Vahesaare Farm" (1909). This is a somewhat naturalistic tale of a young farmer's desperate struggle to save his native farm from creditors. The hero is a straightforward man, deeply fond of the land, who brooks no compromise with his conscience in the interests of property, but who is weak-willed and easily influenced despite his violence, and who soon finds himself in a hopeless and humiliating situation. The socio-pedagogical purpose of the novel "The Slaves" was to reflect the spinelessness and servility characteristic of public life (mainly of journalistic circles) at the time. The author later dealt with the same problem on a smaller scale in a story called "Epp". The opposite extreme, namely morbidly exaggerated proper pride is described in "Toho-oja Anton", a longer story with impressionistic elements in its style. The spiritual impasse and disillusionment of a wealthy businessman is the subject-matter of a psychological novel "Behold the Man!". Another novel "The Life and Death of Taavet Soovere" is the story of a tragicomical unpractical day-dreamer and helpless self-appointed reformer.

What has been said will suffice to show that Metsanurk was interested above all in the problems facing contemporary society. In the 1920s the writer's central theme could be called that of the Reds and the Whites. He made several attempts to give an ethical and psychological interpretation of the dominant social conflict of the period. The first variation on the theme was "The Search for God", a tale where the principal character fails to find his God, i.e. an idea in the name of which to die, in the turmoil of the civil war. The main character in the play "The General's Son" likewise vacillates between revolutionary struggle and the doctrine of Christian salvation. In the novel "The Unmarked Grave" (1926), written in the form of the diary of an underground revolutionary leader, Metsanurk developed a similar theme of the conflict of ideas, and chose for his subject-matter the excruciating inner struggle of an ascetic, selfless and high-principled human being. The latter, however, is in essence a hesitant intellectual

with a dislike for violence, a kindred soul to the author, and it would be difficult to see in him a truly revolutionary Communist. The ideas underlying the works mentioned and their artistic structure reflect the obvious influence of expressionism.

M. Metsanurk deals with the fundamental conflict of the epoch in a much more convincing manner in his two realistic novels "The White Cloud" (1925) and "The Red Wind" (1928). The latter, the more forceful and mature of the two books, depicts relationships in rural society in the unsettled days of the revolutions of 1917, the German occupation and the civil war. The author has provided an objective and true-to-life account of the circumstances in which the class struggle developed and of how it led even the members of one and the same family into opposing camps. The central figure, a young farmer's wife, is rent by a violent inner conflict due to her personal attachments, sense of social justice and class sympathies. The reflection of political events in the consciousness of the different strata of the peasantry in "The Red Wind" is plausible enough, but in the treatment of social problems primarily from the viewpoint of man's moral edification, the author's somewhat abstract humanism led him once again into a characteristic blind alley. Struggling with her scruples the heroine of this novel likewise ends up with a sense of fatalism and resignation.

Several of Metsanurk's works in the 1930s were critical of the bourgeois-hedonistic mentality to which the author sought a positive counterbalance in creative labour. Because of his moralising attitude, however, the author did not sound convincing. The despondency resulting from the years of economic crisis is dealt with in the story "Taniel Struggles On". Metsanurk's most significant book of the period does not deal with contemporary problems, but turns, surprisingly enough, to the distant past. The novel "On the River Ümera" (1934) describes the bitter struggle waged by the Estonians to defend their freedom against the German invaders in the early 13th century. The social conditions, human relations and the manner of thought of people in that grim period, as well as the desperate resistance to the German Knights of the Sword are all depicted with historical veracity and without any romanticisation. Later Metsanurk wrote another historical novel "The Fire under the Ashes", whose plot is laid in the



"On the River Ümera" (*cover by E. Järv, 1935*)

days of a great famine at the end of the 17th century. In his novel "Soosaare Farm" (1936), the author draws on his own childhood memories in order to describe the hard but creative life of peasants in the 1880s. He then proceeded to criticise the contemporary church and the clergy in a novel "The Selected and Ordained" (1937).

Although in his search for truth Metsanurk's sympathy was with the progressive forces in society, his idealistic conceptions often resulted in serious contradictions. Novels form the more significant part of his production. Metsanurk rose to eminence with his social novels; he wrote novels dealing with various topical issues (a new feature in Estonian literature), and he revived the tradition of historical novel writing.

Oskar Luts. In comparison with the austere and intellectual M. Metsanurk, whose pen was given more to sarcastic than to humorous writing, O. Luts (1887—1953) is a totally different literary figure. A depictor of humorous or somewhat senti-

mental scenes from life, he was a talented story-teller by the grace of God, as it were, because his first book proved to be his most successful and perhaps his best work, unsurpassed by anything among the long list of books that followed. Luts made his literary debut with a tale "Spring" (1912—1913) based on recollections of his own school-days. Its vivid imagery, the lively characters with their contagious cheerfulness and mischievous pranks, the author's obvious sympathy with the youngsters in their worries and troubles, and the marked lyrical undercurrent of the work as well as the racy colloquial language in which it was written, gained widespread and lasting popularity for its author. Of the numerous well-delineated characters in the story there are some in particular which are among the most vivid in Estonian literature: the silent dreamer Arno Tali, the restive, ingenious wag Joosep Toots and the goody-goody hapless Georg Adniel Kiir. In a number of sub-



Young heroes of "The Spring" (*Studio Tallinnfilm, 1969*)

sequent stories Luts described the life of the same characters after their school-days ("Summer", etc.). These tales were also successful, but here Luts's humour is more contrived. In his early period the author also published several comedies whose somewhat grotesque characters and plots were a criticism of the follies of a peasant and petty-bourgeois environment ("The Cabbage", "Paunvere", "The Businessmen", etc.). At the same time that he wrote these truly realistic and folksy works, Luts also tried his hand at writing in a neo-romantic, symbolist manner, but his work along these lines was of little value. A relatively better achievement was the story "It Stands Written..." (later known as "The Swamp") in which the author interweaves realistic and sombrely romantic motifs.

A melancholy tone prevails in the stories Luts wrote in the early years of the bourgeois republic. In comparison with his earlier work there is more discretion and lyrical animation, but perceptibly less richness of colour and the author's characteristic humour is absent. The next stories written in the 1920s ("The Course of Andres's Life", etc.) have a more realistic and circumstantial fabric. Luts's humour now finds expression chiefly in his topical satires and feuilletons. Like most humourists, however, Luts took an essentially gloomy view of things.

The monotonous routine of Luts's life, his limited literary horizon, the lack of a more active interest in broader ideological and artistic issues, resulted in his concern mainly with life and conditions on the outskirts of small towns. There is much that is unpretentious and even stereotyped in his story-telling. The same familiar environment which was the source from which Luts drew his material at the time also hindered the development of the writer's personality. The realism with which he described the seamy side of urban life as well as the tragedy of the aimless existence of "humble folk" (a realism, by the way, which has been compared in some respects with Charles Dickens's treatment of life) tended to lack any more profound psychological and philosophical foundation. In the opinion of more exacting critics this part of Luts's work leant towards entertainment fiction. In some works the author succeeded in demonstrating the pitiful nature of petty-bourgeois ideals and "happiness", and he also pointed out the tragedy of the fulfillment of modest dreams. In his depiction



Oskar Luts

of moral decline (especially as a result of alcoholism) Luts confined himself to shallow moralising. One of the most vivid of the author's stories is "In the Backyard" (1933), in which he concentrates most of the ethic and social motifs that recur in his work of the period. This work with its characteristic title is full of sympathy for the down-and-outs of society.

Being on the whole largely dependent as an author on his own personal experience, Luts began in the 1930s to write an extensive series of autobiographical works. The best of this series are the first five volumes with their humorous and wistfully lyrical reminiscences of the author's childhood and school years. The following parts lack the charming intimacy of youthful recollections and they consist mainly of loosely connected informal memoirs.

The tragedy of the attainment of unpretentious ideals is also exemplified by the case of the writer Luts himself, who was too easily satisfied with the popularity of a people's storyteller (a popularity which was indeed great). Nevertheless Luts has a lasting place among the prose writers of the period and the best of his works are still widely read in Soviet Estonia and extremely successful when adapted for the stage.

August Gailit. The exuberant imagination of the short-story writer and novelist A. Gailit (1891—1960) marks him as a late neo-romanticist and makes him stand out conspicuously against the mainly sober and matter-of-fact background of Estonian prose. In his works there are, as it were, two independently functioning systems — one of romantic fantasy and another of the world of reality, which impinge on one another and give rise in a grotesque and conventional form to various symbolic generalisations. It is because of these peculiarities and especially owing to the unusual nature of the events described, the paradoxality and craziness of the situations he deals with, that Gailit has been called a teller of fairy-tales for adults, a writer who wanted to provide some change from the dull monotony of everyday life, and, on the whole, to bid defiance to a sensibly restrained petty-bourgeois way of life.

A characteristic figure rose to the fore already in Gailit's earlier works. This was a Bohemian type who stressed his own eccentricity and contrasted himself to the mediocrity of surrounding life, a day-dreamer and reasoner. At the time of the World War, revolutions (in which he saw nothing but chaos) and civil war, Gailit produced works in which there is an expressionistic vein and in which a pessimistic Spenglerian mood of the ruin and decline of Western civilisation becomes more marked. This mood found expression in a reckless confusion of the illogically fantastic with reality and mysticism, in topsy-turvy aestheticism attended by its peculiar medley of the ugly, the cynical and the obscene, and finally in apocalyptic visions of ghastly pestilences, death and destruction. The collections of short stories "Towards Morning" and "The Crusaders", which appeared in the mid-1920s contain more that is drawn from actual everyday life, but Gailit's characteristic preference for the exceptional and the extraordinary is still obvious. His characters are mostly obsessed by fixed ideas; in desperate rage they storm the border-line between a dream world and reality.

Equally unusual, although free of such oppressive fatality, is the world which Gailit created in his novel "Toomas Nipernaadi" (1928). This work consists of seven stories and marks a complete break with the traditions of the Estonian novel. The stories are about the summertime adventures of a littérateur and fantast who has an intellectual affinity to the author. Based



August Gailit

on contrasts between humdrum everyday existence and a defiantly romantic life of fantasy, the work singles out many queer aspects of reality and ridicules conventionality as well as a variety of human frailties. With his wild inventions and tall stories the strange hero of the novel opposes conformity, dull respectability, the blind fulfilment of duty and everything that is commonplace in life; he is something of a caricatured apostle of altruism and closeness to nature. And in the background to all this there is a distinct note of romantic melancholy, an awareness of the phantasmal and transitory nature of life. By contrasting sober common sense with a Bohemian mentality the author actually makes one as well as the other appear grotesque and he seems to smile wistfully both at what is apparently sensible or senseless. In "Toomas Nipernaadi" reality is reflected as though in a distorting mirror, but it is this device that has helped the author to capture a significant aspect of the mentality of the period, thus ensuring the general success of the novel both at home and abroad.

Gailit's conscious or intuitive striving to blend neo-romanticism with realism gave his work an artistic completeness which is the source of its peculiar interest and lasting literary

value. The same fusion of a world of fantasy and of reality occurs in Gailit's next novels, — "Rough Seas" (1938) and "Ekke Moor" (1941). The author, however, who (in contrast to the attitude expressed in his principal works) showed a tendency to follow the official line already under the bourgeois republic, did not refrain from collaboration with the fascists during the German occupation, and after leaving his native country, he lost contact with a wider reading public. "The Flaming Heart" (1945) was the most significant of Gailit's works which appeared when he was an émigré. The underlying idea of this novel, which was written while the author was still in Estonia, is that the roots of literary and artistic production lie in the joys and sufferings, the entire life of the writer's or artist's own people. The subsequent works that Gailit wrote abroad ("Do You Remember, Dearest?"; in three volumes) are imbued with hopelessness, steadily growing pessimism and a mournful attachment to the past. In them the author also seeks to give a fatalistic account of the course of events. Although Gailit lost touch with the overwhelming majority of the nation and the course of its historical development, the best achievements of the author continue to be appreciated in Estonia. His finest work constitutes an original, somewhat exotically colourful patch in Estonian literature in the 1920s and 1930s.

Peet Vallak (1893—1959) remained first and foremost a writer of short stories. An author with a keen sense of reality, Vallak devoted most of his attention to psychological character studies, although his descriptions of environment are likewise detailed and colourful. His dramatic treatment of life is in a way kindred to that of the expressionists. Vallak's stories turn largely around conflicts springing from contradictions inherent in a character or from a character's incompatibility with his environment or fellow human beings. Although the writer never directly linked his subject-matter with the class antagonisms of the period, he was sensitive to social injustice and his descriptions of cheerless human destinies shed light on many typical aspects of life in those days.

The early collections of Vallak's stories in the mid-1920s contained tales that were prevalently gloomy and dramatically tense accounts of drastic events and situations presented in a restless style. It is often possible to detect a certain tendency

to accentuate the grotesqueness and strangeness of life and this strangeness sometimes becomes downright repellent. Originally Vallak's humour likewise had for the most part a touch of the grotesque, being a peculiar fusion of the comic and the dramatic. The characters in the short stories are representatives of the lower strata of society, as a rule people who have made a mess of their lives, including some morally degenerate, freakish types. It is especially in the collection "The Revolt of Brains" (1926) that evil, to a certain extent mysteriously incomprehensible and unmotivated wickedness, tends to overshadow the better side of human beings. The characters in these stories are people whose motives and occasionally even origin remain somewhat obscure: the author does not deem it necessary to initiate the reader into the sum-total of factors that have moulded their fate.

Later on, in the 1930s, Vallak's manner becomes more staid and the psychological analysis of his characters more thorough. In the stories he wrote at that time the characters are still largely human beings whose life has either proved a failure or is going wrong, but the difference is that now the causes are more clearly felt, viz. the hardships, lack of any prospects



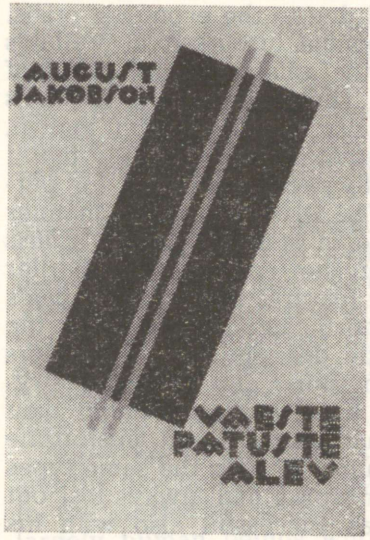
Peet Vallak

and sense of frustration that are all due to the economic crisis. The range of problems and phenomena discussed in Vallak's short stories grows broader and the relative significance of urban conditions of life increases. The behaviour of Vallak's characters becomes more realistically motivated and logical. The author also begins to take a greater interest in the moral evaluation of his characters, and to stress a striving for permanent values and ideals in life. The writer's realistic manner of depiction achieves a fine degree of stability, but it is less original than the often striking foreshortenings of his earlier period. New and interesting artistic features appear in Vallak's collection "Ribald Tales of Näps the Stealer of Sheep". In the stories of this collection the realistic description of characters and environment is combined with funny and fantastic fairy-tale-like motifs in the plot. With a more mellow humour than before, the author smiles at human fortune and misfortune alike, and contrives strange happenings to help the same types of human beings who in his earlier works had always lost out in the struggle of life. Vallak was successful also with his miniature stories. Here he skilfully used some trivial occurrence to reveal an essential feature of a character or to give broader resonance to something implied in the text.

P. Vallak's work is marked by a deep and compassionate interest in human nature and its various manifestations. He also had a gift for portraying characters with their inner contradictions and for representing conditions of life with the typical features of the period. Vallak's stories contain more than a mere reflection of reality and are evidence of the development of Estonian short prose towards greater artistic compactness and more profound realism.

August Jakobson. The prose authors who came to the fore in the latter half of the 1920s included A. Jakobson (1904—1963), a pioneer in the choice of literary subject-matter and a prolific as well as gifted epic writer, who was to become one of the most eminent men of letters in Soviet Estonia.

The young Jakobson made a surprise literary debut with a novel in two volumes called "The Poor Sinners" (1927), which immediately attracted widespread attention. The novel is a pitiless and outspoken exposure of life in the working-class suburbs in which the author himself grew up, a dismal story of the decline in the fortunes of a family as seen against a



"The Poor Sinners" (*cover by J. Vahtra, 1927*)

background of general misery. In its manner of treatment the novel leaned heavily towards naturalism. This was due both to the influence of E. Zola and to the wretchedness and brutality of the subject-matter dealt with. Because of the novelty of the theme, the work was well received by literary critics, although reviewers with left-wing convictions pointed out that the degeneration depicted by Jakobson could not be regarded as characteristic of the state of the Estonian working-class as a whole. At any rate "The Poor Sinners" gave literary prominence to a number of momentous social issues, it focussed attention on the class antagonisms that continued to simmer under the surface of the temporary stabilisation of the bourgeois power, and it revealed the discontent of the have-nots together with their pent-up hatred for the existing order.

After paving the way in Estonian literature for so-called realism of everyday life, Jakobson went on to produce a surprising total of seventeen volumes of novels and seven collections of short stories by 1940. Part of this large output was inevitably repetitive, full of mannerisms or otherwise of little interest. This is true above all of "The Ash-gray Horse", a

novel in four volumes, which deals with the same "poor sinners" environment in 1914—1918. Neither did Jakobson's three-volume novel about peasant life in the 19th century, "The Andruksons", with its biological-naturalistic trend, stand the test of time. The author did better in depicting contemporary events and his own immediate environment. His next novels dealt mainly with the life of intellectuals. "The Path of Three Troubles" deals with some of the psychological problems of love and marriage. A more outstanding novel is "The Old Guard" (1935), which tells the story of the moral ruin of some students given to aimless idling and carousing. In his following novels likewise ("The Path of the Beast", "The New Man") Jakobson undertook a critical examination of the spiritual impasse, be it a state of cynicism, hopelessness, a sense of frustration or discontent, of those intellectuals who remained aloof from democratic aspirations. The four volumes of "The Eternal Estonians" (1937—1940) is a step forward in the direction of a broader comprehension of life and social processes. This series of novels deals with the days of the First World War, and was directed (as is implied already by its ironical title) against the spineless time-serving of the Estonian bourgeoisie. In the last volume of the series, "The Snow Melts", the author comes round to an understanding of the decisive revolutionary role of the working-class.

It is possible to discern a gradual decrease in the relative importance of naturalistic elements in Jakobson's work, but his realism remained largely of the laboriously descriptive type, piling up minute details and recording the movement of events as if in slow motion. Strong biological-vitalistic elements continued to occur in his psychological studies. The cognitive side of Jakobson's works possibly profited from the concrete and detailed manner in which he described the environment, but because of their ponderous, clumsy and slow action, his novels did not make especially attractive reading.

The features mentioned above are less conspicuous in Jakobson's best stories, which constitute an artistically more compact and succinct part of his literary production. In the collections of stories that appeared in the early 1930s one finds reflections of the mood of the economic depression. Sombre colours predominate and there are many pictures of misery,



August Jakobson

hopelessness and despair. It is the outcasts of society that are chiefly in the centre of attention. The author depicts their fate with compassion and brings in an indictment, as it were, of the capitalist class. His general outlook remains pessimistic and he does not even attempt to suggest any way of escape. After the establishment of an authoritarian regime, when literature was expected to show patriotism and a "positive attitude", Jakobson reacted with an even sharper critical tone. In the collection of short stories "Private Soldier Mattias" (1935), the author set out to refute the myth of the heroism of the Whites in the civil war, and he drew drastic pictures of the rapacity of the proprietary instinct. In Jakobson's stories of the latter half of the 1930s it is also possible to discern a strengthening of the psychological approach, more attention being paid to the dialectics and emotional side of the human soul. The author's first plays which were staged at the time were also psychological in character. Social problems rose to the fore anew in connection with the political situation of 1939—1940, when on the eve of the socialist revolution, the author came out on the side of the new progressive forces and wrote about the return to their own class of intellectuals of working-class extraction.

It was as a short-story writer that Jakobson entered Soviet literature. Social ideas now began to play a much more prominent part in his work, whereas there are no significant changes in the writer's manner and style. Jakobson's aim is to depict the new and progressive forces in society, the moral growth and ideological tempering of people in the trying war years (in the collections of stories published during the war "In Fire and Blood", 1942, "The Path of Giants", 1944, and in the later collection "A Red-hot Day", 1949). These works were first major contributions to Estonian Soviet prose literature.

During the post-war period Jakobson concentrated mainly on writing for the theatre. He wrote a number of socio-political plays which were also meant to be read (the author himself called them dramatic narratives). The most popular of these were "Life in a Citadel" and "The Struggle without a Front-line" (both appeared in 1946). The first is directed against political indifference and the second depicts the irreconcilable class antagonisms rife within the bourgeois republic. Subsequently Jakobson wrote several plays about the problems of socialist reconstruction. He then dealt with the ideological struggle that was growing sharper between socialism and capitalism in the international field. In this connection Jakobson wrote a number of plays in which he ridiculed and satirised the capitalist world. A more notable work of the author's later period was "The Old Oak" (1954). This play is devoted to the conflict between rigid traditionalism and new trends in the field of science: an elderly academician, who has lost his sense of reality and who overrates his own role and former scientific achievements, sets himself against a forward-looking collective of research-workers. This headstrong and selfish attitude leads to the downfall of the "old oak".

Jakobson's extensive literary production in the pre-war period enriched the subject-matter and range of ideas of Estonian literature. As a Soviet author Jakobson laid emphasis — in accordance with the needs of the time — on a politically acute, irreconcilable and militant attitude towards everything that was old, reactionary, and hostile to the power of the working-class. In consequence Jakobson in post-war years became one of the most eminent dramatists in the whole of the Soviet Union, whose plays were also staged in other socialist countries.

August Mälk. The way of life of the inhabitants of the Estonian coast was first dealt with by J. Mändmets in the early decades of the 20th century. It was another writer from the island of Saaremaa A. Mälk (born in 1900) who achieved noteworthy results in the same field in the 1930s. It took Mälk a considerable amount of time to find his principal source of subject-matter and to develop an individual manner of treatment. The author emerged on the literary scene with several novels that were constructed after well-known literary models. He tried his hand at writing first in a neo-romantic impressionist and then in a naturalistic-pessimistic manner. Neither did he win general recognition with his first plays — topical comedies which were fairly widely staged, especially by amateur teatrical groups. Mälk found more solid and gratifying ground in the life of the inhabitants of his native coast. The novel "Stony Nest" (1932) already contained some evidence that the author had found his basic subject-matter.

Mälk gained widespread popularity with "Dead Houses" (1934), a historical novel which dealt with the period of the Northern War. Although the novel was not of the same quality as Metsanurk's "On the River Ümera", it nevertheless enriched Estonian literature with new material. In another historical novel, "Masters of the Baltic", published two years later, the author sought to glorify the Estonian viking age and the military prowess of the Estonian islanders in the 12th century. This novel had less literary merit and was inspired by the exaggerated nationalism which was being propagated by the authoritarian regime.

The most significant and characteristic part of Mälk's production consists of works about the life of people living on the coast. Special mention should be made of the novels "Flowering Sea" (1935), "Under the Face of the Sky" (1937), "The Good Harbour" (1942) and the collection "Seaside Stories" (1936). The author was obviously in his element when dealing with this subject-matter, a field in which he had no rival in Estonian literature in those days. With his descriptions of the austere and dangerous daily life of the hard-working population of the coast, the author succeeded in conveying their world-outlook and psychology, both of which differed considerably from those of town-dwellers and even of inland farmers. Among the secluded island fishermen Mälk found



August Mälk

convictions, attitudes and customs which had developed and survived over the centuries. As a result of their struggle against the sea and the elements as well as against perpetual poverty, the islanders had acquired a tenacity, a fine sense of solidarity, and a frank, unfeigned readiness to help their comrades. Mälk was especially captivated by old and worldly-wise, weather-beaten coast inhabitants, whose laconic and pithy speech often consists almost entirely of idiomatic locutions. Alongside a good knowledge of local conditions these works of the author also possess a certain tendency towards stylisation after the Scandinavian pattern. Nevertheless the author's endeavour to depict the moral strength, industry, and other sterling qualities of fisherfolk was one of the most attractive features of his work. Although they contain certain psychological cliches and occasional references to the nobleness of suffering which border on sentimentality (set against an overall background of external austerity), the prevailing tone of these works by Mälk is inspiring and healthy. More conspicuous than the tendency to idealise his characters (a tendency which was pointed out by the literary critics of the day) was the author's weak sense of social protest and the

compromising attitude of some of his characters. These latter features grew ever more marked in the writer's later books.

The world depicted in the works which Mälk wrote as an émigré in the post-war period is one of disillusionment and greatly changed attitudes. It is evident that the writer, who had hitherto drawn on his native shores for inspiration, now missed them badly. His train of thought turned to psychological symbolism and religion ("The Way to the Well"), and despite its sunny heading his narrative account of life on the coast ("Sun over the Village"), written on that side of the Baltic, is primarily but a collection of despondent scenes. In the novels "Toomas Tamm" and "Vernal Soil" the author lets his characters in pre-war Estonia or post-war Sweden pass through an ordeal of frustration and disappointments, losing their erstwhile hopes and illusions, reaching a stage where they believe they have attained the limit of their endurance, only to let them discover their own true self, and their place among other similar suffering fellow-beings. In comparison with the preceding period the author has perhaps become somewhat more discerning and he delves deeper into the underlying layers of life and human existence. At the same time, however, a fatalistic attitude to life becomes dominant. The latter trait is characteristic also of the short stories the author published as an émigré (the collection "The Fire in Thy Hand", 1953). At any rate it is Mälk's pre-war works that continue to be appreciated by readers in Estonia mainly because of the feeling of intimacy the author succeeds in conveying for his native shores and their inhabitants, his native sea and sky.

Other prose writers. In addition to the outstanding prose writers dealt with above, attention should be drawn to several other authors of the period who also made an extensive and varied contribution to Estonian literature.

Karl August Hindrey (1875—1947) came to the fore as a short story writer in the 1930s alongside P. Vallak and A. Jakobson. He made his debut as an elderly man with several works that displayed both literary maturity and individuality. Hindrey went on to publish a number of collections of short stories which attracted attention with their subtle psychological observations and fine narrative quality. As regards his world outlook and treatment of life Hindrey was one of the most conservative writers of the period and he often tended to go

to extremes in his individualist and egocentric haughtiness. At the same time there was something undeniably impressive in his intellectually aristocratic attitude and emphasis on moral values, especially when viewed against the general background of levelling-out tendencies characteristic of the period. The subject-matter of Hindrey's short stories is for the most part drawn directly from the author's own rich store of experience. His favourite character is either a self-confident, supercilious and elderly gentleman, given to reasoning, or a worldly-wise and resigned reteller of past events. Hindrey's attitude towards contemporary society was for the most part very critical, especially as regards the educational-ethical aspect. He was equally annoyed by the uncouthness of the villager and the prim gentility of the upstart. His critical mind very skilfully singled out every possible manifestation of coarseness, pretence and insincerity in emotions and behaviour. Hindrey was particularly intolerant of snobbishness although the attitudes that he struck were themselves sometimes dangerously close to snobbery. In his romantically-flavoured historical novels and tales the author gave expression to his ideas concerning the history of his people before they were subjected to foreign domination, and he attempted to create a grander and more stirring canvas of the viking age in Estonia. Hindrey also wrote for children and adolescents.

In his literary works Karl Rumor (born 1886) regarded people as motivated chiefly by passion and lust, and he also expressed his disillusionment and scepticism with regard to all attempts to reform and improve the existing state of affairs. Rumor dealt with erotic themes in the manner of D'Annunzio and Schnitzler, and tended (especially in the 1920s) towards extreme naturalism and cynicism. He also seemed to take an embittered pleasure in depicting human meanness and moral degradation. Parallel with such vigorous and even repellent works the author revealed himself as a pure neo-romanticist in works that he wrote in a wistfully poetic manner tending towards symbolism. It is characteristic of Rumor's impulsive and eccentric personality as a writer that he constantly vacillated between moods of voluptuous ecstasy, revulsion and ascetic self-denial. In his later life as an émigré Rumor wrote "The Crucifix" (1960), a novel whose plot is laid in Brazil — depicting the frenzied excesses of religious fanati-

cism —, and which may be regarded as a peculiar synthesis of the author's literary career.

Albert K i v i k a s (born in 1898) made his way into literature with stories of rural life and war. After some futuristic experiments undertaken mainly in an attempt to produce a sensation, the author turned to the changes under way in the countryside in the early years of the bourgeois state (the novel "St. George's Day", 1921). The author attracted attention with his characters, the topicality of the problems raised, and his exuberantly naturalistic depiction of life. Kivikas fought in the civil war and the latter occupies a dominant place in his writings. The author's initial expressionistic pacifism, the exposure of the horrors of war and of the hero legend, were subsequently developed in several realistic short stories (collection "Red and White", 1927), where the writer tried to shed light on the primeval motives of violence and power-seeking which impelled people of either camp at the time of war and revolution. In the novel "Names on a Marble Slab" (1936), which deals with the experiences of schoolboy volunteers in the civil war, the central figure is a pacifist youth who half-accidentally finds himself on the side of the Whites, and who wavers between socialism and nationalistic ideals. Kivikas began his career as a writer with marked left-wing leanings, but he then became a supporter of the authoritarian regime, and later he actually collaborated with the fascist invaders. As an émigré he has continued his reactionary activities.

Richard R o h t (1891—1950) began his literary activity as a writer of short stories in a neo-romanticist, impressionist and symbolist manner. His earlier work was also characterised by a keen appreciation of nature and an endeavour to imitate the frame of mind of Knut Hamsun. Beginning with the 1920s Roht became a novelist and produced a total of twenty books. A frequently recurring theme in his novels is that of the intellectual who becomes disillusioned with civilisation and who withdraws into the lap of nature, i.e. the theme of the contrast between a healthy country environment and the evils and degeneration of urban life. In a number of books R. Roht's account of the seamy side of contemporary society confined itself to piling up scenes of depravity and vice, and the result was that such books sank to the level of chatty entertainment fiction. R. Roht's best society-criticising novels ("On the Path

of Struggle", 1933; "The Blind Alley", 1937; "The Course of Life", 1938) contain realistic pictures of the oppressive circumstances prevailing in the bourgeois republic, and it is with sympathy that they describe the struggle for existence of representatives of the poorer sections of society.

Mihkel Jürna (born in 1899) and Johannes Ruven (1902—1942) made a modest contribution to the literature of the period under discussion with their socially critical short stories. In expressing his dissatisfaction with and indignation at social injustice Jürna tended to pile up naturalistic illustrations of the iniquities and vices of life. Somewhat better are those stories in which he employed an element of satire, and presented his characters in a grotesque and caricatured light. The characters in the works of Ruven are, for the most part, people who have been humiliated and insulted, occasionally also persons whose hopelessness and desperation is depicted with a sympathy bordering on pessimism or resignation.

Enn Kippel (1901—1942) perished during the blockade of Leningrad in the last war. He gained widespread popularity in the 1930s with his lengthy novels based on Estonian history and marked by a strong anti-war attitude. E. Kippel also published two novels dealing with contemporary life in which he described the dehumanising effect of the power of money and the lust for property.

Jüri Parijõgi (1892—1941) was an outstanding writer of stories for the young. With his humour, childlike manner of thought and use of language in his better books he succeeded in producing true-to-life and unadorned pictures of life.

The novels and stories of Pedro Krusten (born in 1897) revealed a tendency to examine unusual human types and extraordinary traits in ordinary people. In his stories Juhan Jaik (1899—1948) combined a naturalistically exuberant depiction of rural life with elements of popular fantasy. Leida Kibuvits (born in 1907) attracted attention as a keen observer of life and humorous story-teller.

A number of significant prose writers appeared during the period under review. Rudolf Sirge, Mart Raud and Erni Krusten became known already in the 1920s. They were joined in the 1930s by Aadu Hint and Karl Ristikivi. All these writers, however, produced the more important part of their work in the next period.

Beginning with the revolutionary year 1917, poetry became dominant in Estonian literature. A number of new talents made their debut with collections of verse. They included Marie Under, Henrik Visnapuu, Johannes Semper, August Alle, Artur Adson, Jaan Kärner, Johannes Barbarus, Hendrik Adamson. In the days of the *Siuru* group love and nature lyrics had prevailed. The verse of that time contained much that was novel, youthfully straightforward and poetically original, but it soon became inevitable for such a remoteness from time to be abandoned and for a feeling of social responsibility to be revived. An awareness of the contradictions and tragedy of the period penetrated poetry which now became unsettled in form and began to draw on an extreme range of figurative imagery. This marks the beginning of a period of topical verse or so-called songs of the time which covered the years 1919—1923.

The principal features of this topical verse were, on the one hand, its attention to the sharp contrasts and discords within reality, the outspoken condemnation of the senselessness and inhumanity of war, a sarcastic attitude to the prevailing upstart elements in society, and, on the other hand, an emphasis on humanism as well as spirituality, and an appeal for moral regeneration. Such a complex frame of mind had been instilled in the poets by actual life itself and it was in turn encouraged by the example of German expressionist poetry. The topical poems of the time were characterised by a propagandist-declamatory and rationally schematising manner, a formulaic emphasis on the essential aspects of phenomena, and by the categorical nature of the judgements they contained. The attainment of an effect was sought chiefly through the piling up of allegorical-symbolic motifs as well as of the devices of pathetic rhetoric. The lyrical hero was usually an intellectual who addresses himself to the masses or speaks in their name, whose attitude to life has developed on the basis of humanistic traditions, and who emphasises the strength of the human spirit in solving complicated social problems. Since all this remained utopian against the background of the harsh contradictions and violent class struggle of the period, poets soon became disillusioned and were led to introversion, while

abstract moralising and moods of melancholy and despair replaced an earlier prophetic tone.

In the mid-twenties the treatment of social topics grew somewhat less acute as the belief in the efficacy of poetic appeals in refashioning life declined. A broader conception of life and a more personal approach takes over. In poetry it is possible to discern a diversification of themes and a greater attention to the depiction of actual life. Both these developments are indicative of the rise of a realistic trend and they were attended by a decline in the use of grandiloquent, pathetic and declaratory language. More reliance was placed on direct experience and as a result lyric poetry became more subjective and individual as well as more simple and popular in expression. In comparison with the preceding period poetic self-cognition grows deeper, the contradictions of life and the age were dealt with in a more subdued and at the same time in a more versatile manner. In contemplative verse social scepticism and sometimes even pessimism prevailed. On the other hand, however, there was a striving to discover the values of life in the plenitude of human feelings, in nature and in travel experiences. There was much evidence of poetic self-analysis and the torment of inner conflict. A recurring feature of the poems of the period is that of discordant patriotic feelings: love for the native land confronts dissatisfaction with existing conditions and a sense of protest against the bourgeois state. Juhan Sütiste, Erni Hiir and Valmar Adams were the most promising of the new authors who published their first verse collections at this time.

Despite its increasing individuality and more profound realism, poetry aroused less interest among the reading public towards the end of the 1920s because of the steady rise in popularitiy of the novel. As social problems grew sharper, critical notes once again became more frequent. If in the meanwhile poets had remained aloof from social strife, then now their sense of civic responsibility is reinforced and they seek closer ties with the life of the people. Most of the poetry of the time is characterised by an increasing democratisation of the poet's world outlook, defiance of conventional bourgeois views, and critically keen generalisations based on scenes of social injustice. The better part of the artistically mature poetry of the time draws freely on the subject-matter and relations of actual life.

At the beginning of the 1930s the realistic trend and the growth of social activity continued. In the conditions of a crisis in the economy and in the internal situation generally, poets turned their attention to social phenomena and tendencies. From the depiction of the injustice and misery rampant on every hand there developed a violent criticism of the existing way of life. This criticism sometimes took the form of uncompromising condemnation and occasionally a growing sense of solidarity with the working-people found expression even in poetic appeals that had a revolutionary resonance (J. Barbarus, J. Sütiste, and J. Kärner). With the poets' interest in everyday life and the working man the theme of labour occurs more frequently in verse. In a few cases, however, the poeticisation of labour lacked social concreteness and obviously led some authors astray. Alongside verse about social subjects nature lyrics also continued to be produced, and they, too, were often associated with the theme of human suffering. The structure of verse was marked by a continuing pursuit of simplicity and clarity in the choice of imagery — a feature typical of realism on the whole. There also was a striving for a natural manner of expression and the use of popular diction.

In the suddenly changed circumstances that followed the coup d'état of 1934, the spirit of struggle and protest against the existing way of life could not but flag. Moods of dissatisfaction and opposition now had to be expressed in an indirect and allegorical or pointedly subjective form. Democratic and humanist ideas could be conveyed more directly in anti-fascist and anti-war verse dealing with international subject-matter (J. Semper, A. Alle, J. Barbarus, J. Kärner, J. Sütiste, E. Hiir etc.). At the same time there was more evidence of the influence of the conceptions of "national unity" propagated by the ruling circles. Such an influence was conspicuous mainly in the case of authors who had already earlier shown a leaning in this direction. Generally speaking, it was contemplative verse that gained ground at the time. The principal themes in this connection were those of anxiety for the destiny of the native land and of the world at large, the search for truth and integrity, the difficulties of spiritual self-realisation. These themes were frequently associated with a lyrical approach to nature. The epic element also became more important in poetry. A classically clear verse structure was now preferred

even by poets who had earlier tended to experiment in matters of form.

The overall picture of Estonian verse in the 1930s was affected by a marked change within the ranks of poets as regards their composition and relative importance. The creative activity of the generation of poets who emerged after the revolution of 1917 had already declined perceptibly. Of those who had appeared in Estonian poetry in the 1920s the most prolific was J. Sütiste, a representative of the realist trend. V. Adams and M. Raud already stood essentially closer in their work to the new generation of poets that was attracting an ever-increasing amount of attention. Among the young lyricists who published their first verse collections in the middle or the latter half of the 1930s, we find Heiti Talvik, Bernard Kangro, Betti Alver, August Sang, Kersti Merilaas, and others. In 1938 a bulky anthology of their verse appeared under the heading "The Soothsayers". This collection provided the generic name for the new trend in poetry and helped to bring out the features which the authors had in common. In comparison with the realism of earlier verse these young poets strove for greater intellectual and emotional intensity. With its emphasis on the independence of the individual this new poetry found itself in opposition with the official mentality and it came out against the encroachment of levelling-out tendencies, undemocratic views, and anti-humanistic forces. The harsh conflict between ideals and reality introduced some tragic notes into poetry; a defiant attitude and appeals for vigilance and resistance to the erosion of spiritual values were often tinged with scepticism and obsessive pessimism. The service of art regardless of the oppressive tendencies of the time was the principal aim of these poets and they strove to achieve a classical discipline of form, fullness and clarity of treatment, efficacy and freshness of imagery, as well as purity and ease of utterance.

Taken as a whole, Estonian poetry at the time was copious as well as artistically diverse, and the most outstanding authors added works of lasting value to the stock of national literature.

Marie Under. The development of M. Under (born in 1883) as a poet was a fairly lengthy process. She contributed already to the "*Noor-Eesti*" album and journal. Although some of her poems aroused interest, most of the work of this formative



Marie Under

period remained unknown to the public. It was only in the days of the *Siuru* group that Under published three collections of verse in succession and immediately became a central figure in the literary life of the country.

There is hardly any other book of verse which has caused such a storm of controversy between ardent supporters and

indignant opponents, as Under's first collection "Sonnets". If it were especially the young intellectuals who waxed enthusiastic over the poet's infectious vitality, the extraordinary wealth of colour and imagery of her nature lyrics, her exuberant sensuality and eroticism unbridled by the bonds of conventionality, then the conservative and genteel sections of society were shocked by the author's "immorality". Although in reality Under's love poetry did not represent a deliberate challenge to decency, the overflowing *joie de vivre*, thirst for beauty and intoxication with happiness did have the effect of a peculiar protest against the dullness of everyday life and the hypocrisy of the poet's own earlier environment. At the same time the public was surprised by the high poetic quality of this first collection of verse, by its vivid images, and, finally, also by its strict discipline of form which confined emotional exuberance to the exacting genre of the sonnet.

The verse collection "Sonnets" together with "First Flowering" (containing poems from earlier years) and "The Azure Sail" (1918) constitute the first stage in Under's production. They are characterised by the prevalence of love and nature lyrics, a certain neo-romantic aestheticism, and a tendency to use images for a purely decorative purpose. All the momentous events of the period were overshadowed by accounts of intimate experiences, selected landscape motifs, the profusion of flowers in cultivated gardens, and alluring descriptions of boudoirs. The poems of Under at that time were not concerned with social topics. Like other writers of the *Siuru* group, however, Under soon inevitably found her way to social experiences, to the realities of contemporary life shaken by the World War, revolutions and civil war, to human suffering and social injustice — much of which seemed quite appalling to the poet because of its incomprehensibility. Under was directly influenced by German expressionist poets (Georg Heym, Franz Werfel, Ernst Stadler, Walter Hasenclever), whom she read extensively and a selection of whose verse she translated into Estonian. The frame of mind underlying the author's poetic world changed thoroughly: the joyful exuberance characteristic of her youthful lyrics was replaced by oppressive anxiety and harassing inner conflict, moods of destruction, hopelessness and death; the ecstasy of pleasure was replaced by that of moral self-improvement and spiritual redemption (the col-

lections "Bleeding Wound", 1920 and "The Heritage", 1923). Corresponding changes also took place in tonality and the choice of imagery, in accordance with an expressionistic approach the piling-up of tropes alternated with a somewhat abstract pathetic manner, the structure of verse became nervously jerky and brittle. The poet's compassion for those who suffered was sincere but feeble. In her production this was something of a transitional stage which did not yield any work of great artistic merit. But the addition of an ethic element to the aesthetic deepened the author's vision of life and strengthened her ability to comprehend everything human in its inner dialectics. A new hope for the future was kindled in the poetess as a result of her feeling of affinity to fellow human beings and an all-embracing apprehension of universality.

It was thus that Under reached the classical period of her literary career, a period which saw the coalescence of subjective and objective elements, of philosophical thought and a striving for depth of vision, of rich imagery and freshness of wording, of poetic virtuosity and a highly-developed sense of verse structure. This poetry is not less intense emotionally than before, but considerably richer and more comprehensive. The representation of the outer world has more meaning, while experience and its depiction have become fused into a united and impressive whole. These qualities may be seen in the verse collections "A Voice from the Shadows" (1927) and "Delight in a Beautiful Day" (1928), the first of which concentrates on sombre and melancholy scenes and experiences, whereas the second contains poems inspired by the joys of life. These two collections highlight the contrast in the approach to life of poems that were completed at more or less the same time and they include some of the poet's most influential and artistically flawless work. If in one collection the awareness of the limitations of human existence, of hardship and senselessness occasionally attains a nightmarish quality of despair and visions of death, then the other collection gives expression to the thoughtful and balanced affirmation of life on the part of a mature human being transfigured as a result of various ordeals, to sage tenderness and the appreciation of the simple pleasures of earthly existence. Here the poet already deliberately refrains from the use of merely decorative wording, from the accumulation of similes and metaphors. The real-

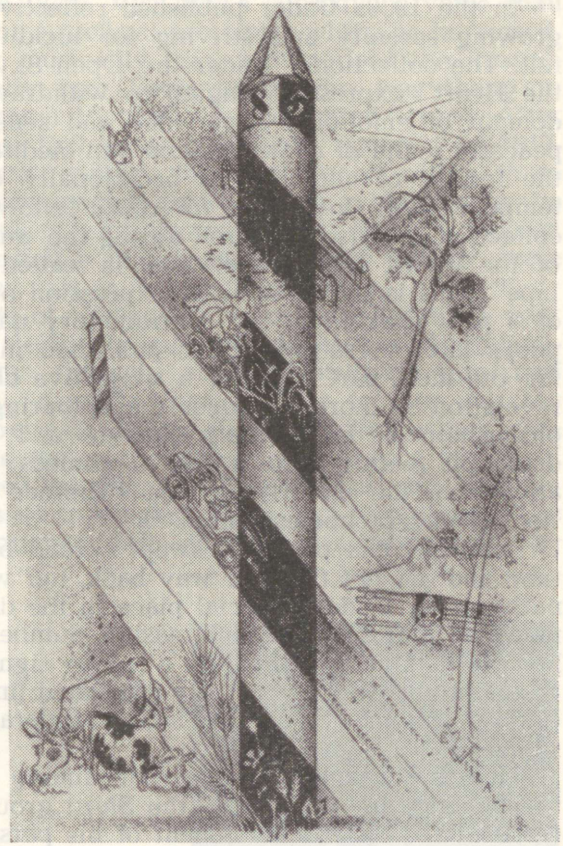


Illustration to the collection of poems "Delight in a Beautiful Day" (*E. Viiralt, 1928*)

istic figurativeness that is achieved is both convincing and highly suggestive. In addition to lyric poetry Under also wrote several ballads at that time which were based on folk-tales and legends (the collection "Eclipse of Happiness", 1929), and these are added proof of the poet's rich imagination and her mastery of the means of poetic expression. In keeping with the genre the themes and motifs are dramatic in character with fate casting its sombre shadow over man's life, aspirations and yearning for happiness.

In the 1930s Under published reflective verse in which a growing serenity and striving for lucidity make themselves felt. The collections "Under the Open Sky" and "A Stone off the Heart" express a longing to withdraw from the agitated domain of emotional experience and sensations into a more peaceful realm of contemplation and meditation. But even here the feeling of happiness is occasionally overcast and joy is tempered with heartache for one's fellow-men. Under's next collection of verse appeared during the war (1942), at the time of the fascist occupation, and is called "With Sorrowing Lips". This is the pessimistic expression of the tragic feelings of a poet shaken by the contradictory nature of events. The poet's later verse collections published in emigration contain for the most part lyrics of a subjective character where self-revelation is more subdued, the colouring often deliberately old-fashioned, the wording simpler and more laconic. The dominant feeling here is one of aimless somnambulism and alienation, the underlying idea (whether explicitly stated or not) is that of homesickness.

Although the poet was swept abroad by the storms of the time and did not find her way back, her work lives on in her native land. Under's special place in the development of Estonian literature and the increasing number of translations of her poems give her life-work a lasting significance. The poetry of Under has been extensively translated (into Russian, German, English, French, Swedish, Finnish, Esperanto, and other languages).

Henrik Visnapuu. Another outstanding lyric poet who rose to eminence in the days of the *Siuru* group was H. Visnapuu (1890—1951). The development of his personality as a poet is extremely contradictory and inconstant even if viewed against the background of what was a troubled and contradictory age. Impulsive by temperament, spontaneous as a writer, and often also equally unstable in his aspirations and beliefs, Visnapuu conveys in his verse an intensity of endeavour and doubt, a sense of the conflict, tragic duality and discord within everything that exists.

Having made his debut as a poet before the First World War, the young Visnapuu turned under the influence of Russian modernistic poetry from epigonic romanticism to experiments of a symbolist and later of a cubo-futurist character.

Of greater influence upon Visnapuu's subsequent verse than the motifs or even the structural principles which he borrowed, was the striving for musicality that characterised the Russian modernists (especially Igor Severyanin, who was living in Estonia, and with whom Visnapuu was on good terms). After the publication of his first verse collection "Amores" in 1917, Visnapuu brought out another four collections within three years. These collections constitute a uniform cycle despite the variety of their content and manner. They were composed on the thematic principle and contain poems which were written for the most part in 1914—1920.

Among the merits of Visnapuu's verse were from the very beginning the plasticity of its imagery and its melodious quality (attained chiefly through sound instrumentation and frequent repetitions). Another characteristic feature was the use of emotional contrasts. In his first collection which consisted of love lyrics the poet ranges from devout moods of yearning to unbridled passion, through cynical and blasphemous verses he passes to elegiac tones and resignation. The next collections contained both discreet and refreshing per-



Henrik Visnapuu

sonal lyrics ("Farewell, Ene!" and "The Meadow Violet") as well as extremely rude and shocking sensuality ("Silver Sleigh-bells"). The poet was even more contradictory in his poems on topics of the day (the collection "The Height of Winter"). Here one finds sincere suffering for the bloody and cruel events of the time, the torment of a rent world outlook and the anguish of inner conflict (although sometimes worded in an uncongruously songlike and playful manner), but also a more distinct leaning towards the bourgeois treatment of patriotism than is the case with other poets of the generation.

In the verse collections which appeared in the following period covering the years 1925—1932, there prevails a sombre and pessimistic self-analysis, a disillusionment with earlier half-truths and current truths, a growing tendency towards fatalism. The theme of the native land (in the collection "Song about Maarjamaa"*), a theme always so painfully dear to the poet's heart, remains in many ways discordant. It is in vain that Visnapuu seeks a compromise between nationalistic declarations and the dissatisfaction engendered by the realities of the bourgeois republic. The author's increasing resignation, mournful sadness and attitude of a passive on-looker was attended by the use of a more abstract, ponderous and hazy poetic diction. Brighter and gayer notes occur in Visnapuu's nature lyrics (in the collection "The Sun and the River") which are remarkable for their directness, emotionality and realistic maturity. On the whole, however, the 1930s saw a steady decline in the extent and quality of Visnapuu's hitherto intensive activity as a poet. His novel in verse about the civil war "The Shadow of Satan" is thoroughly pro-bourgeois. In the collection of ballads "The Northern Lights" the religious element is very conspicuous. The poet who had once been so rebellious and defiant of conventions had actually become a conservative as a result of his increasingly close ties with the ruling bourgeoisie. It was a logical consequence that the vortex of events drew him into emigration. As an émigré he joined the most reactionary circles and wrote hysterically anti-Soviet propaganda verse in addition to some extremely despondent personal lyrics.

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* *Maarjamaa* = Virgin Mary's Country. In the Middle Ages Estonia was thus called by the Catholic Church.

It is the early period of Visnapuu's production that is significant for Estonian poetry. At that time the author created much that was both novel and poetically unique. This contribution had an important influence on the general development of poetry and ensured a lasting place for Visnapuu in the history of literature. The author's subsequent regression and the fact that he finally ended up in an impasse highlighted the contradictory and unstable elements in the output of a poet who underwent a complicated process of inner change.

Johannes Barbarus. Like the other prominent poets of the period under discussion, J. Barbarus (1890—1946) made his debut in the publications of the *Noor-Eesti* group, and began his literary career as an admirer of neo-romanticism. Already as a young man Barbarus was conspicuous for a rebellious spirit of protest against everything that was stagnant or that hampered human progress. It was to this inherent scorn for conformity that experience later added a broadly humanistic and materialistic world outlook, a democratic attitude, and a profound hatred of war. At the same time Barbarus took a special interest in the latest trends in art and literature on an international scale. He kept abreast of these newest developments by reading and frequent travel. With something of an experimenter's passion he also sought to adapt and make use of these models in his own work. It is thus that he came to be known as a restless and indefatigable explorer of new ideas and artistic horizons, although his aesthetic aspirations did not always meet with sufficient understanding among the reading public.

A characteristic feature of Barbarus's earlier poetry was its somewhat shocking sensuality, its defiant negation of established moral standards. The influence of Russian symbolists and akhmeists is obvious here and a great deal in this connection is merely the result of literary fashion. The poet himself soon felt the incongruity of such an approach and in a third volume of poems "Disasters" (1920) he found his way to social problems and an expressionist manner. In the days of the *Tarapita* group Barbarus became one of the leading writers of publicistic poems of protest, a herald of justice and humaneness, and one of the most enraged critics of petty-bourgeois mentality. His ponderously rude wording, his *vers libre* with its affinity to the intonations of speech and cumulative use of



Johannes Barbarus

images (in the collection "Relations", 1922) was appreciably more in keeping with the spirit of the time and the author's own inclinations. It was addressed above all to the progressive intellectuals in whose spiritual struggle the poet at that time saw the principal promise of a better future. Barbarus, defiant of everything traditional, now turned to intellectual experimentation with verse forms. Following the example mainly of modern French lyricists (G. Apollinaire, B. Cendrars, F. Divoire, etc.), he gravitated towards cubism and constructivism, and sought to find polyphonic solutions in verse. Although the poet retained his radical view of life, the social appeal of his work decreased during this period of experimentation.

Barbarus achieved a more personal synthesis at the end of the 1920s and in the early 1930s. His verse retained its intellectual and ironical-polemical manner, and he continued to regard the destruction of established ideas as the principal aim of poetry, but at the same time his socially very intense poetry had become simpler in structure and its artistic concreteness had increased. His pictures of life were no longer

confined to the descriptive level, but they reflected social and philosophical meditations, a striving for generalisation and criticism of the period. The poet took an uncompromising stand against all manifestations of fascism and thus he arrived at a negation of the bourgeois world order (the collection "The Focus", 1934).

Barbarus did not change his attitude of opposition under the authoritarian regime either and sought to express it mainly by means of symbols and allegories, through social implication. In the last of his verse collections published in bourgeois Estonia, under such significant titles as "Fishes on Dry Land" (1937) and "Crossing the Threshold" (1939), the role of images grew more important and their cognitive substance increased, the overall impression being one of realism. In his contemplative verse the poet is frequently ironical, sometimes even showing a tendency to be grotesque or paradoxical. As a poet of social strife Barbarus expressed the most radical views possible in the legal press, and he now became conscious of his complete solidarity with the class that was fighting for a new social order.

The poet's production in the Soviet period is organically linked with his preceding evolution as a writer. Barbarus held responsible offices of state in Soviet Estonia and was at the same time one of the most eminent poets of the country. In his poems he called on his readers to take part in the construction of a new life and later in the war years he wrote numerous patriotic and anti-fascist poems (the collections "Armed Verses", 1943 and "On the Roads at the Front", 1944). Laying particular emphasis on the communicative function of verse, the poet endeavoured to achieve greater closeness to the people; at the same time his intellectual and publicistic manner was enriched with emotional notes.

In the development of Estonian poetry Barbarus occupies a permanent place as an innovator and author who wrote dynamic reflective poems and publicistic verse. The significance of his attitude as a fighter and of his function as a vigorous and indefatigable searcher for new creative approaches has become increasingly more manifest with the passage of time.

Johannes Semper. For decades J. Semper (1892—1970) played a prominent part in Estonian literature. He was a versatile and gifted man of letters, an organiser of literary

life, well-versed in the arts; he was not only a poet and prose writer, but also an essayist and dramatist, a literary scholar and prolific translator who did much to promote relations with literary circles abroad. Since 1917 he continuously belonged to the democratic vanguard of literature and his progressive views helped him in finding his way as a writer through an age full of contradictions and crises.

The influence of French and Russian symbolists as well as the pursuit of pure art characterise the preparatory period of Semper's literary career (from the publication of his first poems in the "*Noor-Eesti*" journal in 1910 to the appearance of his first collection of poems, stories and essays at the time of the *Siuru* group). The neo-romantic verse that Semper wrote in those days was largely the fruit of so-called secondary inspiration derived from literature, music and the theatre (motifs of the *commedia dell'arte*). The author endeavoured to capture fleeting impressions and to describe them by means of moderately stylised and intellectually restrained symbolic imagery.

In the poems he wrote at the time of the civil war Semper began to show an interest in the class conflict and tragedy of the period. Visions of death and destruction with traces of



Johannes Semper

the figurative language of expressionism find their way into his verse. In the verse collections that followed in the 1920s the poet abandons a narrowly subjective and aesthetic manner remote from life and finds more immediate points of contact with the diversity of the surrounding world. As a representative of the intellectual opposition which disapproved of the upstart bourgeoisie, he gave expression in his verses to a sense of social injustice, to anxiety for the welfare of his people, and to an urge for broader spiritual horizons.

Semper lived for years in some of the major cities of Western Europe and he introduced much new material into Estonian literature with his attempts to render in verse something of the contrasts and variety of the hectic life pulsing through a great metropolis. The collections "The Five Senses" (1926) and "The Sun in the Gutter" (1930) are full of the realistic joy of knowledge, the enthusiasm that attends a broad comprehension of the diversity of throbbing life. The tendency to delve into the deeper philosophical significance of his subject-matter is characteristic not only of Semper's urbanistic verse but also of his nature and love lyrics, and it provided his poetry with a special spiritual pointedness.

In the collection "The Wind-Driven Toy" (1936) all personal experiences have been given a powerful social resonance. As the political skies became more and more overcast, thoughts of home and the native land acquired an increasingly serious and almost painful intonation. Another aspect of Semper's poetry at the time was his satirically expressed protest against all attempts at mental regimentation and his uncompromisingly hostile attitude to fascist regimes. It was the poet's aim to keep alive the belief in the power of free human thought and in the ultimate victory of democratic aspirations. As the author grew socially more active, his poetry gained clarity of thought, precision of expression, and poetic cogency.

In addition to his poetry Semper also wrote works of prose. His earlier psychological short stories dealt mainly with the experiences of young intellectuals. The author was more successful with his stories in which he depicted the upstart bourgeoisie in the distorting mirror of irony. These two principal lines of interest were reflected also in Semper's novels. On the one hand there was "Jealousy" (1934), a novel in the

tradition of depth psychology, which sought with clinical precision to record and analyse every subtle shade of feeling and every element of jealousy. On the other hand, "Stone upon Stone" (1939) is a novel with a distinctly social background about the life of intellectuals. The underlying ideas of this novel are the poeticisation of creative work and a critical attitude towards bourgeois society in which intellectuals feel inhibited and cramped whenever they undertake any more ambitious tasks.

Semper also wrote many essays which reflect his wide artistic interests and absorption with problems of the theatre, music and the fine arts. These interests of his enabled him to take a broader aesthetic view of literary phenomena. By dealing with the essence of different literary trends, the works of eminent foreign men of letters (Verhaeren, Whitman; Gide in 1920s, and other recent French authors) as well as of Estonian writers, Semper helped to extend literary horizons and to raise the level of literary thought. His prolific work as a translator of world literature also served the same aims. Semper's travel letters were of much help in acquainting the Estonian reader with artistic and literary activities in various European countries. In these letters Semper described his own impressions of the cultural heritage of foreign nations and his personal contacts with contemporary literary celebrities (especially at P.E.N. Club congresses.)

Semper's consistently democratic purpose and anti-fascist attitude brought him nearer to an understanding of the importance of the international labour movement and to the adoption of a socialist path for the future. In Soviet Estonia he was from the very beginning a leading figure in educational and artistic life. Semper was also an outstanding personality who embodied the continuity between the aspirations of the older generation of democratic intellectuals and present-day socialist culture. His wartime collections of verse "One Cannot Remain Silent" (1943) is a sequel to and extension of his earlier anti-fascist verse. In 1958 he published a collection "How Would You Live?" in which he showed himself to be a poet with a profound sense of civic duty, a writer who took a keen and youthful interest in contemporary life. In his novel "Red Carnations" (1955) the author makes use of an intellectual setting to depict the complicated as well as tense ideological

and political situation in Estonia in 1939—1940. In addition during the Soviet period Semper published several plays, a number of new travel letters, and continued his work as a translator. A cultural figure of great erudition and a writer who endeavoured to comprehend the basic tendencies of his age, J. Semper fulfilled an important role in contemporary Estonian literature and exerted a profound influence on the development of the creative ideals of young writers.

Jaan Kärner (1891—1958) in known chiefly for his nature lyrics, but he also produced poetry directed against social injustice, several novels and plays, and a number of critical writings. His earlier poems which were published before the First World War are marked by literary *Weltschmerz* and epigonic despair. His second collection of poems "In the Earthly Cycle" (1919) already contains some fine nature lyrics and it is also here that the author declared his intention of turning to social problems. The collection "Songs of the Time" (1921) is made up largely of expressionist social verse. With his attacks on the unjust social order and the upstart bourgeoisie, and in particular with his outspoken support for the struggle of the working-class (the cycles "About a Recent Truth" and "Songs for Russia"), Kärner was the most radical poet in bourgeois Estonia in those days.

Subsequently the poet abandoned social topics in disillusionment; a pessimistic and embittered tone taking over as he engaged in introspection. In "Bianka and Ruth", a novel in verse (incidentally the first of its kind in Estonian literature), the lyrical descriptions of nature are a more salient structural feature than the philosophy of life and underlying love story of the book. The principal themes of the novel recur in a variety of forms in three collections of verse that Kärner published in the second half of the 1920s: "Harvest Month", "Flowering Autumn" and "The Wanderer Whistles". Meditations and moods in a predominantly elegiac key and associated with scenes of nature prevail in these poems. Kärner's landscapes are usually rendered in pastel shades and blending water-colour hues. A stylising manner was also successfully employed in some poems. The merits of this verse include its popular simplicity and melodiousness.

At the turn of the decade a new attitude of violent opposition and struggle appears in Kärner's work. This new attitude



Jaan Kärner

is especially conspicuous in "A Woman from the World of the Poor" (1930), a novel which deals with the revolutionary and civil war period from a proletarian viewpoint, and in the collection of poems called "The Man at the Cross-roads" (1932). If already in his preceding collection "Lyre of the Storm" the poet had drawn attention to the contrasts of life in bourgeois Estonia, then now he quite openly voices the grievances of the working-people. From depictions of social misery and human suffering he moves on to appeals calling upon the oppressed to destroy their fetters and to win the right to a life worthy of human beings.

Then, however, Kärner temporarily lost his way ideologically and politically. Some of his novels of the period were socially critical in character, but there were others in which the author tended to embellish the historic role of the bourgeoisie. Of relatively greater artistic value are some purely autobiographical works. In his verse collections which appeared in the late 1930s one finds a dissonance between the lyrical and the ironical that is reminiscent of Heine. Nevertheless, there is also room for tender memories of the author's

home and for anxious reflections about the dangers threatening the world. The only gleam of light in the stifling and oppressive situation is the reviving hope that a new, better and more just social order will ultimately emerge from the imminent cataclysm.

Kärner's activity as a literary critic is noteworthy, all the more so because especially in the 1930s his aesthetic views developed under the influence of the Soviet treatment of literature. The author's numerous critical articles are characterised by support for a realistic and democratic line of development. Towards the end of the bourgeois republic Kärner's treatment of the social function of literature and of various specific problems was essentially Marxist in character.

As a logical consequence of his evolution as a writer, in 1940 Kärner came out on the side of the revolution. In his poems he welcomed the victory of the working class and the admission of Estonia into the USSR. These declarations in verse form were followed by detailed accounts of life in the Soviet Union during the war when he was one of the leading Soviet Estonian poets (the collections "The Behest of the Homeland", 1943, and "Hatred, only Hatred", 1944). Kärner's impassioned calls to battle and verses dedicated to his native land (then under fascist occupation), his lyrics about home and nature with their reflections and echoes of the momentous struggle in progress made a powerful impact on the reader. The poet's historical poems and ballads with their militant spirit also had a topical resonance. The structure of Kärner's verse at the time was for the most part deliberately simple and popular, occasionally he even tended to employ rhetoric.

The course of J. Kärner's literary career was marked by several inner crises and ideological aberrations. But his ever live and keen social conscience and sympathy for those suffering from social injustice linked him closely to the working masses and helped him to become one of the founders of Estonian Soviet literature.

Juhan Sütiste (1899—1945) was one of the most consistent representatives of the realist trend in poetry during the period of the bourgeois republic. The bulk of his work was closely connected with the troubles and joys of working people.

Sütiste began to publish verses in the early 1920s and his first poems are collected in "Restlessness" (1928). This book

with its characteristic title is indeed imbued with the restlessness that accompanies a quest for new ideas and new modes of artistic self-expression, a wish to give utterance to one's own unconventional convictions. At the same time the book is also evidence of a certain inner conflict. The poet's sense of social justice and his own origin led him to the side of the working people in the struggle against the exploiters. None the less, he also continued to cherish certain illusions connected with national sovereignty. An after-effect of expressionism in those days is his use of ponderous and involved verbiage. The poet's dynamic *vers libre* full of prosaic expressions attracted attention with its realistic concreteness and nearness to life; in his later work Sütiste developed these qualities quite purposefully. In general the keynote of his verse is vigorously optimistic.

In his new collections of verse Sütiste refrained from bombastic declarations and began to use simple everyday language to create true pictures of surrounding life. In these poems the author showed a keen understanding of the antagonisms inherent in capitalist society. His poems have not only become more plastic and well-formed, but they voice a clearly militant



Juhan Sütiste

attitude (the collections "Down with Peace!", 1932, and "Two Camps", 1933). These stills as it were from a poetic news-reel expose the reality of the bourgeois state and are sharply accusatory and condemnatory. The funeral of a revolutionary murdered by the police, a meagre ration of soup for unemployed workers on the dole, the poet's father hunched up as a result of endless toil, his friends languishing in prison, rampant social injustice, and above it all the state flag, the "drooping tricolour" — Sütiste connects all these concrete matters with progressive militant ideas. An essential feature is the poet's ability to sense the poetic quality of labour and to convey it in simple and popular language. The theme of work is sometimes directly linked with a fighting mood, with a firm belief in the victory of the toiling masses.

After the coup d'état of 1934, it was no longer possible to continue along the earlier path. Moreover Sütiste himself was to a certain extent and temporarily affected by bourgeois ideology. The dominant themes in his poems of the second half of the 1930s are nature and hiking about the country. These poems are written mainly in a neutral descriptive manner. Sütiste's nature lyrics are, on the whole, characterised by realistic concreteness and a wealth of detail. They are usually based on an appreciation of the ties between man and nature. The author's narrative poems published at the close of the 1930s are of the same general type. They are lyrical verse reportages about the way the summer was spent and about rambles through the length and breadth of the native land. The language is free and informal, the style flexible and fluent in the manner of Pushkin. The poet, however, makes frequent digressions of a publicistic character and waxes ironical about existing conditions. In a narrative poem dealing with the oil-shale district — "In Ashes and Fire" (1938), the depiction of labour and workmen is once again associated with an awareness of social injustice. It is here that one can feel especially distinctly how the poet is drawing closer to the aspirations of the working-class and to a comprehension of life in its revolutionary development.

Thus it was quite natural that in the summer of 1940 Sütiste came out on the side of the working people. In the very midst of those decisive events he wrote a passionate poem "The Earth Turns East", a work full of happy excitement,

sincere and whole-hearted support for what was happening, and faith in the future of socialism. Sütiste's last collection of verse "Oppressive Days" (1945), which came out posthumously, contains poems he wrote during the fascist occupation. The spirit of resistance finds forceful poetic and figurative expression here. A cycle of thirty sonnets entitled "Love" occupies the central place in the collection. The sonnets are not only confessions dedicated to one's beloved, but also an appeal in the name of humanity for resistance to fascist barbarity. Love — that most noble of all human emotions was like a guiding ray of light to the poet in the murky night of fascist atrocities; it kept alive his faith in the ultimate victory of humanity and the liberation of his native land. The struggle against the fascist invaders also inspired Sütiste to write his historical drama "The Hounds of the Cross", which deals with the events of the early 13th century in Estonia.

Sütiste was fortunate enough to see the liberation of his homeland. His health, however, had been ruined in prison during the occupation, and he did not live to see the final collapse of fascism. Although the poet died in his prime and many of his literary plans remained unfulfilled, his life's work constitutes a significant literary bequest. Sütiste's lyric poetry, dealing as it does with the broad range of contemporary political and social issues, belongs to that trend of Estonian poetry which represents a direct link between the earlier democratic tradition and Soviet poetry.

Betty Alver (born in 1906) made her debut with a novel "The Wind's Paramour" (1927). From the very beginning she assumed an attitude of protest against the petty-bourgeois view of life. The earliest of B. Alver's narrative poems was "The Tale of a White Crow" (1931), the pointed satire of which was directed against the newly-rich elements of society and parvenu intellectuals. The wit and grace of the verses testify to the influence above all of Pushkin, but also to that of Baudelaire, Heine and Gautier. In a relatively short time B. Alver developed into a poet with a strong and intense imagination and a precise appreciation of form. Noteworthy features of her work are a proudly defiant intellectual attitude towards everything that is base and negative, an ability to combine meticulously distinct pictures of actual reality with apt generalisations, and also an ingenuity of expression.



Betti Alver

In the latter half of the 1930s B. Alver published several pieces of poetry with an epic texture ("The Pear-tree", "The Cracked Mirror", etc.) in which a transition revealed itself from a playfully ironical treatment of subject-matter to a more profound approach, a realistic depiction of environment and delineation of characters, and the use of more popular language and style. One of the central themes of B. Alver's collection of lyrics "Dust and Fire" (1936) was a hymn of praise to art as the expression of the highest degree of humanity, its incorruptible love of truth and beauty. It is with particular inspiration that she writes about the striving for independence and perfection and about a strong mentality capable of resisting the evils of life. B. Alver's lyrics of the time are classically rigid in form and characterised by the frequent use of symbolic images, romantic themes, and occasionally also by a pathetic manner. On the other hand, however, there is an endeavour to depict one's experiences objectively, to conceal them deliberately with cool reason or irony aimed at oneself.

The second period of B. Alver's literary production coincides with the grim years of war. The poet's manner now changes noticeably. A broader range of subject-matter and

a more profound depiction of life are accompanied by a change in tonality and form. Romantic poeticisation and strained contrasts recede in order to make more room for a world perceived by the senses. Concern for the fate of the nation focused attention on relationships outside art and oneself, this concern found expression in the description of grave and depressing experiences, in compassion for the outcasts of life. All that is extraneously decorative disappears from B. Alver's poetic diction and her verses become crystal-clear and succinct. The poet's increasingly close ties with native landscapes and fellow-countrymen impart a peculiarly discreet quality to the form and content of her poems. A captivating warmth of human feeling pervades her translucent and frail verses. During the war years B. Alver also wrote some new poems which combined the epic with the lyric and in which a synthesis of realistic and romantic-symbolic elements is attained. The poet's attitude had grown more serious and was often permeated by a tragic note.

The predominantly simplified treatment of poetry that was characteristic of the post-war years was not conducive to an appreciation of B. Alver's work and talent. At that time the poet was concerned mainly with the translation of Pushkin's verse and she achieved unsurpassed results in this field (especially "Yevgeni Onegin"). B. Alver's original contributions to Soviet poetry began to appear in 1965, and she again immediately gained a position of eminence. The volume of verse "The Star Hour" (1966) contains the best of B. Alver's early poems as well as her later lyrics. The poems in this volume as well as those published in periodicals in the late 1960s reflect the worldly-wise interpretation of all the poet's experience. A tempered sense of dignity and deep humanism pervade these poems which ponder over the fundamental problems of existence, the meaning of life, the relationships between man and his age. In addition to the fervour, supple wording, sureness of form, melodiousness of verse, and the ability to focus concrete images into suggestive symbols, which are all features familiar from her earlier work, the poet's later poetry has acquired a glowing inner radiance.

Other poets. August Alle (1890—1952) embarked upon his literary career with verses in a romantic-symbolistic manner that were published in the "*Noor-Eesti*" and "*Siuru*"

albums. These poems were melancholy and remote from life and they drew mainly on legends and myths for their subject-matter. Soon thereafter, however, Alle began to write acrimonious verse that was strongly and aptly critical of contemporary conditions. His vigorous verse with its restless rhythms and dynamic as well as "explosive" imagery castigated social stagnation and censured the greed of the extravagant upstart bourgeoisie, its hypocrisy and ignorance. At times Alle was also mercilessly critical of his own vacillations in an unsettled and contradictory age. For some time feelings of personal frustration and resignation prevail in Alle's verse against a general background of the hardships and troubles of a society in the throes of crisis. The wrathful anti-fascist and anti-war poems that he published in the early 1930s have a strong social resonance. The poet's apt and precise wording may be seen at its best in his epigrams, many of which were on literary topics. During the war Alle levelled his satire against the fascist ringleaders and their hirelings. Parallel with his interest in social issues Alle wrote some fine nature lyrics.

Artur A d s o n (born in 1889) was an entirely different poet as regards his world outlook and view of life. He was an introspective lyricist given to subjective meditation, a poet who dealt with intimate recollections of home and childhood. Most of his verse was written in the South-Estonian dialect and this added to the emotional intensity of his reminiscential idylls in particular. Adson was less successful when he used dialect in his love lyrics and this feature was quite inappropriate when it was employed to express abstract *Weltschmerz* or feelings of intellectual frustration. With respect to its general tone Adson's poetry was essentially pessimistic. Already in his early period he showed an inclination to produce variations on the theme of the transience of life and his nature lyrics were also largely in a melancholy key.

Hendrik A d a m s o n (1891—1946) was another poet who wrote in the South-Estonian dialect. Taking a mainly elegiac view of life, he expressed it somewhat differently by adding a humourous touch. Adamson kept away from the larger centres of population and remained a poet of the countryside. He was in close contact with rural life and nature. His verse is interesting because of its pertinent and often quaint images and occasionally surprising changes of mood. The poet

achieved a peculiar comic effect with the way in which he presented themes drawn from the Bible and world literature in a rustic manner and dialect form. Although Adamson also wrote meditative verse and poems of social protest, he was more successful with his nature lyrics and poems of personal confession.

A complete contrast to this rustic poet is Valmar A d a m s (born in 1899), a typical poet of urban life, an intellectual writer of contemplative verse, an erudite and sensitive striver for perfection in wording and versification. His earlier collections of verse which appeared in the 1920s consisted mostly of poems in the manner of the self-analytical Russian modernist poetry of the pre-war period with its emphasis on the dissonance between actual reality and the intellectual, a poetry which was often shocking or coquettish. As an innovation in technique Adams (like H. Visnapuu) deliberately used imprecise rhymes of the Russian type. In the 1930s the social element grows stronger in the poet's philosophical and confessional reflective verse. The dominant tone of these poems as well as of the author's love lyrics remained, however, one of romantic conflict and pessimism, even if this was sometimes concealed under an outer shell of facility and playfulness.

Erni H i i r (born in 1900) has been a prolific author (he has brought out 12 books of verse). He made his debut with futuristic and expressionistic experiments, going on to produce socially critical topical verse. In the 1930s he tended towards the one-sided exaltation of the joy of creative work. What Hiir lacked in individuality he sought to compensate for mainly by carefully contrived wording and ponderous constructions. During the war years the poet wrote patriotic appeals calling upon the Soviet people to fight against the enemy. A dry pathetic note has crept into his later output together with a rhetoric manner of presentation.

Aleksander A n t s o n (1895—1945) represented a distinctly left-wing trend with his epigrams. The latter contained scathing attacks on the bourgeoisie and on various social wrongs, but their quality was uneven as regards the imagery involved.

Two younger authors should be mentioned here who emerged in the 1930s and who were granted only a short period of time in which to express themselves. Heiti T a l v i k (1907—1947) produced only two collections of verse, but in these he

forcefully expressed his defiance of and uncompromising attitude to all that was repugnant, sham and undignified in life as well as within himself. From a chaotic mood of rebellion, a gloomy sense of ruin and merciless self-flagellation the poet found his way to more general problems, he called upon intellectuals to live up to their responsibilities and to stand their ground undaunted in the face of hopelessness and despair. The poetry written by Uku Masing (born in 1903), a theologian and orientalist, is influenced by the religious philosophy of the East and oriental poetic diction. Owing to Masing's good translations the Estonian reader now has direct access to the poetry of R. Tagore.

Bernard Kangro, Kersti Merilaas and August Sang were also able representatives of the new generation of poets in the 1930s. As the bulk of their production came out in a later period, they will be dealt with in the appropriate place below.

THE DRAMA

In comparison with the other basic genres of literature the Estonian drama is of relatively more recent origin and its development has been slower and more uneven depending on the state of the theatre. There have been short periods of great achievement, such as the years before the First World War, which were followed by periods of decline, if not by downright gaps. In drama it has not yet been possible for such traditions or an inner continuity to develop as in the other basic types of literature. The ranks of poets and prose writers grew steadily, but of the more outstanding writers it was only A. Kitzberg who had hitherto specialised as a dramatist, and, moreover, he had reached the peak of his career by the 1920s. The only significant work that he wrote during the period under discussion was "The Cursed Farmstead", a play which demonstrated the venerable author's sincere wish to deal with contemporary problems, but which was not exactly a great achievement. Neither was E. Vilde's play "The Link" (published five years after its first production and thus falling within the period under review) on the same level as the author's earlier plays. Other dramas were composed by prose authors or poets who generally regarded the writing of plays as a less promis-

ing and less responsible form of literary activity, and who did not always know enough about the specific features of the genre.

The only play of truly classical rank to appear in the early 1920s was A. H. Tammsaare's "Judith". Other dramatic works worthy of mention include M. Metsanurk's anti-religious "Life of the Devout" and "The General's Son". The latter lays bare the rotten foundation of the bourgeois social system and was banned by the authorities after its first performance. One should also mention E. Peterson-Särgava's comedy "The New Minister" which derides the self-interested scheming of minor politicians, and J. Kärner's comedies ("The Only Idealist" and "The Hero") in which the author attacked pseudo-revolutionary phrasemongering and the parvenu bourgeoisie. All these works reflect the same moods of disappointment, political scepticism, pessimism and social criticism bordering sometimes on sarcasm, which are largely characteristic likewise of the poetry and prose of the period.

Hugo Raudsepp. The only really significant professional Estonian playwright in the 1920s and 1930s was H. Raudsepp (1883—1952). In the 1920s the Estonian theatre was in a state of crisis and Raudsepp himself tried in every way to write plays that would be to the taste of the public. It must be admitted that he really succeeded in making the public go to the theatre. For original plays to be so successful was something unheard-of in Estonia.

Before he became a professional dramatist, Raudsepp had worked for a long time as a journalist. The experience he had gained by writing feuilletons and critical reviews of plays and books stood him in good stead when he began to write for the stage. Raudsepp's developed sense of comedy, style of a popular humourist, topicality, and facility of self-expression, on the one hand, and his good knowledge of both the stage and the public, on the other, enabled him to fill a real gap at a time when the theatre was suffering from a chronic shortage of original plays. At the same time the author's journalistic topicality, his inclination to adapt himself to public taste, and his jocularity which usually lacked any fixed ideological and aesthetic principles (and was sometimes actually based on quite doubtful ideas) were also the source of obvious weaknesses. None the less Raudsepp possessed an outstanding and

original dramatic talent, especially in the field of the comedy. This is the reason why his best plays were produced in neighbouring countries and why they have remained in the repertoire of Estonian theatres.

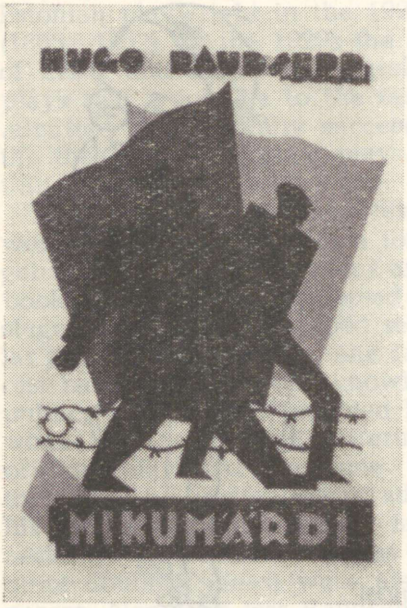
In the 1920s Raudsepp wrote some comedies about conditions of everyday life as well as plays on biblical themes. Contemporary issues and attitudes were dealt with in both types of play. In "Samson the Judge", a drama of ideas, the central problem is the conflict between a powerful personality full of the enjoyment of life and the masses with their harsh god. The play ends nevertheless with submission to the inevitable and to the force of tradition. In his comedies the author limited himself above all to reflecting topical problems and phenomena, situations and characters in the distorting mirror of the comic. He also seemed to revel in the accumulation of human eccentricities and follies. While doing all this Raudsepp often sought to conceal his own position. This attitude of a detached on-looker, a striving to offer something for everybody, and a



Hugo Raudsepp (*caricature by Gori, 1933*)

deliberate endeavour to suggest several possible interpretations, is characteristic of Raudsepp. Some comedies were filled with the rather coarse comicality of everyday life ("The Demobilised Head of the Family"), in others a satirical criticism of manners takes on a more social ring, e.g. the scorn poured on mammon-worshippers and the newly-rich in "The American Christ". The latter play also ridiculed aestheticism and a detached approach to literature (a feature which recurred in his later works), but in place of which Raudsepp offered adaptation to current literary tastes. In his fantastic and burlesque comedy "Sinimandria" he deals in highly paradoxical fashion with the relationship between a creative personality and his output.

The most successful of Raudsepp's plays were "Mikumärdi Farm" (1929) and "The Sluggard" (1932). The principal merits of these two comedies about rural life are their vivid comic characters and situations and their colourful popular dialogues.



"Mikumärdi Farm" (*cover by P. Aren, 1929*)

"Mikumärdi Farm" is concerned mainly with such features of contemporary life as the ridiculously exaggerated sense of property of well-to-do and conceited farmers and their relations with their dependents. The second comedy deals with an incredibly lazy country lad and the metamorphosis which takes place in him when he falls in love. This metamorphosis is directly connected with the biologistic approach that began to prevail in Raudsepp's views at the time and traces of which occur already in his earlier works. The characters who represent this approach find it necessary to shed the "veneer of civilisation" and they see the purpose of life in the fulfilment of their inner urges, in "healthy egoism" and a "natural existence". Proceeding from the principles of pragmatism the writer also sought to make out a theoretical case for a synthesis of the biological and the social. The biologistic view of life is particularly conspicuous in the comedy "The Blessing of a Cracked Brain" (1931), where it serves, however, as the starting-point of what is in itself a welcome satire on social conventions, hypocrisy and political intrigue.

In his comedies of the middle and late 1930s ("In Drawing-room and Cell", "The Man with the Trumps") Raudsepp's treatment of social issues continued to be ironical and paradoxical and he poured further scorn on aestheticism. He was also still an advocate of a biologistic-vitalistic view of life. But at the same time the author showed a readiness to oblige the bourgeoisie by writing some works to their order ("Flags in the Storm") and he even revised his already popular comedy "Mikumärdi Farm" to suit their taste. In the following period of political upheaval and ideological struggle Raudsepp could not regain his earlier momentum as a writer of comedies since he lacked a firm world outlook.

In addition to (and mostly before) his dramatic writings Raudsepp also published numerous short works of prose. At first the author tended to give his short stories, tales, topical satires, etc. an anecdotal flavour. He focused attention above all on man as a biological creature with his urges and aspirations and unexpected vicissitudes of fortune. The social element becomes more pronounced in Raudsepp's later short stories. In the novel "The Last European" (1941) the author concentrates his ironical attention on an aesthete who is alien to life — a character that often occurs in his works. H. Raud-

sepp's activities as a writer of essays and critical reviews are also noteworthy. In this field he stressed realism and the need for closeness to life. From the late 1920s onwards, however, these writings are likewise marred by increasingly strong biologistic traits and subjectivism.

Other playwrights. It has already been pointed out that a certain number of plays were written by authors who had specialised in other branches of literature. As a rule, however, their contribution to the drama did not measure up to their other work. This was the case, for instance, with A. Mälk who produced a few rustic comedies after Raudsepp had scored several successes in the field. Already in the 1920s A. Antson published several anti-war and markedly left-wing plays under the influence of expressionism, and he later also tried his hand at writing comedies. In the 1930s, when the genre had become popular, M. Metsanurk, J. Kärner, H. Visnapuu and others wrote mainly topical comedies. Relatively few serious dramas were written (some works by M. Metsanurk, isolated experiments by J. Sütiste, A. Jakobson and J. Kärner).

After the coup d'état of 1934 the critical trend in drama subsided and still more plays were written simply to provide entertainment. At the same time there was a noticeable increase in the number of "positive" and "patriotic" pieces adapted to bourgeois ideology. However, A. H. Tammsaare gave a profound and masterly analysis of the dangerous pro-fascist tendencies of the period in his satirical comedy "The King Feels Cold" (1936). The psychological plays of A. Kallas are noteworthy especially for their forceful characters. The plays of H. Wuolijoki on Estonian as well as Finnish themes were successful. An important development in the 1930s was the adaptation for the Estonian stage of well-known prose works by such authors as A. H. Tammsaare, O. Luts, A. Mälk, A. Jakobson and others. As regards the depiction of their characters these stage versions were considerably better than the plays of the period. Some prose authors themselves wrote stage versions of their own works.

Evald T a m m l a a n (1904—1945) was a new and promising writer of serious drama in the second half of the 1930s. Rejecting the stagnation of ideas and the petty-bourgeois mentality that was gaining ground in the drama of the period, Tammlaan turned to a socially critical treatment of subject-matter. The

author's strong side was his realistic depiction of everyday life and the convincing manner in which he linked his characters with their age and environment. In the drama "The White Plain" (1937) Tammlaan describes the life of coast-dwellers, and deals with the conflict between the soulless law and popular beliefs and customs, a conflict which entails the making of difficult decisions in their personal life. The author's best work and an outstanding achievement in the Estonian drama of the time was the antifascist play "The Iron Home" (1938). The action of the play takes place aboard an Estonian merchant vessel with an international crew, and it is against this background that Tammlaan produced a broad generalisation of the antagonisms between the working-people and the bourgeoisie. The play emphasises the international solidarity of the proletariat in the struggle to protect their class interests, democracy and humanism, and as such it went beyond the limits of critical realism and became a major connecting link with later Estonian Soviet literature. The writer's own creative career was tragically cut short as he fell into the hands of the fascists during the war and perished in a concentration camp in Germany.

LITERARY CRITICISM

Literary criticism attains maturity later than the other branches of literature. Properly speaking, it is on the development of fiction (and also of the reading public) that the level of criticism largely depends. Hence it is not remarkable that Estonian literary criticism in the second half of the 19th century remained fairly scanty and superficial, confining itself primarily to the modest task of acquainting readers with works of literature and making pertinent recommendations. The appearance of critical realism at the end of the century gave rise to a more lively exchange of opinions, the majority of conservative critics taking a stand against the new trend. The development of critical thought gained momentum only at the beginning of the present century when the leaders of the *Noor-Eesti* group G. Suits and F. Tuglas became the initiators of up-to-date literary criticism in Estonia.

Owing to the stormy events of the time and the considerable changes in the aesthetic aspect of literature itself, the criticism of the period of revolution and civil war and the early 1920s was chiefly polemic and largely subjective in character. Literary groupings appeared and disintegrated with great rapidity at the time and the ensuing controversy was often biased, the arguments advanced being even deliberately partial and directed against personalities. Nevertheless, one cannot deny that the literary criticism of the time was vivid and animated in form and style. As it was mainly the representatives of the younger generation of writers (A. Gailit, A. Alle, H. Visnapuu) who seized the initiative also in the field of criticism, the genres close to literature properly speaking — the feuilleton, pamphlet, parody, essay, etc. — rose to the fore in critical writing. F. Tuglas, who otherwise always encouraged new ideas and trends, found it necessary to condemn the extremes of Bohemian subjectivism, scandalous braggadocio and buffoonery, and he insisted on correct behaviour also in literary disputes. Keenly aware of aesthetic as well as social issues, Tuglas was one of the most influential literary critics of the time. Moreover, during the following years he published several literary monographs of fundamental importance. The other representatives of a more objective and balanced trend in criticism in the early 1920s were H. Raudsepp and J. Kärner, who stressed the need for closer contacts between literature and actual reality, and J. Semper who insisted on the need to attain the level of a European mentality in literary matters.

In the mid-twenties Estonian literature began to flow in a predominantly realistic channel which was conducive to the development of more objective literary criticism. This trend was encouraged in turn by the activities of F. Tuglas as editor of the journal "*Looming*". Once again the interpretation of the ideas and social content of works of literature gained an important place in criticism and support for democratic ideals became dominant. In comparison with former years the manner of treatment grew more argumented as well as professionally competent and there was an increase in the number of authors who devoted themselves especially to criticism (D. Palgi, N. Andresen, O. Urgart). For the most part, however, literary criticism remained analytical or summarising without seeking

a more profound synthesis. There were only a few literary-philosophical studies of broader scope (A. Annist). Critical works along consistently Marxist lines were published by Estonian authors living in the Soviet Union (H. Pöögelmann, etc.). One should also mention the beginning of methodical stylistic studies (D. Palgi, J. Semper).

In the field of research into literary history F. Tuglas was joined by a school of specialists trained by Professor G. Suits. These young scholars turned their attention mainly to the foreign influences upon earlier Estonian literature. M. Kampmaa, a representative of the older generation and an outsider, produced a history of Estonian literature. To the two volumes of his history which had appeared already earlier (1912—1913), he now added a third (1923), and subsequently also a fourth volume (1936). Kampmaa's history was essentially conservative and eclectic in character, and it could not keep abreast of the literary thought of the period. As a teacher, Kampmaa wrote his history mainly for secondary schools and it was first and foremost an extensive and systematised collection of material. The three-volume history of literature written by V. Ridala was also the result of its author's teaching activities. Later, in the 1930s, several other authors produced histories of literature for schools, and F. Tuglas published a succinct survey of the field. Nevertheless, no profound history of literature based on a systematic study of the literary heritage was written in bourgeois Estonia.

The crucial problems that literary criticism concentrated on in the late 1920s and early 1930s were the relationship of literature to contemporary reality and various aspects of the treatment of realism. The controversy between "rural realists" and "modernists" was now replaced by a debate between the adherents of so-called "nearness to life" and "nearness to the mind". As the aesthetic program of the "nearness to life" trend was not sufficiently clear, certain biologistic-vitalistic tendencies appeared alongside the social interest. Some exponents of the trend even inclined towards conformity to the official bourgeois line. The position of literature as an independent — though not an esoteric — phenomenon and its lofty spiritual mission were stressed mainly by authors who had formerly belonged to the *Noor-Eesti* and *Siuru* groups. On the whole, criticism in the 1930s was characterised by the treatment of

literature with due attention to the socio-historical context; the keynote continued to be a democratic mentality and an attitude of opposition towards the power of the bourgeoisie. An important landmark in the consolidation of this tradition and a model of critical writing were the eight volumes of F. Tuglas's collected works of literary criticism (1935—36). Other writers also published anthologies of their critical writings (J. Semper, J. Kärner). There was a marked trend in pre-war Estonian criticism towards a deeper and more discerning analysis of the specific features of art. Several authors who had a profound knowledge of foreign literature (F. Tuglas, G. Suits, J. Semper, A. Oras, A. Aspel, etc.) dealt with Estonian literature within a broader frame of reference and examined some of its more recent and subtle aspects. A. Annist worked productively at the time in the field of literary history and published a thorough monograph devoted to the folklore sources and origin of the epic "Kalevipoeg".

In the 1920s and 1930s Estonian literary criticism attained a noteworthy professional level. Criticism became an efficacious factor in literary life and an integral part of literature. Although criticism seldom attempted more extensive generalisations, its various trends as a whole succeeded jointly in providing a many-sided picture of the literature of the period and of the course of its development.

FROM THE REVOLUTION OF 1940 TO THE PRESENT DAY

LITERARY LIFE IN 1940—1945

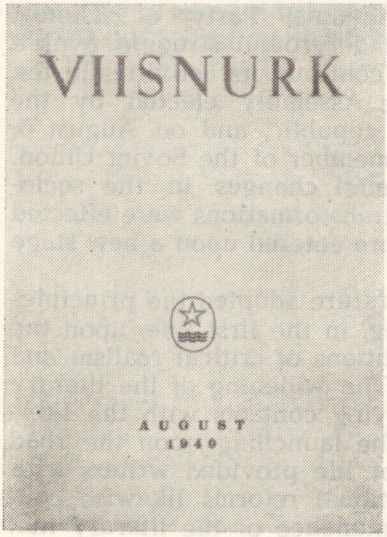
The beginnings of Estonian Soviet literature. In 1940, a significant change occurred in the history of the Estonian people. Soviet power, which the bourgeoisie had abolished with the help of foreign reactionary forces in the civil war of 1918—1920, was reinstated.

In 1939, at the proposal of the government of the USSR, the bourgeois government of Estonia had concluded a pact of mutual assistance with the Soviet Union, but subsequently violated its stipulations. As a result, the Soviet government demanded that the Estonian policy be changed and supplementary Red Army contingents be admitted into the country. Owing to World War II, the bourgeoisie could expect no help from the Western Powers, and the foundation of the bourgeois regime began to shake. On June 21, 1940, the working-people started revolutionary actions in Tallinn and other major towns of Estonia. A new, democratic cabinet was formed, headed by poet J. Vares-Barbarus. The Communist Party of Estonia, which had been conducting an underground struggle over a long number of years, could now continue its activities in the open. On July 21, the new State Assembly elected by the people declared Estonia a Soviet republic, and on August 6, the Estonian SSR was admitted a member of the Soviet Union. Simultaneously with the fundamental changes in the socio-political life of the country, great transformations were effected in the cultural life as well. Literature entered upon a new stage of development.

The young Estonian Soviet literature adopted the principles of its progressive heritage, leaning, in the first line, upon the democratic and revolutionary traditions of critical realism and the works of proletarian writers. The widening of the literary horizon was favoured by intensifying contacts with the literatures of other Soviet peoples. The launching upon the road of socialism and the new mode of life provided writers with novel subjects. Various organisational reforms likewise contributed to shaping the new countenance of the literary life.

The organisational committee of the Union of Soviet Estonian Writers was founded, headed by A. Jakobson. Private publishing houses were replaced by state-owned ones. The literary journal "*Looming*" ("Creation") with F. Tuglas as editor-in-chief, continued working on new lines. The new magazine "*Viisnurk*" ("The Five-cornered Star"), editor-in-chief A. Hint, and the weekly "*Sirp ja Vasar*" ("Sickle and Hammer"), devoted to problems of art and literature, were issued. In all of those publications, a significant place was attributed to the elucidation of the principles of socialist realism.

Of course, the attitude of Estonian writers towards Soviet power and socialist ideology was rather differentiated. A number of democratically-minded authors supported the revolution by active work at various cultural establishments as well as by their writings, in which they tried to keep abreast of the times. On the other hand, some writers who had been sharing the interests of the bourgeoisie, adopted the attitude of interior refugees, awaiting further developments, or playing a double



Journal "*Viisnurk*"

game, politically. The assimilation of the new literary concepts was not easy even for those who had taken a firm stand in support of socialism. Nearly all of them had to re-evaluate their former principles and activities, and adopt new methods of creation. This was relatively simple for such writers as J. Barbarus, J. Kärner, J. Sütiste, A. Jakobson, J. Semper, A. Alle, A. Hint, E. Tammlaan, R. Sirge, E. Hiir, etc. who, in the previous years already, had represented the most active wing of Estonian democratic literature. Though their actual literary contribution did not yet correspond to the new aims (mostly because they were entrusted with urgent tasks of an organisational character), the general countenance of literature was transformed within a brief period of time. Instead of depicting the deadlocks of life, writers began to reflect the fighting spirit of the working-people and their soaring expectations.

That new trend was best revealed in poetry, which, at that crucial period, strove to convey the widened concepts and the rejoicing at the fulfilment of the hopes of the working-people and democratically-minded intellectuals. That poetry was often characterised by a romantic pathos. In the poem "The Earth Turns East", J. Sütiste presented a suggestive and poetic generalised interpretation of the recent revolutionary events. J. Kärner, J. Barbarus, and others, welcomed the change in the life of the people, extolling creative work and the friendship of the Soviet nations. The new conception of life and the adherence to socialist ideas also found expression in poems by M. Raud, K. Merilaas, A. Kaal, F. Kotta and H. Angervaks. Now the pungent anti-bourgeois epigrams by A. Alle and A. Antson could be made public, as well as the revolutionary poems by L. Parker, written in prison in the bourgeois period. The early Estonian Soviet poetry, addressed to wide masses, bore the character of an outspoken appeal and strove to be understood by everybody.

In prose, the new aspects of life were mainly treated in short stories and novelettes by A. Jakobson, A. Hint, M. Raud, E. Krusten, J. Ruven, and others. The works of those writers mainly reflected the class struggle in bourgeois Estonia, the development of the social consciousness of people and the first steps on the new road of life. E. Kippel devoted his story "Meelis" to the struggle for the liberty of the Estonians in the

13th century. Some collections of short stories of a psychological character and novels in the manner of critical realism, which had been written earlier (e.g. "In a Strange House" by K. Ristikivi, "The Last European" by H. Raudsepp) were published now. J. Madarik completed the first part of his revolutionary novel "The Republic".

In literature, the first Soviet year was a time of revaluations, searchings and expectations, though it was too short a period for the completion of extensive works in the new manner.

Estonian Soviet literature in the years of the Great Patriotic War. In June, 1941, fascist aggression interrupted the construction of the socialist economy and culture of Estonia. All those Estonian writers who realised that the future of their people was connected with the road of socialism, joined the common struggle of the people. The former anti-fascist traditions became the basis of the militant literature in the period of war, in which the idea of patriotism, the belief in the ideals of communism, in the international brotherhood of the workers, and in the final victory acquired a particularly forceful expression.

Owing to the fascist occupation of Estonia, the Estonian Soviet literature of the war-period was mainly relegated to writers who either had joined the ranks of the Red Army or had been evacuated to the Soviet rear of the front. Their ideological growth and creative development was based on their immediate contacts with Soviet literature and with their immediate participation in the efforts of the older republics of the Soviet Union in the war-times. In October, 1943, a conference of Estonian authors was held in Moscow, resulting in the foundation of the Union of Soviet Estonian Writers, whose members simultaneously became members of the USSR Writers' Union. The writers made contributions to the Estonian front-papers and other publications as well as broadcasts in Estonian, and published their works in various collections and in the almanac "*Sõjasarv*" ("The War Bugle", I—VI, 1943—1944). The publishing houses in Moscow and Leningrad printed in Estonian the books of poems by J. Kärner, J. Barbarus, M. Raud, J. Semper, A. Alle and E. Hiir, and the prose works by A. Jakobson, P. Keerdo and P. Rummo. By means of Russian translations, the works of Estonian writers were also introduced



Almanac *"Sõjasarv"*

to other Soviet peoples. The essential part of the war-time production of writers was published in liberated Estonia, including the works by the younger authors who had come to the fore during the war, i.e. the first books of poems of D. Vaarandi, R. Parve, J. Smuul, A. Kaal and M. Nurme, as well as collections of war-time short stories by E. Männik and by A. Hint.

As follows from the above, the prevailing forms of Estonian war-time literature were poems and short stories — the most suitable genres for instantaneous reaction to the events of the day, and also suitable for publication in periodicals. As a matter of course, the focal subject themes were the heroic struggle of the Soviet people, the bravery on the battle-front or in the enemy's rear, selfless toil in the rear of the front, and the growth and formation of individuals during a period of hardships. The perception of the greatness and of the unbroken spirit of the Soviet country, and of the unity of her nations were the typical topics of the literature of that time. A significant place was attributed to motifs of the historic struggle of the Estonians against oppression, especially in connection

with the 600th anniversary of the Estonian peasant uprising of 1343. In poetry, alongside of topical militant verse, there were also poems on themes of the native scene and lyrical reminiscences, which fulfilled a mobilising function. The hitlerites and their henchmen were frequently derided in satirical poetry, which also penetrated into occupied Estonia, by means of broadcasts and leaflets. In stories and novelettes, writers described the atrocities committed by the enemy, showed how ordinary people, torn out of their peaceful lives, turned into militant personalities and how the former uninformed "neutral" people came to realise the inevitability of an active resistance. Of course, the heroism of the fighters at the battle-front was also emphasised.

The Estonian Soviet literature of the war-period was to a striking extent penetrated by a romantic pathos, characteristic not only of themes of a distant past. Typical features were the revival of the ballad, the application of motifs and poetical devices of the Estonian folklore, the symbolic connection of the current struggle with the historic events of the past, and the emphasising of principal points by forceful, exaggerated metaphors. Those tendencies became particularly evident in poetry. Neither did prose of those days tend to show the current developments on a large scale, with all the controversies and complications involved, which were connected with the survivals and prejudices of the recent past. On the contrary, the chief aim of prose was, likewise, to convey suggestive, mobilising scenes of the decisive battle, and to present examples of manliness and heroism.

In the days of the war, the Estonian Soviet writers did their patriotic duty. In 1944, they returned to the native country, enriched by ideological consciousness and abundant experience of actual life and literary work. In spite of the losses — the war had demanded the lives of J. Madarik in the defence of Tallinn in 1941 and E. Kippel in besieged Leningrad in 1942 — the ranks of writers had been replenished by new, promising forces. In the next following years, too, quite a number of writers came to the fore from among the former soldiers (H. Leberecht, P. Kuusberg, E. Rannet, U. Laht, V. Gross, A. Saar, M. Kesamaa, H. Sergo, I. Sikemäe, J. Peegel, H. Suislepp, R. Vaidlo, H. Pukk, and others) whose firm ideological convictions had been shaped on the hard paths of war.

Literary life in occupied Estonia. The fascist terror inflicted sufferings on a number of democratically-minded Estonian writers who, owing to the impetuous development of military actions, had been forced to remain in Estonia. Playwright and journalist E. Tammlaan perished in a concentration camp, short story writer J. Ruven was executed in Tallinn, and the poets J. Sütiste and A. Antson lost their health in fascist jails. R. Sirge, O. Tooming, and others, were imprisoned. In conformity with fascist methods, the entire production of the evacuated Estonian writers, books by Russian Soviet authors and a number of world classics were eliminated from bookshops and libraries, and destroyed altogether. Literary activities were mainly continued by those authors who had served in the interests of the bourgeoisie, and whose works were published in the fascist press. Two literary almanacs "*Ammukaar*" ("The Bow-Arc", I 1942 and II 1943) were edited in those years.

In the novels and short stories published during the period of occupation, which had partly been written in the ultimate years of bourgeois Estonia, the writers A. Gailit, A. Mälk ("The Good Harbour"), K. A. Hindrey, and others, adhered to their former subject-matter and literary manner. The most outstanding achievement in prose was the novel "The Garden" (1942) by K. Ristikivi, which, with fine psychological insight and literary charm, depicts the life of an alienated intellectual since the end of the last century. The short forms of prose either reflected a nightmarish premonition of catastrophe (F. Tuglas), or were borne by a nationalist, anti-Russian and anti-Soviet spirit (A. Mälk, M. Metsanurk, H. Raudsepp, and others). In the poetry that appeared in the years of occupation, a pessimistic mood prevailed, which found eloquent expression in the title of M. Under's book of poems — "With Sorrowing Lips" (1942). B. Alver's, H. Talvik's, B. Kangro's and H. Adamson's poems of that time reflected feelings of resignation and anxiety evoked by current events. J. Sütiste revealed, even in prison, an unabated spirit of resistance. Of course, his book of poems "Oppressive Days" could appear only after the expulsion of the fascists from Estonia, and, alas, posthumously (in 1945).

The year 1940 had already marked a decisive stage in the ideological differentiation of the Estonian writers, which had begun in earlier years. The period of war, however, separated

the former colleagues by the front-line, in the verbal sense of the word. The main bulk of the Soviet-minded active writers had been evacuated to the Soviet rear of the front, where they applied their best abilities in the struggle against the invaders. On the other hand, some of the reactionary-minded authors compromised themselves by collaborating with the fascist press and other propaganda organs. In 1944, the defeat of Hitler's army forced them to seek refuge abroad, in fear of a threatening punishment. Thus, A. Kivikas, A. Gailit, A. Adson, P. Krusten, and H. Visnapuu fled to Sweden or Germany. The fate of an émigré was also chosen, for various reasons, by G. Suits, M. Under, A. Mälk, K. Ristikivi, B. Kangro, V. Uibopuu, and others.

ESTONIAN SOVIET LITERATURE IN THE FIRST DECADE AFTER THE WAR

After the liberation of Soviet Estonia and the final victory over fascism, themes of war prevailed in literature for some time. It was an altogether understandable and justified endeavour to generalise and summarise the experience acquired in the hard times of war, and depict those events and situations in which every thinking individual had to choose an alternative. Literature tried to convey a picture of a time, during which the inexorable logic of struggle accelerated ideological transformation and the finding of one's place in the ranks of the conscious fighters for humanism, progress and socialism.

The war had inflicted disaster upon the Soviet people, Estonian included. The entire country was covered with ruins and graves, whole towns had been destroyed. In Estonia, likewise, the hitlerites had committed atrocious mass slaughters, pillaged the national economy and, violating international rights, forced the men to join the ranks of the German army. By means of a campaign of slanderous propaganda, the retreating fascists spread a panic, as a result of which thousands over thousands of Estonians, townspeople and inhabitants of coastal regions, in particular, left the country, fleeing across the sea to Sweden and elsewhere. The period of the fascist occupation had left behind a feeling of insecurity in the consciousness of the people, who were afraid to face the present and the future as well.

Under those conditions, one of the prime tasks of literature was to show the events of the past and present in a true light, to inculcate a Soviet outlook of life into the minds of the masses, and to unfurl the prospects of socialist reconstruction before the eyes of the people who had survived war-time hardships.

A peculiar feature in Estonia, and in the other Baltic Soviet republics, Lithuania and Latvia, was the fact that the period of the post-war reconstruction of national economy was simultaneously a period of laying the foundation to socialism; a large-scale industrialisation of the country was effected, which was followed by the collectivisation of agriculture. Those transformations which had already been carried out in the older Soviet republics long before the war proceeded in an atmosphere of a violent class struggle, either open or concealed. Literature received a challenge to propagate new ideas, reflect topical developments and conflicts, and take a stand against reactionary views and inimical propaganda. The prime task set to the writers by the Communist Party was to show the advantages of socialist ideology and collectivism as compared with the outdated bourgeois views and mode of life, to foster the feelings of Soviet patriotism and proletarian internationalism, and to inspire, with their works, the building up of a new society.

At the initial stage, the leading group of writers were those who had adopted the principles of socialist realism in the years of the Great Patriotic War. They had already made an acquaintance of the writers of other Soviet nations and had applied their experience in portraying life in its revolutionary development. It was far more difficult to cope with the new tasks for writers who had stayed in Estonia during the fascist occupation. Some older writers (O. Luts, M. Metsanurk, H. Raudsepp, R. Roht) tried to keep pace with the times, but without any noteworthy results. A further important fact was that a wide-ranged realignment of forces took place in the literature of the very first post-war years. Owing to the death of J. Sütiste and J. Barbarus and the dropping out of J. Kärner, A. Alle and P. Vallak on account of their poor health, the younger generation of writers that had come to the fore in the war-years, was now responsible for the main bulk of literary production. The majority of those authors were still searching for their individual styles, and that fact was reflected in the general standard of the literature of that period.

The drama was a relatively successful literary genre at that time, mainly owing to the fruitful endeavours of A. Jakobson. The plays reflected the sharp antagonism in life, dealt with the important problems of an individual's place in society, with ideological growth and formation of new qualities. Though not devoid of schematic and illustrative elements, the best plays of that period conformed to the essential demands of the times, and therefore Estonian literature penetrated into the other Soviet republics and, to some extent, into other socialist countries as well. Poetry also reacted quickly enough to the transformations that were taking place in life. The poets who took the lead were the writers of the younger generation — J. Smuul, D. Vaarandi, R. Parve, and others, and M. Raud, a poet of the intermediate generation. When trying to depict the intellectual growth and the ideological transformation of an individual, those poets could not help avoiding a didactic tone and simplification. Nevertheless, the poetry of that time yielded abundant topical and epical verse, inspired by the desire of the poets to contribute to the victory of socialist mentality. The development of prose in the period under discussion proceeded in a less uniform and harmonious manner. E. Männik published his war-time stories, and R. Sirge and E. Krusten wrote a number of stories dealing with the period of the fascist occupation and events of the first post-war years. At the end of the 1940s, those writers were joined by O. Tooming and H. Leberecht. The last-mentioned author soon won recognition in the whole Soviet Union and even abroad, with his works treating contemporary social developments. And yet, the simplification of life restricted the appeal of those prose works. It was only at the beginning of the 1950s that writers began to strive for a wider portrayal of human relations and general conditions. The short forms of prose by J. Smuul and the novels by A. Hint and E. Krusten are the most typical representatives of that trend.

In the subject-matter of the Estonian Soviet literature of the post-war period, one may observe certain shifts in harmony with topical developments and demands. The war-time topics which had been prevailing in the period immediately after the war (including the portrayal of life in the rear of the front-line and in occupied Estonia) were replaced by themes dealing with reconstruction work and the building up a new society as well as with the attitude of the intellectuals. In connection with the

wide-scale collectivisation at the end of the forties, attention was focused on country-life, and themes in this connection began to predominate in literature as well. At the beginning of the 1950s, literary themes became more diversified. Next to subjects dealing with life in Estonia, there were also themes related to international events (in poetry and dramaturgy, in particular), to the struggle for peace and democracy in the entire world. Simultaneously, the revolutionary and historical topics (the novel) rose to a place of importance.

The development of literature of the post-war period was considerably impeded by phenomena connected with deviations from the rules of socialist democracy in the last years of Stalin's activities as political leader and head of the government. The theory of socialist realism was often interpreted in a dogmatic and normative manner. A true-to-life portrayal of actual events was impeded by tendencies to simplify reality; conflicts of life were often replaced by constructed intrigues. In the struggle against aestheticism and formalism, one could state a disregard of the individual character of the peculiar talent of writers. Several distinguished poets were undeservedly labelled as decadents. In the acute ideological struggle, the writers J. Semper and F. Tuglas and the critic N. Andresen, and some others, were unjustly accused of bourgeois nationalism. All this fettered creative forces, engendered hesitations and impeded the accomplishment of the great tasks of literature. From 1953 onwards literature experienced a new period of revival, the actual rise beginning in the latter half of the 1950s.

In the literature of the first post-war decade, on the whole, popularity and realism were the paroles, but the preference for traditional forms and means of expression nipped every experiment of innovation in the bud. Some new genres were taken up, such as the dramatic narrative (i.e. a play in the epic or conversational-publicistic style) and some hybrid forms of documentary prose and publicism; a greater number of epic or lyro-epic poems appeared than in the pre-war period. But literature was rather conservative in regard to interior and exterior structural elements (e. g. in the composition of the literary works, delineation of characters, use of metaphors, technique of verse, etc.). Nevertheless, the post-war literary works have retained that place and importance in the history of Estonian literature as literary documents of an epoch, as phenomena

pertaining to a transitional period and as a preparative stage for the much more significant and diversified art of the later years.

In the first years following the war, particular attention was devoted to the translation of Russian classics and Soviet authors into the Estonian language. In turn, Estonian literature — both the production of Estonian classics and contemporary writers — was introduced by means of Russian translations to the readers of the Soviet Union and, partially, to the reading public abroad.

CONTEMPORARY ESTONIAN SOVIET LITERATURE

In the mid-fifties the entire multi-lingual Soviet literature entered upon a new stage of development. On the background of a widening scope and general progress, the literatures of different nations revealed peculiar features of their own, in dependence on their previous literary traditions, the composition and level of their creative forces as well as their connections with the basic trends of contemporary world literature, and the newest tendencies of development of the socialist and democratic literature of other countries, in particular. The latest decade and a half has been a fruitful period for Estonian Soviet literature, rich in achievements and, particularly, in the number of new promising authors. In comparison with the early post-war years, literary production has not only considerably increased in volume, but, what is more important, it has also improved in content and form.

The enlivenment of the general aesthetic and literary ideas, which began in the mid-fifties, overthrew the dogmatic and vulgar-sociological conceptions. The endeavour to liberate literature from illustrativeness and empiric description became a typical feature. The aims of literature were defined more precisely, and the value of literature as an art was emphasised. Writers began to try to appeal to the contemporary erudite reader, to approximate their creation to the intricate relations between man and community, and to reflect the past and present in a profound, many-sided and convincing manner. Simultaneously with attempts at overcoming the one-sidedness of theoretical concepts, a serious re-evaluation of the literary policy of the post-war years was effected, together with a correction of the

mistakes committed at that time, and a rehabilitation of the writer's rights of some talented authors who had been eliminated from the literary arena. The works of some writers who had been neglected in the meanwhile (G. Suits, F. Tuglas, M. Under, H. Pöögelmann, Eessaare Aadu) found now a worthy place. All that contributed to normalising the literary atmosphere.

In the choice of the subject-matter of contemporary Estonian Soviet literature, one may state a profound and many-sided treatment of reality, which cannot be as easily reduced to a common denominator as the topics of the previous period. At that time, the general line, prompted by socio-political developments, was obviously indicated to all the literary genres in a rather crude manner. The relation of contemporary literature to actual life is by far more many-faceted and complicated. Simultaneously, the choice of themes and topics is of a much wider scope. In general features (in prose, first and foremost), we may state a gradual approach to the topics of the day, which has been achieved by throwing a new light upon the revolutionary historical events, the years of the Great Patriotic War and the post-war period, and by proceeding to the life and people of the present time. A number of works, the more voluminous and multi-planed panoramic prose-works in particular, deal with different stages in the lives of people, and with social groupings and phenomena, shown in their development. In poetry and dramaturgy contemporary topics have always predominated, and are still playing a significant part at the time being as well.

In Soviet literature, problems have been viewed from a social angle, and this approach is still valid at the present stage of development. The treatment and analysis of the interrelations between man and society has become profounder and more detailed. The social environment is no longer regarded as the sole determinant factor in shaping the fates of people, in which the external conditions and interior properties, in their dialectical interaction, play an equally important role. Alongside of the social aspect, and most frequently in a close connection with it, the circle of moral problems has acquired a particular significance in literature. The motives of actions are subjected to analysis and the factor of personal responsibility is stressed. On the whole, the philosophical impact of literature has grown in depth and width. Estonian

writers, supporting the efforts of the camp of socialism and democracy in the struggle against imperialist reaction and militarist aggression, perceive acutely the dangers threatening mankind in the restless and antagonistic world of today. They are also concerned about other questions that require solution, such as the inter-relations of man and his natural environment, the genuine and seeming advantages of progress, and the complicated problem of the drawbacks of technological civilisation.

In the latter half of the 1950s, prose predominated over the other genres, particularly owing to the revival of the novel. Simultaneously, the range of poetry became wider. Poets began to reveal an acute sense of the times; the philosophical trend gained in strength. At the beginning of the '60s, poetry took the leading position. In connection with the diversification of the subject-matter in poetry and with the enlivenment of searchings, a considerable number of new talents emerged, and outstanding achievements were attained. Prose, too, was enriched and diversified, yielding some valuable novels of various types. In the mid-sixties, the short forms of fiction obtained a noteworthy level, mostly thanks to the works published in the last years. Dramaturgy could not keep pace with the development of prose and poetry at that stage, though it showed some progress. In the 1960s, considerable advance could be observed in children's and youth literature. Some talented authors of youth fiction came to the fore, and children's verse, already represented by a number of gifted poets, developed further on. Literary criticism and theory also gained in importance.

At the present stage of development, Estonian Soviet literature may be characterised by a growing diversity of styles. Socialist realism, the principal literary method applied, allows for a wide range of different manners and individual approaches. The ties with the literatures of other nations have been getting closer. A better acquaintance of the literary achievements of socialist countries, in particular, has provided new stimuli for further development. A deepened understanding of the relation of literature as an aesthetic phenomenon to actual life has inspired writers in their search for novel forms of expression. Contemporary literature makes bolder use than formerly of complicated metaphors and symbolic images. The new elements were first applied in poetry, and thereafter, in the second half

of the 'sixties, in the short forms of fiction. In recent years, novel elements have been introduced in dramaturgy as well.

Innovations in literary styles and searchings for a condensed form of expression are first and foremost typical of the authors who came to the fore in the late 1950s and in the 'sixties. Their major endeavour was to approach reality without any bias, and to interpret phenomena of life in an individual manner. That intensity of searchings and of the creative thought as well as the lively interest in contemporary trends of literature are the typical traits of the present young generation of Estonian writers.

Contemporary Estonian literature maintains close contacts with its readers. The reading public is looking forward to the appearance of new works with exceptional interest. Evidence of this is the large number of editions, which exceeds the pre-war figure about 10-fold, on the average. Thus, an edition of a book of poems — including the works of debutants — is, as a rule, 8—12 thousand copies, of stories and novels 20—30 thousand (in single cases, even more). All of those books are sold within



The journal "*Looming*" today

a very short time, and the works of particularly popular writers — verbally in a couple of days. Literary journals enjoy the same popularity. There are probably few countries in the world where books find such an eager reception.

A peculiar feature of contemporary Estonian literary life is the enlivening and strengthening of literary connections, in all respects. This is first and foremost revealed in the increasing volume and range of translations. In the first post-war years, mainly the works of Russian classics and those of contemporary Russian and other Soviet nations were translated, whereas since the second half of the 1950s translations have been made of the masterpieces of the entire world literature, in the true sense of the word. There has never before been such a highly qualified staff of translators in Estonia as at the time being: direct translations have been made from about thirty languages. The series entitled "Great Masters of the Word" has acquainted readers with the classics of the world literature; the collected works of Shakespeare, Balzac, Tolstoi, Chekhov and Gorki have been published in Estonian. "Iliad" and "Odyssey" by Homer, "Faust" by Goethe, and "Yevgeni Onegin" by Pushkin have appeared in splendid translations, as well as the selected poems of classics and outstanding contemporary poets (Schiller, Shelley, Byron, Heine, Béranger, Lermontov, Petőfi, Shevchenko, Nekrassov, Whitman, Mayakovski, Becher, Eluard, Frost, Yessenin, Pablo Neruda, Nezval, García Lorca, Hikmet, Tvardovski, and others). Series of 20th-century novels and poetry are being published. Since 1957, ""*Loomingu*" *Raamatukogu*" ("The Library of "Looming""), a periodical publication, has been systematically acquainting Estonian readers with contemporary foreign literature, prevalently with short forms of prose. In all, about 2,300 books of fictional translations have been published in Soviet Estonia, the total edition exceeding 35 million copies. That is quite a remarkable number for a population of one million, and it speaks of a keen interest in literature. At the same time, the number of translations of Estonian literary works into other languages has also been considerably increasing. Most of all, Estonian classical and contemporary literature has been translated into Russian, the languages of other Soviet and foreign nations following the lead. The renderings of Estonian literary works in 42 languages include about 750 books, in a total amounting to 20 million copies and more.

General trends of development. As shown in the foregoing outline, the short forms of prose were the main genres to acquire a new content and reflect the new ideas in the first Soviet year and at the time of the Great Patriotic War. The stormy times simply did not allow writers to concentrate upon a generalisation of their experience in an exhaustive manner. In the first post-war years, matters did not change at once, either: prose was overshadowed by other literary genres further on, as well. As formerly, the principal subject-matter of the stories and novelettes of the latter half of the 1940s was the formation of people's characters under the hard conditions of battle-fronts and in the rear of the front-line (E. Männik, A. Jakobson). Some authors depicted life in occupied Estonia (E. Krusten, R. Sirge). The last-mentioned theme induced O. Tooming to write his work "In the Years of the Brown Plague" (1950), the first novel of importance in Estonian Soviet literature. The events of the day, and, in particular, the collectivisation of agriculture, which marked a significant turning-point in the lives of country-people, demanded the attention of the writers with increasing urgency. The theme was treated by H. Leberecht in the story "Light at Koordi" (1949), the first Estonian prose-work to win a USSR State Prize. Some stories and novelettes by R. Sirge, E. Krusten, and others, were written on that subject. The writers endeavoured to show the formation of new qualities in people, the development of a Soviet outlook upon life in the struggle with the class-enemies and representatives of a reactionary ideology. In the prose of that period, the characters were presented, first and foremost, as products of the social environment and symbols of one social force or another.

The first prose works in which the basical principles of socialist realism were applied in a more natural and individual manner began to appear in the early 1950s. J. Smuul started to publish his serial "Letters from the Village of the Benighted", rendering, in an easy manner, the daily happenings in a fishermen's collective, stressing at the same time, the necessity of a humane and dialectic attitude to man. Simultaneously, the panoramic novel, devoted to historical and revolutionary themes, rose to a leading position. Here, the main attention was centred upon the development of the social awareness of

the people, beginning with a spontaneous protest against oppression and ending in a conscious revolutionary struggle. A. Hint, the pioneer of that genre, published the first two parts of his "The Coast of the Winds" (1951—1954), an epic account of the life and social relations of the villagers on the coast of the Isle of Saaremaa, at the beginning of the present century. A. Hint was seconded by E. Krusten, whose "Hearts of the Young" (I—II, 1954—1956), kept in a lyrical and intimate tone, dealt with the life of estate labourers and villagers in North Estonia, in the same period. Those two mature and masterfully written works, which treated individuals as a complex of social relations, laid a firm foundation to the further development of the Estonian Soviet novel. A new genre of prose was initiated at that time, the "documentary story" containing journalistic elements (A. Hint, E. Rannet, and others).

From the late 1950s onwards, the novel has been occupying a leading position in Estonian literature. A number of new authors emerged, and the novel became diversified, both in its content and literary style. At the initial stage, better results were attained in the panoramic novel, with a great number of characters and parallel plots, in which the portrayal of types proceeded mainly from a social viewpoint, the descriptive element playing an essential role. However, greater attention was already then devoted to such people whose behaviour was not entirely motivated by the social environment. The treatment of the interrelations of the characters and their surroundings became more varied. The evolution of the hero was founded on a deeper understanding of the mutual relations between an individual and the community and on the dialectics of the typical and individual traits. The events of 1940/1941 were presented in the novel "The Country and the People" (1956) by R. Sirge, whose rendering of characters and events was based on a philosophical interpretation of socio-historical processes. H. Leberecht's family chronicle "The Palaces of the Vassars" (1960) dealt with life in revolutionary and post-revolutionary Petrograd. Further panoramic novels were written by J. Semper ("Red Carnations", 1955), L. Vaher ("The Story of the River Emajõgi", 1960), P. Kuusberg, and others.

At the subsequent stage of development, attention was focused on the novel dealing with a single individual, in which life was viewed from a narrower but more concentrated aspect.

The range of psychological observations was considerably widened, and the interrelations between single individuals and the problems they involved were brought to light. A typical feature of those works was the endeavour to convey the atmosphere of the epoch by means of a character who struggles with serious inner conflicts. In the process of that struggle his mentality is revealed as well as the world of his moral ideas and his feelings. Focusing the attention on the development or deterioration of a character during the crucial times, writers tried to make social and psychological generalisations. An important place was attributed to the motives of action and to personal responsibility. The composition became, likewise, increasingly complicated: action often proceeded at different times; the development of the plot became tenser, and the expression more concentrated and vivid. Here we must mention, as the most outstanding novels of that period, dealing with the life of an individual and exposing the complicated dialectic of a human mind, the third part of "The Coast of the Winds" (1960) by A. Hint and "Like a Droplet of Water in the Ocean" (1962) by E. Krusten. The problem novels by P. Kuusberg, which contain strong journalistic elements, treat the painful and contradicting transformation of an individual in the days of war ("The Two Selves of Enn Kalm", 1961) and the changes in the socio-political atmosphere of the post-war years ("The Case of Andres Lapeteus", 1963). Those two periods were also shown from different aspects and in different walks of life, in novels by L. Promet, V. Gross, R. Kaugver, E. Tennov, H. Sergo, L. Vaher, V. Ilus, and others. There were also some novels dealing with contemporary developments, though of an inferior artistic value.

The last 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s brought along an enlivenment in the short forms of prose, which had been of rather mediocre standards up to that time. The short story was resuscitated in its classical form (M. Raud), and a number of collections of stories (by O. Tooming and others) were published in which contemporary problems were mostly viewed from an ethical aspect. Prose miniatures and portrait sketches of contemporary people became also popular (E. Krusten, L. Promet). Novel features also appeared in documentary prose, whose best representatives combined, in an individual manner, elements of journalism with those of fiction (J. Smuul, A. Kaal, J. Peegel, and others).

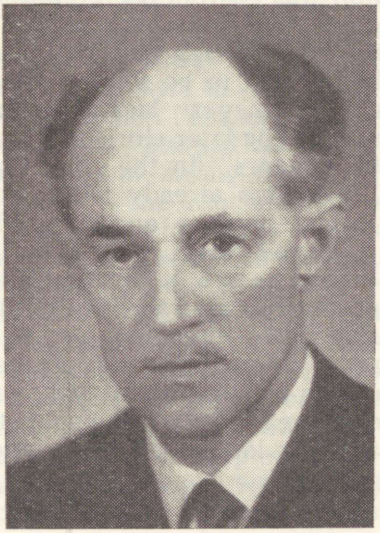
In the latter half of the 1950s, remarkable enlivenment could be stated in travelling notes, which had almost been neglected in the previous decades. The best books about travels in Europe and other parts of the world deservedly aroused lively interest among the reading public since the writers (A. Kaal, L. Promet and R. Parve, V. Beekman, R. Sirge, E. Niit and J. Kross) had not put down their immediate impressions only, but supplemented them with interesting observations of erudite thinkers and social critics. The internationally best-known Soviet Estonian book — J. Smuul's account of his voyage to the Antarctic "The Icy Book" (1959) belongs to that genre as well. This work, a skilful combination of lyrical and publicistic elements, enriched the whole Soviet literature and won its author the Lenin Prize.

From the mid-sixties onwards, the share of the young prose writers has considerably risen, simultaneously causing noteworthy shifts in both the problems and genre relations, due to the searchings for novel means of portraying people and actual life. On the whole, young writers show a preference for the brief forms of prose, such as the short novel, story and novelette. That circumstance has contributed to the change in the structure of fiction. In the works of E. Vetemaa, A. Valton, M. Traat, M. Unt, and others, the attention is predominantly focused on man; the types are created with particular compactness, verging on abstraction. The central problem is the search for an individual's, mostly a young person's, place in community, involving all his inner contradictions as well as his complicated relations to other men and to society. When dealing with those intricate problems, some young authors have lately revealed a tendency to use symbolic imagery and artistic deformation as well as extensive exaggeration and elements of the grotesque and absurd.

The Estonian prose-writers of both the older and younger generations, proceeding from a Marxist outlook on life, have dealt with the same general issues which have been predominating in the entire world literature of the 20th century. Those are first and foremost the problems of relations between man and society, the share of the intelligentsia in revolution as well as the question of man's attitude to his property, to land, etc. The following brief survey of the work of the most important Estonian authors of the post-war years ought to show in how

far they have been able to connect general concepts with the local life treated by them, or to add novel nuances to their treatment.

Rudolf Sirge (born in 1904) broke his way into literature in the second half of the 1920s, as a hardened working-man who had been obliged to earn his living since his early youth. His first collections of short stories still bore a character of searchings. However, his interest in social problems became already apparent at that time, as well as his sympathy with those protesting against overwhelming circumstances. His first two-volume novel "Peace! Bread! Land!" (1929) added some new elements to the general picture of Estonian prose by its subject and the attitude of the writer. Here the author depicted the revolutionary year of 1917 in Tartu. The main characters were slum-dwellers, proletarians and revolutionaries. The author portrayed communists with obvious sympathy, showing a negative attitude to the bourgeoisie. Though the presentation of the living conditions in the slums and the portrayal of the phenomena of decay in the times of war tended to naturalism and one-sidedness, the novel, as a whole, rendered an objective enough picture of the period. That novel was subsequently —



Rudolf Sirge

after a period of some thirty years — substantially re-written by the author and published under a new title, "Lights in the River-Plain" (1961).

In his two collections of short stories which were published in the 1930s ("Small Wishes" and "The Flights that Failed"), Sirge continued dealing with people who were mutilated by the conditions prevailing in a bourgeois society. The novel "Bleak Summer" (1936) took the readers back to the times of the German occupation of Estonia in 1918, and was simultaneously a warning of the danger of fascism. In the pre-war period, Sirge wrote a mature novel "Shame in the Heart" (1938), which was conceived in the form of the diary of a young man, giving account of his failure to find his proper place in an atmosphere of suffocation and stagnation.

For Sirge, an expounder of social problems, whose novels and stories had been permeated by democratic ideas, the way to Soviet literature was but a continuation of the path taken in earlier years. In the post-war years Sirge mainly wrote short stories, depicting country-life at the time of the fascist occupation (the collected stories "Before the Dawning Day") or dealing with problems of socialist construction (the collection of stories "In the Rhythm of Common Work"). The writer's attention was centred on the fate of the working-man, on his development at the times of war and great social upheavals. But, in those stories his treatment of the intricate phenomena of life tended to be somewhat schematic and illustrative, and his artistic imagery lagged behind the standards of his previous works. His later stories, "The Decisive Turn" and "The Song of the Victors" (in the collection of stories "The Inviting Path", 1954) were already better and the writer regained his ideological balance and his artistic mastery.

Sirge's novel "The Country and the People", published in 1956, was one of the first outstanding prose works in contemporary Estonian Soviet literature. The novel presents an extensive and convincing picture of the events of 1940—1941 in a rural community and of the ensuing intense class struggle, drawn in a suggestively generalised manner. The author exposes from various angles the attitude of different social strata towards landed property, and, in his portrayal of the compli-



"The Country and the People" (*paper-jacket by R. Pangsepp, 1959*)

cated relations between different people, looks for the situation of the question: who is the real representative of the whole people, responsible for the future of the country? The deeply felt changes in the role of the rural bourgeoisie in connection with social reforms are splendidly reflected in the monumental character of Peter of Logina farm. The dignity and self-consciousness of that wealthy old farmer are based on strong traditions, and his attachment to land is deep; but it is the attachment of a proprietor in the first line, and not that of a toiler. Peter's entire strength is rooted in the past; he is not a verdant tree, but an old stump that proves an obstacle in the field of new life, and has to be eradicated. In Peter's fate, the writer has been able to show objectively the human tragedy of the representative of a decaying class, irrevocably doomed owing to the renewal of social life. Therefore Peter of Logina may be regarded one of the most remarkable characters in contemporary Estonian literature. "The Country and the People" is evidence of the author's mastery in revealing the interrelations between individuals in a dialectic manner, as a manifestation

of class relations. His philosophic concept of the fate of the country and the people is convincingly reflected in the characters and events depicted. Showing the clash in the interests of different classes and the increase in the political activity and revolutionary self-awareness of the former farmhands, Sirge stresses, through the medium of his characters and their actions, the following beliefs: the actual master of the land is he who toils on it, and the real representatives of a people are those who struggle for its happier future. With that profound work, which appeals by its convincing presentation of characters as well as by the masterful development of the plot, the writer has elevated the standards of the Estonian Soviet novel.

In the later works — the collection of short stories "Swept by the Wind" (1965) and in the story "Three at Table" (1969), Sirge recurs, once again, to the difficult fates of the people in the hard times of war and social upheavals; now, they are viewed from a greater distance, both in time and in the approach, enriched by the experience of the author.

Sirge has also merits in the development of the Estonian travelling books. His travel notes, in particular those about his recent trips to the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, entitled "With Those Living Across the Ocean" (1969), are a successful fusion of striking observations made by an experienced newsreporter and the penetrating thoughts of a mature writer and philosopher. Sirge has also uninterruptedly collaborated with the press, as an essayist and literary critic.

Erni Krusten (born in 1900) likewise made his debut in the 1920s. His early short prose works and his first novel "In Pursuit of the Past", dealing with the inconsiderate attitude of people in their relations to their fellow-men, are approached from a peculiar angle, and the theme is presented in a subjective manner. Krusten made frequent use of abstractions verging on the grotesque, as already seen in his psychological novelettes of the late 1930s (published in the collection "Blind Love", 1941). Detailed analysis of the psychology of extraordinary individuals is made in the novel "The Love of Org Mägedi" (1939), in which the author shows what intricate human relations may result from compassion and deception. Though these works are not devoid of a rather broad social background, the main attention of the writer is devoted to a single individual, viewed from the angle of moral value.



Erni Krusten

Krusten's humane attitude and his understanding of the drawbacks of the class society helped him to find his way to Soviet literature; nevertheless, his creative transformation was not easily effected. He tried to find a novel approach, but these first works of the post-war period (the novel "The Book of the Pekses", the collections of short stories "Turning-Points" and "In the Name of Peace") are rather monotonous in style and of little interest in contents, despite the author's attempts at concentrating on social problems.

Krusten regained his writer's composure and took a firm stand as a Soviet author in the two-volume novel "The Hearts of the Young" (1954—1956). Here the writer has achieved a real synthesis of individual and social aspects. "The Hearts of the Young" is a panoramic novel dealing with the life of farmers and manor-labourers in North-Estonia at the beginning of the present century. It is rich in vividly drawn types, impressive genre scenes and dramatic events. The socio-historical problems are presented first and foremost through the medium of human fates. One of the central themes is the victorious love of a young manor-labourer and the daughter of an affluent

farmer. The single fates and their sum are united in the main stream of the novel, the wide panorama of the awakening revolutionary aspirations of the people in the stormy days of the revolution of 1905.

The original feature of that socio-historical novel is the lyrical and intimate touch peculiar to Krusten. His composition reveals the ability of an experienced narrator to seize important details and develop single scenes (though at times, at the expense of the general epic and dramatic line). Krusten's literary style is typified by a pastel-toned gentleness, subtle and animated lyrism, intertwined with eloquent speech proper to country-folk, and notes of satire and irony in the portrayal of the representatives of the exploiters.

The novel "Like a Droplet of Water in the Ocean" (1962) takes the reader along the path of the development of an exceptionally sensitive and beauty-loving individual who has been living the life of a hermit for a long time, to the most complicated problems of the era. In that psychological novel, the nature and perception of life of the hero have been almost exaggeratedly represented, but this circumstance helps to emphasise the belief of the author: even in the case of a self-centred individual who is trying to escape from actual life, it



"Like a Droplet of Water in the Ocean" (*cover by H. Laretei, 1962*)

is impossible to retain the attitude of an onlooker when facing the atrocities committed by fascists. Before his tragic end, the hero arrives at the realisation that the true sense of life is the struggle for truth and justice. The author traces the fate of the main character with painful compassion, analysing his inner world in minutest detail.

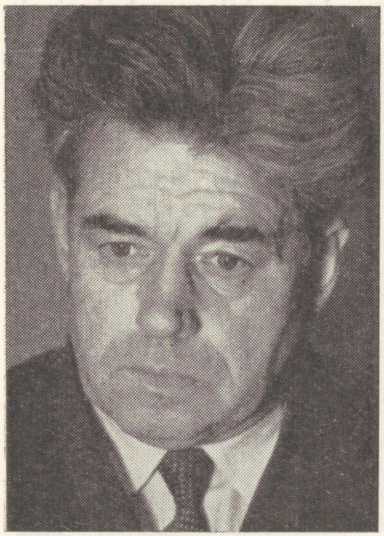
Krusten has also proved himself a masterful writer of prose miniatures and short stories, particularly in the book "In Search of Spring". In seemingly trifling episodes and details, he finds that which is important and generally valid. In the gentle manner proper to him, he deprecates vacuity and worthlessness and points to the joys derived from the beautiful sides of life. His miniatures have often been called poems in prose and compared to those by Turgenev. The writer has also tried his hand at poetry (the collection of miniatures and poems, entitled "Yucca"). A lyrical undercurrent is likewise typical of Krusten's plays, which accuse the bourgeois society of greed and blind egotism. A number of the writer's works excel in a peculiar humour, which predominates in his later stories ("The Old Rascal"). He has also written books for children, which, above all, are aimed at teaching the young readers to appreciate everything that is good and beautiful.

The strong side of Krusten's gift is his subtle psychological perception combined with an inherent lyricism, with which, in his best works, he has been able to convey the triumph of the noble and fine human feelings over the low and vicious ones.

Aadu Hint (born in 1910), one of the most original Soviet Estonian prosaists, deserves particular mention for his epic narratives of the life of fishermen and sailors and for his social and philosophical generalisations based on the events depicted. In the 1930s, Hint, at that time a young school-teacher, began his literary career as a writer of novels, whose plot and range of problems were concerned with the terror of leprosy that had overshadowed his early youth (that terrible disease, at that time incurable, was spread among the dwellers of the Island of Saaremaa). In those works, attention was focused on the analysis of the subconscious instincts and complicated feelings of terror and hopelessness among the deprived people. Hint tended to stress the importance of moral self-perfection. A profound psychological approach was revealed by the author in the novel "The Golden Gate", a merciless dissection of the problems

of love and marriage. Towards the end of the 1930s, the writer developed an interest in social problems, as shown in his novel "The Trimmer" (1939), a portrayal of the life of seamen. All the works by Hint, including the earlier ones, are permeated by an ethical seriousness and reveal his endeavour to understand those who are struggling with contradictions of life. And yet, in Hint's career as a writer, the novels of the pre-war period mark a preparatory stage.

A crystallisation of the writer's world outlook and a deepening of his criticism of society may be observed in some short stories that were published in 1939—1940. The short stories and documentary sketches written during the war were published in 1945, in a book entitled "Wild Geese". The best of them, particularly those dealing with the struggle against the fascist invaders, are characterised by an acute conflict, laconic presentation of the inner world of men, and a social interpretation. In the first post-war years, the writer published two plays, which, depicting the life of a fishing village, had interrelated plots ("The Fishing Schooner of the Men of Tagaranna" and "Where Are You Going, Comrade Director?"). Hint conveyed a true-



Aadu Hint

to-life picture of the formation of socialist relations in the fishing village, the first attempts at common work and the difficulties and contradictions involved, laying particular emphasis on the principles of socialist democracy. He showed what happens when a man becomes intoxicated with his power and begins to misuse the privileges of his office. In those years, Hint also wrote some sketches of the front-rank workers of the post-war reconstruction period (the collection "Portraits of Workmen", 1948) as well as two fine youth books.

The four-volume novel "The Coast of the Winds" (1951—1966) established Hint's fame as the initiator of the Estonian revolutional-historical novel and recorder of the life of the coast-dwellers. That work represents a multi-faceted panorama of the life of the people and their struggle for their civic rights, from the beginning of the present century to the last years of bourgeois Estonia. The life on the Estonian coast had already been depicted in earlier literature by several writers (J. Mändmets, A. Mälk, and others), but in Hint's epopee it not only found a more wide-ranged treatment and deeper historico-philosophical interpretation than hitherto, but also attained the culmination of self-expression of a writer, an offspring of seafarers, whose emotions and thoughts are deeply rooted in the environment described. Hint's work is characterised by an extensive utilisation of autobiographical and family materials and by his immediate connection with his native place, its people and its nature. Tracing, in the main, the life of a parish on the isle of Saaremaa, and that of the numerous members of the family of the Tihus in particular, the author touches upon serious social problems connecting the fates of his heroes with the liberation struggle of the wide masses of people, at its different stages.

Part I of "The Coast of the Winds" unveils the life of the coast-dwellers, beginning with the period prior to the revolution of 1905, showing their opposition to landlords and clericals, which, in its development, led to a dramatic collision. At the same time, the author points to the developing class distinctions among the villagers themselves, which resulted in the rise of the bourgeoisie, whose representatives could no longer find their way back to their former fellows, in the crucial days of struggle. A typical instance is the life-story of Captain Tõnis Tihu, continued throughout the ensuing volumes of the novel.



"The Coast of the Winds", I
(cover by E. Okas, 1951)

That strong-willed and energetic man, having chosen the road of prosperity, turns his back on his people and his love, and, despite his wealth, is doomed to experiencing all the bitterness of his isolation and moral decline in later years. In composition, part I of the epopee is based on the traditions of the panoramic historical novels of E. Vilde, with a great number of characters representing all social strata, both rural and urban (part of the action is taken to Tallinn), and with a satirical touch in the portrayal of the class of the exploiters.

The time of action of part II coincides with the years of reaction after the defeat of the 1905 revolution, when the ideas of the struggle of liberation were smouldering in the hearts of the people. Accordingly, the movements of the wide masses are no longer in the centre of the author's attention. The main character of that novel is, in the first place, a sailor's wife, Mare. By dwelling on her innate industry, integrity, and straightforwardness, the author stresses the ennobling role of a selfless,

life-promoting individual. Part III is of a more complicated structure. The author connects the life of his hero, Joonas Tihu, with the topical problems and crucial events of the epoch, simultaneously presenting a deep analysis of the inner world of an individual. Joonas is in the vortex of war and revolution. Though emerging from amidst the working class, he is infected by a petty-bourgeois yearning for wealth. Here, a single destiny reflects the fundamental changes in the principles, human emotions and strivings in those stormy times. Having passed a long road of enormous sufferings and humiliations, Joonas Tihu finally finds his proper place among the soldiers of the revolution. The last part of the epopee depicts the development of Enn Tihu, a young intellectual; coming from a family of working people, he arrives at the realisation of the social injustice reigning in bourgeois Estonia and, as a result, becomes aware of new ideological vistas. As to the range of problems and the milieu, that part of the novel is mostly of an autobiographical character, showing (with a somewhat insufficient sense of distance in places) the searchings, both ideological and literary, of the author himself.

The chief merit of Hint's works, and of his "The Coast of the Winds", above all, consists in the profound understanding and skilful interpretation of the life of the Estonian coast-dwellers, their traditions and experience, and in the penetrating portrayal in depth and width, of the struggle for liberation of wide masses, as reflected in the destinies and inner developments of single individuals. The writer has succeeded in combining the general and typical traits of his heroes, showing the Estonian coast-dwellers in their total nature and as social types. The language of Hint's masterpiece is strikingly rich, vivid, and truly popular in style.

Hans Leberecht (1910—1960) penetrated meteor-like into Estonian literature at the end of the 1940s. His first extensive work, "Light at Koordi", was awarded a State prize in 1949, and was subsequently popularised by numerous translations all over the Soviet Union and abroad. The author, a journalist, had already tried his hand at fiction in previous years; from 1934 on, some of his short stories had been appearing in Russian literary journals in Leningrad (where the writer had spent his youth). Being acquainted with the problems and methods of Soviet literature, Leberecht had a considerate advantage of

those writers who had started their literary careers in bourgeois Estonia. On the other hand, owing to his education and to circumstances in which he had developed his talent, Leberecht wrote all of his works in Russian, up to the end of his life, publishing them in Estonian as authorised translations.

As a journalist, Leberecht had collected copious material concerning the collectivisation of agriculture, which he used in his "Light at Koordi". In that book, he tried to convey the attitude of the Estonian farmhands and the development of their principles during the period of socialist transformations. M. Sholokhov's classical novel about collectivisation, the "Ploughed Virgin Land" served obviously as an example for Leberecht's work. Laying main stress on different phenomena in the process of the formation of new concepts and on the class struggle, the author principally subdivides his characters into groups according to their social position. The narrative is characterised by a matter-of-fact recording of phenomena of life, a good grasp of interesting details and laconism, which all contribute to the compactness and concentration of the plot. The generalised



Hans Leberecht

realistic rendering of the world of ideas of the poor and middle farmers is rather successful, but the description of the process of the establishment of the collective farm suffers from simplification. A certain one-sidedness and schematism may also be observed in the portrayal of characters. However, "Light at Koordi" was among the first serious attempts at conveying the ideological and political struggle of the post-war period and the transformation of the world-outlook of the people, and Leberecht deserves recognition as the pioneer of the new theme and recorder of topical processes. The tendencies of simplification and schematism were more outspoken in the following works, in which the author treated the same problems (the story "On the Road", about the life of collective farmers, and the novel "Captains" — devoted to the life of oil shale miners).

In the second half of the 1950s, Leberecht's work acquired greater depth and a more many-sided interpretation of complexities of life. In the novel "The Soldiers Are Going Home", on war-time subjects, the author tried to give a generalised picture of the campaigns of the Estonian Infantry Corps, by rendering the developments in a unit, and showing the ideological transformation of the Estonian soldiers, as well as their gradual liberation from the prejudices and survivals of the bourgeois society. In the kolkhoz theme (the story "In a House Together"), as well, Leberecht succeeded in finding better ways of presenting the contradictions in the development of a new society and revealing the complexity of human relations. The writer's most outstanding work was his last novel "The Palaces of the Vassars" (1960), which depicts the life of the Estonian workers in Petrograd, mainly in the days of the revolution of 1917 and in the following years. The novel, containing a number of autobiographical elements and subjects familiar to the author, presents a broad epic panorama of the period. The author truthfully and with great persuasiveness portrays the victory of the October Revolution and the difficulties in connection with that significant historic turning-point, focusing his attention on the relations between man and society. With his work, Leberecht extended the range of themes in Estonian literature, and, by picturing the different mentalities and fates of the Vassar brothers on the background of the great historical upheavals of our epoch, made a successful artistic generalisation.

Death interrupted Leberecht's work at a time when he had reached maturity as a writer. However, in spite of the briefness of his literary career, he succeeded in contributing to the development of Estonian Soviet prose, and, in particular, to its penetrating into the literary world of other nations.

Juhan Smuul. It might seem somewhat conditional to place such a many-sided author like Smuul (born in 1922) among the prosaists: at the beginning of his literary career he wrote mainly poetry, and, at the time being, he is considered one of the most outstanding contemporary Estonian playwrights. Nevertheless, Smuul made his appearance on the literary arena both in the Soviet Union and abroad as a prose-writer. In the 1960s, he became the most-translated and best-known Estonian author.

Smuul, a native of a fishing-village, began writing in the days of the Great Patriotic War. His first book of poetry "Hard Youth" (1946) reflects the experience of those years that shaped him as a Soviet patriot and communist; the same themes have been recurring in his poetry time and again. From the very beginning, Smuul has revealed a tendency of combining the lyrical, topical and epic genres, showing a preference for social problems. The long narrative in verse, "The Son of the Storm", begun in the years of the war, gives a generalised picture of the life of Estonian sailors in the bourgeois state. The book "The Järvesuu Boys' Team" (1948) contains poems about construction work in post-war years and changes in the mentalities of people; the title poem, a documentary narrative dealing with the building of a power plant by young men, is particularly typical of that approach. In his subsequent poetry, Smuul, likewise, treated the construction of socialism, comparing the life of the working-people in bourgeois and Soviet societies, and expressing the desire of the Soviet people to live in peace (the collection of poems "So that the Apple-Trees Might Blossom", 1951). The "Poem to Stalin" (1949), as well, was an attempt at interpreting and generalising the crucial events of the epoch. The narrative in verse "I — a Komsomol" (1953) containing autobiographical elements, was devoted to the growth and maturing of people in the hard days of the Great Patriotic War.

Smuul's poetry was borne by the pathos of ideological transformations, typical of that period; it is realistic and concrete in style, fluent in the manner of presentation; but at times the author is unable to avoid rhetoric verboseness. In form, Smuul's



Juhan Smuul

poetry is simple, traditional rhymed verse, in which the expressiveness of the popular language and an original humorous tone are not lacking. A particular place is taken by the themes of the sea and the life of the fishermen (the book "Between the Sea and the Sky", 1959).

In the 1950s, other genres began to prevail in Smuul's production. The first prose work of importance was the cycle of short stories entitled "Letters from the Village of the Benighted" (1955), a colourful, vivid and meaningful account of the life in a collective fishery. That book is of particular importance for it introduced new topical problems of signifance and established new aesthetic standards. The sound sense of humour of the writer and his keen glance are revealed in "The Strange Adventures of Muhu Islanders at the Jubilee Song Festival in Tallinn" (1957), an entertaining report in feuilleton style, directed against human folly and the current shortcomings in

life. The same trend was later successfully continued in "Muhu Monologues" (1968), written in the dialect of the writer's native Isle of Muhu. In all of those works, ample use is made of recent folklore, and, particularly, of the inexhaustible source of folktales of an anecdotic character.

One of Smuul's masterpieces is the literary diary kept during the author's voyage to the Antarctic, "The Icy Book" (1959; in the English translation "Antarctica Ahoi!"), which made the author's name famous in the Soviet Union as well as in a number of countries abroad. The Estonian travel book, which had attained notable standards already in the first half of the century (in the travel notes by Tuglas and Semper, in particular), found a worthy and original representative in Smuul. The informational part of that lyrical and yet topical diary is enlivened by striking details concerning the collective of the investigators of the Antarctic, also containing meditations on various problems of life and creative work, and an abundance of novel and interesting thoughts and sayings about

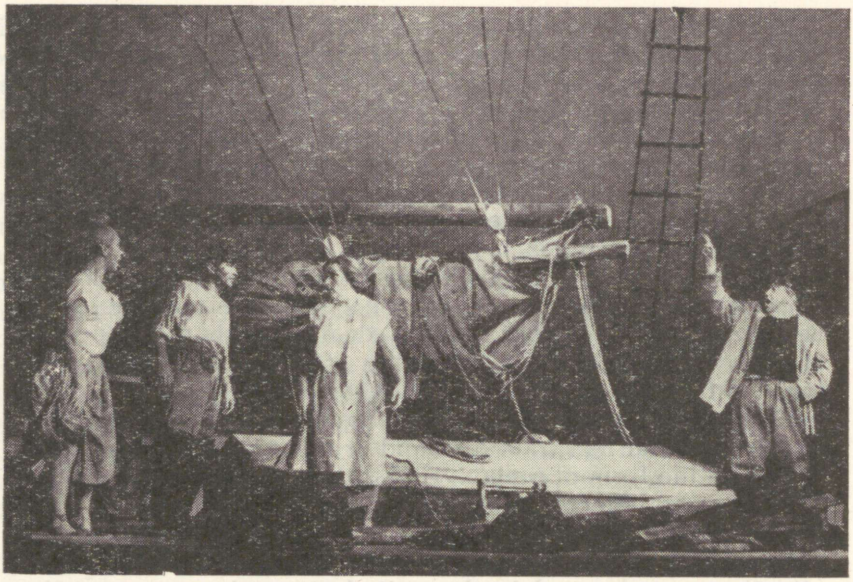


"The Icy Book"
(paper-jacket by V. Tolli, 1959)

contemporary Soviet people. The book did not only appeal by the freshness of themes and observations (which is a merit in itself), but also by a contemporary perception of life, in harmony with the mentality and world of emotions of a progressive individual. In the entries of the travelling diary, the author has succeeded in conveying his experience with immediate directness and to portray, with sincerity and ease, the atmosphere of a creative restlessness and the intensity of spiritual searchings, which fascinate the readers.

An analogical form of expression (though not in the form of a diary) was used by Smuul in his second travel book, "The Sea of Japan, December" (1963), dealing with the expedition of a Soviet vessel and a collective of researchers. That book, too, has been translated into a number of languages.

Already before writing the above-mentioned accounts of voyages, Smuul had tried his hand at representing life aboard a vessel, in the form of a play. "The Atlantic" (1957), his debut as a playwright, depicts the everyday happenings on board a fishing vessel, far from the native coast. For that purpose, the author participated in a fishing expedition. In that play, main attention was devoted to the attitude towards man, a particularly poignant problem at that time. Neither Smuul's plays nor his prose works conform to the traditional genres. The writer follows boldly the line dictated by his own intuition. In the next play, "Lea" (1960), the author dealt with the intricate problems of religiousness and humaneness, on the background of the crucial events of 1941—1942. Both the play and its production evoked lively discussion. The colourful characters and episodes in the life of Estonian sailors and coast-dwellers at the end of the last century found a joyous revival in the play "Jõnn of Kihnu Island, or the Wild Captain" (1965). The author makes a particular point of the innate intelligence, manliness and strong sense of human responsibility of the semi-legendary hero. That play has been produced in a greater number of places beyond the borders of Estonia than any other work by Smuul (in Moscow, Riga, Helsinki, and Berlin). A further original line was struck in the satirical play "The Colonel's Widow", consisting almost entirely of monologues, startling and militant self-revelations of a contemporary upstart. The conditional character has been applied to an even greater extent in the comedy, "The Life of the Penguins" (1969), where, as if in con-



A scene from the performance of "The Wild Captain" *(Tallinn, 1964)*

tinuation of the tradition of motifs suggested by Anatole France, the author presents a parody of contemporary conflicting ideas and polemics of various kinds.

In the production of Smuul, which is rich in problems, genres and manners of execution, we find works that may be considered to belong to the best part of Estonian Soviet literature. The author has been particularly attracted by the spiritual and ideological growth of man, by the theme of the victory over oneself, by the desire to master one's fate; simultaneously, as an innate humourist, he has added colour and zest to the general picture of Estonian literature. As a coast-dweller, he displays particular preference for the theme of man and sea. In that sphere, he has a lot to say, and not only to the local reading public.

Paul Kuusberg. In the 1960s, P. Kuusberg (born in 1916) rose to prominence as a novelist. His literary career was somewhat unusual. In the post-war years, next to journalistic activities, he mainly engaged in literary criticism, and started writing nov-



Paul Kuusberg

els at a relatively late date. His first novel, "The Walls" (1957), deals with the life of construction workers in bourgeois Estonia — a theme very familiar to the writer, a former builder and Trade Unions activist. In that book, the main problem is the growing class consciousness of the workers on the eve of the revolutionary events of 1940.

Kuusberg arrived at a far superior form of expression and contemporary themes in his second novel, "The Two Selves of Enn Kalm" (1961), depicting the campaign of the Estonian Infantry Corps. The development of the central character, and the intricate process of his ideological growth, full of contradictions, is in the focus of the narrative. The author succeeded in showing, with a great degree of persuasiveness, those situations and conditions, in which a person who was brought up in bourgeois surroundings and was imbued with nationalist prejudices may become a purposeful fighter for a socialist society. In comparison with the first novel, Kuusberg's second work is much more lapidary in expression, more varied in imagery, and displays a deeper insight into the inner world of the hero. The battle scenes are rendered by the author very impressively.



Enn Kalm on the road of war. A scene from the film "Men in Soldiers' Coats" *(Studio Tallinnfilm, 1968)*

The writer tackled a significant theme in his following novel, "The Case of Andres Lapeteus" (1963), describing in detail, as if he were diagnosing a medical case, what happens when a man turns into a semi-mechanical link of administrative power and allows his sense of personal responsibility to get blunted. Kuusberg follows, stage by stage, the moral decline of the title hero, a former battle-front commander who holds a responsible post after the war. We see the fluctuations in the world outlook and the total bankruptcy of an individual who has no sense

of dignity and no moral courage in the peculiar circumstances during the post-war period. All that is recorded with a certain dryness, but the events presented develop with a breath-taking tension, thanks to various compositional devices (action taking place at different chronological planes, etc.).

The novel "In Midsummer" (1966), dealing with the initial period of the Great Patriotic War, depicts the struggle of Estonian volunteer workers' battalions against the attacking fascist forces and gangs of emboldened bourgeois-nationalist henchmen of the Nazis; in the summer of 1941. By means of dynamically developed episodes, battle scenes, unexpected turns in the fates of people, often caused by an unclear situation, the author has succeeded in showing the specific character of those hard days of bitter struggle, in which it could even happen that people who had been loyal to Soviet power, joined the ranks of the enemy.

Kuusberg's merit as a novelist consists in his ability of choosing the most topical problems and expounding them in a meaningful manner. The range of themes selected by him coincides with the most critical stages in the history of his own generation.

Lilli Promet (born in 1922), an artist's daughter and art student in the pre-war period, entered the literary arena in the 1950s, bringing along not only themes relative to art and the life of the artists, but also an original, artistic manner of shaping her material. Her abilities are best displayed in short forms of prose.

The first book by L. Promet, "The Disciples of Holy Art" (1958) contains three stories, all devoted to artists and arts life in bourgeois Estonia. At one time we see, in the beam of her flashlight, the fledglings of an art school, at another time — the tragedy of an original artist who clings to his democratic beliefs, and, lastly, the vacuity and egotism of conceited artists-poseurs. Already in that book, the author showed her ability of portraying different characters, conveying different moods and giving an almost visual picture of situations, revealing, at the same time, an original elegance of literary style. Those properties found an even more appropriate application in the collections of stories and prose miniatures "Out of Pure Love, Only" (1958), "The Pink Hat" (1961) and "The Reclining Tiger" (1964).



"The Reclining Tiger"
(paper-jacket by P. Ulas. 1964)

The short prose by L. Promet is typified by the prevalence of social and psychological motifs, generalised on a wide scale, and by the preponderance of moral issues. Human yearning for goodness and beauty, beauty in the lives of individuals and in society, people's attitude to life, the worth of an individual, and the world of ideas of the younger generation — that's what preoccupies the mind of the author. The types created by L. Promet are vividly drawn, at times somewhat exaggerated in outline, and the contrasting characters are often set off in juxtaposition. In the prose miniature, in particular, L. Promet masters the concentrated manner of presentation, possessing the ability of pointing to poignant problems by way of seemingly trifling episodes, and making the readers draw their own conclusions. The brevity and elasticity of presentation are achieved by a fastidious choice of images and words as well as by striking details. L. Promet's manner of perception and expression has been stated to show affinities to impressionism. In her short stories, the course of events does not play a particularly significant role: everything that is irrelevant is eliminated, and only the main points are stressed

(this being a particularly strong side of the author). In longer stories and modern fairy tales, the plot is of a greater significance, but the style remains concentrated and compact, acquiring, at times, a vivid picturesqueness, or the cool transparence of a water-colour. The brief prose by L. Promet is often enlivened by a humorous note, which is sometimes scintillatingly mischievous, or femininely ironical.

L. Promet's novel "A Village without Men" (1962) deals with the life of a group of Estonians evacuated in the days of the Great Patriotic War to an outlying Tatar village — in novel and strange surroundings. Attention is focused on the changes during that period of hardships in the world outlook of people with a different upbringing and different attitudes to life. Despite their contradictory and even depressing experience, the better people gradually arrive at a broader understanding of life and become conscious supporters of the struggle for a socialist society. In the style of that novel, L. Promet adheres to the method of a short-story writer, blending various episodes and scenes to a harmonious and many-faceted whole.



Lilli Promet

In the latter half of the 1960s, L. Promet recurred, once again, to longer tales. The book "Who Spreads Anecdotes?" (1967) is illustrative of the author's talent for a broad portrayal of types, which also shows an increasing precision and many-sidedness in the delineation of characters and a mastery of stylistical devices. L. Promet draws and stylises, even uses the collage technique in the title story, thus arriving at a discreet conditionality. Some critics have pointed — and not without a justification — to the cold brilliance of L. Promet's style and to her tendency to decorativeness, but her eager searchings and her tireless work on perfecting her literary technique have always found due recognition.

L. Promet has also published (in collaboration with Ralf Parve) some books about her trips to European countries, and a collection of critical and publicistic essays. She has likewise tried her hand at poetry.

Other prose writers. Eduard Männik (1906—1966), who began his literary career in bourgeois Estonia as a writer of humorous sketches for the democratic press and as an author of children's books, rose to prominence in the post-war years with his short stories dealing with themes of the Great Patriotic War. Having fought throughout the war in the ranks of the Soviet Army, he was at his best as a literary recorder of the events of those years. His war-time stories — the collections "The Trial of the Hearts" (1946), "Fifteen Paces" (1947) and "The Struggle is Continuing" (1950) — are penetrated by the heroism of the Soviet people, both in battle and in the rear of the front-line, and by the perception of the unity of the multinational population of our vast country in that struggle. Like the sketches of a front-line artist, those stories might seem somewhat schematic and rough, but in their impulsive character they mirror the severe atmosphere of the war-times. Simple in texture and resembling, in their laconicity, the political posters of the war-times, they appeal by their deep emotionality and sincerity. In his later works, Männik also dealt with the life of workers in bourgeois Estonia (the collection of stories "The Barbed-Wire Fence", 1955) and with the problem of the real value of man in the post-war reconstruction period (the collection "People on the Scales of a Balance", 1959).

Osvald Tooming's (born in 1914) earlier works — the collection of stories "The New People" (1948); the novel

"Green Gold" (1950) — introduced some new themes into the post-war prose literature of Estonia, viz. the perception of the new reality and the maturing of people in the course of socialist construction. Showing the differences in the old and the new attitudes to life, and the conflict between the style of administration in conformity to the interests of people and that of the careerist-egotistic clique, the author often plunged into a didactic and illustrative manner. In the novel "In the Years of the Brown Plague" (1950), Tooming depicted the ideological growth, in fascist prison, of an intellectual, a man of progressive views, but still fettered by petty-bourgeois prejudices. In the following works, Tooming concentrated his attention on ethical problems, depicting conflicts between different moral principles, e.g. in the collection of stories "The Swan Flight" (1956), the novel "The Kirrets" (1958), the story "The Road through the Forest" (1960). He juxtaposes the humaneness and the spiritual purity of nature-near people to the egotistic and inconsiderate attitude of other indviduals, allotting now more space to the portrayal (though somewhat sentimental) of the inner world of his characters. Further works by Tooming are "Twelve Years" (1963), a novel dealing with the life of collective farmers, and two collections of stories — "Six Stories" (1966) and "A Book of the Forests" (1969) — in which he recurs to his favourite subjects, the life in the woods, hunting tales, and stories about wild animals.

Villem Gross (born in 1922) began his literary career at the beginning of the 1950s as an author of plays, in which he stressed the necessity of a considerate attitude to man ("The Questionnaire", 1955). After the publication of a youth book ("A Boy's Summer", 1956), Gross attained remarkable results as a youth author in the story "Spreading the Wings" (1958), dealing with the life of pupils of a secondary school in 1939—1941. It is a profound work, concerned with the complicated and controversial process of teenagers searching for their place in life, in a most critical period for Estonia, rendered in a true-to-life manner and told in a story with a captivating plot. Contemporary themes are treated by Gross in the novel "An Unfinished One-Family House for Sale" (1962); the story of the development of two young people shows how different concepts of aims of life might lead to a disruption of the marriage and to an abdication from the idea of "building one's

own nest". The author displays profound psychological insight and an outstanding ability in creating characters. In the novel "Deskmates" (1964), Gross subjects the problems of the attitude to life and the world outlook to an even closer examination, confronting different concepts of confidence and of the responsibility for one's former mistakes. The author criticises those who, encased in the armour of stolid political principles and ideological intolerance, have lost the ability of understanding people and cannot realise that conditions have changed. The novel "The School Fee" (1967) is devoted to events of the past — a strike of oil-shale miners in bourgeois Estonia. Gross is also the author of short stories, mostly dealing with representatives of his own generation, people who have reached middle age, e.g. in the collection "Average Days" (1966). The writer's work is typified by a meditative and inquisitive manner, his endeavour to analyse topical and intricate social problems and depict developing and controversial characters. At times, his narrative is enlivened by slightly humorous touches.

Herman S e r g o (born in 1911), a former ship's captain, has expanded the scope of themes of Estonian literature by his works devoted to the life of seamen. His stories "The Call of the Sea" (1960) and "The S/S Kajakalaid" (1963), the collections of short stories "The Surface Ripple and the Bottom Wave" (1962) and "Pilot-Room Stories" (1967) — are all devoted to the seamen's battle with the elements and to their class struggle under the bourgeois rule. When telling about their strange adventures — with obvious allusions to seamen's folklore — the author sometimes deviates from the realistic manner and tends to entertain the reader with an externally thrilling plot, rendered in a chatty tone. In the novel "The Ship of the Refugees" (1966), Sergo deals with Estonian coast-dwellers, exposing those incentives that drove a number of people to seek their fortunes abroad, in the days of war.

Luise V a h e r (born in 1912) made her literary debut with the novel "A Tale of the River Emajõgi" (1960), dealing with country-life in post-war years. Showing the changes taking place in the minds and lives of people, the author revealed a keen eye and striking abilities in drawing scenes and characters. Her further works, the collection of stories "Katrina Üle" (1962), also found appreciation, but the quality of the

later novels ("The Front-Line Nurse", 1965 and "Facing the Daylight", 1969) was below the standards of the previous books.

The contemporary life of workers is the subject, with which Raimond Kaugver (born in 1926) made his entrance into the literary world of Estonia, showing his strong sides in the portrayal of the milieu rather than in the delineation of characters. He has written some novels, e.g. "Noon-Light" (1962) and "The Daily Bread" (1964), with identic characters in the centre of action, and "The Seventh West" (1965), depicting the life of oil-shale miners. In the novel "Forty Candles" (1966), the author exposes the complicated fate of his contemporary, in the course of which the main character gradually turns into an unprincipled philistine. Kaugver has also published short stories and written a number of radio plays and dramas, mostly devoted to topical moral problems.

Väino Ilus (born in 1929) began with sober and matter-of-fact accounts of the life of collective farmers, publishing the story "The Heel on the Ground" (1962) and the collection of short stories "Changeable Weather" (1965). The novel "The Life of Your Own" (1964) was devoted to the problems of the generation that entered life in the post-war period. The author achieved a broader portrayal of his epoch in the novel "Sowing the Wind" (1968), in which action is presented at different chronological planes. Considerable advance may also be observed in the collection of short stories entitled "It is Noxious to Think at Night" (1969). In the works by Ilus, the main importance is attributed to social problems and relations between man's character and his position in life, which are analysed in a somewhat dry, rational manner.

Contemporary school-life and pedagogical problems are in the centre of attention of novels by Veera Saar (born in 1912), a former teacher of long standing, and particularly in two works dealing with characters in common — "Larks under the Canopy of the Sky" (1960) and "Above the Springs" (1963). Leo Metsar's (born in 1924) novels "Dreams Do Not Die" (1960) and "The Sun-Carriage" (1964) are concerned with the strivings of his own generation, and with the problem of finding one's proper place in life.

Juhan Peegel (born in 1919) has written meaningful brief accounts, both lyrical and humorous, of the past and present of his native island, Saaremaa. He has also achieved

a fine comical effect in his masterful imitations of the style of early didactic writers. Aristarch Sinkel (born in 1912) has published two historical novels, "Under the Yoke of the Black Cross" (1956) and "The Land Measured with Swords" (1959). Lennart Meri (born in 1929) has won wide recognition as an author of interesting travel books (which have been translated into a number of other languages) about his hikes in Central Asia and Eastern Siberia and an expedition to Kamchatka. Heino Kiik's (born in 1927) novel "The Hostel of the Ghosts" (1970) is a somewhat grotesque representation of the life on a collective farm that has gone bankrupt owing to a one-time bureaucratic administration, and of different reactions to situations, conveyed occasionally with a grim humour. The general picture of Estonian Soviet prose has been enriched by fiction by Endel Tennov and Einar Maasik, written in different styles and genres, as well as by works of Aira Kaal, Voldemar Panso, Ilmar Sikemäe, Ants Saar, Hugo Angervaks, Vassili Riis, Ellinor Rängel, and others.

Next to writers of books for adults, quite a number of authors have come to the fore, who specialise in juvenile fiction. Eno Raud (born in 1928) has succeeded in grasping the romantic element of adventure, appealing to the minds of the young, in his juvenile books "The Stainless Sword" (1957), "The War Hatchet Has Been Dug Out" (1959), and "Light in the Darkened Town" (1967). He has also written a number of good books for the very young, which have been translated into foreign languages, a story about a hike in Lapland ("A Reindeer-Ride", 1965) as well as a play for youth "Flying Saucers". E. Raud's novel "Pawns" (1968) also deserves to be mentioned. Silvia Rannamaa (born in 1918) is the author of two popular books, "Kadri" (1959) and "The Foster-Mother" (1963), dealing with one and the same young heroine. These books are written with a fine insight into the inner world of girls. Heino Väli (born in 1928) has destined his work for boys, in the first line, and written books with exciting plots and interesting characters. Jaan Rannap (born in 1931) has recently won popularity with his juvenile books, which reveal a keen perception of nature and a fine sense of humour. Further authors of youth fiction to be mentioned are the sisters Leida and Aino Tigane, Robert Vaidlo, Holger Pukk, the poet Vladimir Beekman, and others.

The younger generation of prose writers. In the 1960s, Estonian prose was enriched by the works of a number of young gifted authors, who brought along some novel aspects, both in the perception of life and artistic searchings.

Enn Vetemaa (born in 1936) came into literature as a promising poet (with collections of poems "Breaking of the Voice" and "The Snow-Ball Fight"), endeavouring to convey the contemporary all-embracing human dialectic of social phenomena by abundant contrasts, controversies and dissonances. In his verse, even when discussing very serious matters, he often tried to show the comical or ironical aspect of things, or tended to confuse too serious a reader by ingenious puns. However, fiction has become the main preoccupation of Vetemaa. His short novels, "The Monument" (1965), "Illime, a Poet" (1967) and "A Small Requiem for the Mouth-Organ" (1969), typified by a variation of leading motifs and problems in common, may be regarded as an original triptych-like whole. In all of those stories, there is a lower level, at which the characters, problems and the plot are immediately perceivable and intelligible; there is, however, another plane as well, which is



Enn Vetemaa

higher and more distant, providing the general picture with depth. Perceiving "The Monument" at the lower plane, we find the self-revelation of a young ambitious sculptor, who is bent on making a career, the satirical portrait of an emboldened plotter, who turns into a cold cynic. "Illime" is the story of a poet who conceded to becoming a tool of injustice and is now perishing on account of his baseness. "A Requiem" is an episode from the days of the fascist occupation, in which some men, pursued by the fascists, find refuge in a church, but get involved in a deadly fight among themselves. But, at a higher level, those works deal with much more far-reaching, complicated and all-embracing human problems — those of guilt and responsibility, sin and redemption, evil and judgement, and even of the possibility of judgement. The characters portrayed are mostly resigned or disappointed people with a distorted inner world, and it is often difficult for them to motivate their actions; they waver in their moral concepts, and that fluctuation has a depressing effect, engendering in them a sense of fatalism. Thus Vetemaa touches upon serious philosophical problems, achieving a profound psychological penetration and artistic compactness, laconic precision as well as a high degree of suggestivity.

Aimée Beekman (born in 1933) seems to achieve the same aims, mostly in a much more rational manner. Prior to taking up literary activities, she had been working as a film operator and had written a script in collaboration with V. Beekman. The characters and plots of her first two novels are interrelated, the action taking place before and after the overthrowal of the bourgeois regime in Estonia (in 1940). In the first novel, "Small People" (1964), the petty-bourgeois world is viewed through the eyes of a little girl; the second novel, "The Mirror of the Well" (1966), is the summary of the reminiscences, concepts and reflections of a woman who has grown out of that milieu in every sense of the word, and has covered a long road of hardships and bitter experience. The author might seem to make use of certain constructivism and accumulated details, but in the picture of the world, vividly and originally seen, she has succeeded in conveying the main features peculiar to that critical period as well as the conflicting attitudes and actions of people. A. Beekman's following work "The Flock of White Crows" (1968) is a novel conceived in



Aimée Beekman

the form of several inter-related stories dealing with the world of film-makers. It is mainly a critical analysis of failures in the creative and personal life of the characters, but the author's attempts at a broader generalisation enlarge the scope of problems and contribute to the contemporaneity of the novel. The depressive atmosphere prevailing in those novels, and the world of small people, small actions, petty emotions and thoughts seems to express, in its own way, A. Beekman's concern about life and people. A particularly gloomy colour scheme has been applied by A. Beekman in the novel "Potato-Bells" (1969), depicting the life of the war-refugees of 1944, in which the deformation of reality verges on the grotesque, and the multi-dimensionality of the world is suggested by symbols and associations.

Arvo Valton (born in 1935), in his literary searchings, has struck a road entirely of his own, as a writer of short prose, first and foremost. His first collections of short stories, "A Strange Desire" (1963) and "Under the Wheels" (1966) aroused lively interest owing to the author's peculiar way of viewing the world, presenting problems and expressing his thoughts.

Valton mostly concentrates his attention on the most ordinary, even simple-minded and therefore somewhat comical working-people, with their relations to the collective and to the leading officials of various kinds. The author contrasts the serious and creative attitude to work with that of chatterers, routineurs and career-makers, throwing frequently light upon reality from quite unexpected angles. The author's humour is tinged with melancholy and either obvious or concealed irony. The style of those realistic short stories is deliberately very ordinary and apparently simple; the principal moods are stressed by frequent repetition of thoughts, occurring, in particular, in the inner monologues of the heroes. The characters are drawn in a plastic and concrete manner. In later collections, published in 1968, viz. "Eight Japanese Girls" and "The Swan Bog. The Merry-go-round", the range of problems treated by Valton, has got wider, the portrayal of characters is more generalised, and the imagery has become more intensive and many-sided. Further new traits are also an increasingly satirical undercurrent, a deliberate deformation of reality and flashes of a critical thought, presented with the help of grotesque images, events and situations. In some of those stories, the behaviour of the characters contains obvious elements of the absurd, and reality borders on fantasy. Next to gloomy images, depicted in an ironical or altogether vicious manner,



Arvo Valton *(caricature by E. Valter, 1968)*

one may also perceive human figures drawn in a humorous and funny way. The author is ingenious in creating interesting situations, revealing his unusual ability in writing meaningful stories based on typical feuilleton plots.

Mati Unt (born in 1944) wrote his first book at quite an early age. "Good-bye, Yellow Cat" (1963), published soon after his graduation from school and called a "naive novel" by the author himself, creates a picture of school-agers and their attempts at determining their relations between themselves and the rest of the world. There is really still quite a lot of naivety in the desire of the young to obtain clarity "quite by themselves" as well as in their defiant attitude to the ready model of life proffered to them, and in their outbursts of protest, hesitations and, at the same time, in their need for some ideals to believe in. In the following works by Unt — the story "The Debt" and the play "This World or Another One" — his young heroes, who yearn for independence, without having a sufficient background of firm moral criteria or a sense of responsibility, get into conflict with other people and the surrounding world; their emphasised independence proves to be illusive, clashing with reality. Their attitude towards accepted ideals is sceptical, they struggle against stagnation and hypocrisy, but they have no other weapons but their defiance and trust in their instincts and moods. In a further story entitled "On the Possibility of the Existence of Life in Outer Space" (1967), the author endeavours to depict the controversies in contemporary life and arouse the reader's anxiety by showing the irrelevance and the irrevocable bankruptcy of a romantic and pathetic conception. The play "Phaëthon, the Son of Helios", based on ancient mythological imagery, treats the impetuous desire for self-consummation and the uncompromising attitude of the young. The story "Murder at a Hotel" (1969) reveals some traits in common with the fantastic and hallucinatory Kafkaesque manner. As seen from the above, Unt's manner has undergone a considerable metamorphosis, from initial transparence to an ever-increasing complexity and diversity of planes.

Mats Traat, one of the most original young prose-writers, became first known as a poet. His collection of short stories, "Knock at the Yellow Window" (1966), and the story "The Odd Young Man" (1967) are focused on the painful

problem of man's individuality getting worn out and tamed. Further contributors to the prose of the 'sixties are the twin brothers Jüri and Ülo Tuulik, adherers to the lyrical and romantic manner, as well as Kalju Saaber, Heino Tominga, Rein Saluri, Jaan Kruusvall and Vaino Vahing. There is quite a number of other young prosaists who have made their debuts in periodical publications, so far.

POETRY AND POETS

Main trends of development. Poetry usually comes to prominence at crucial points of the historic development of the people, mainly in the way of topical citizen-poetry. In Estonian literature, this was the case in 1940—1941, and in the days of the Great Patriotic War as well. The arrival of poetry to the support of socialist ideals in 1940 was favoured by strong democratic traditions and by outstanding poets — J. Sütiste, J. Barbarus, J. Kärner, J. Semper, A. Alle, and others, taking the side of the working-people. In their poems, they endeavoured to reflect, first and foremost, the life and the struggle of the people, and to promote social progress. The expression of subjective emotions had to retreat before themes of all-national significance. That poetry might be characterised as a predominantly political poetry, serving direct agitational purposes. At the side of poems of a topical and pathetically declarative nature, there were also such that reflected the life of the people in a more concrete manner.

The attack of the Soviet Union by fascist Germany inspired the Estonian poets, already in the first days of war, to write poems challenging to struggle, and that form of poetry predominated throughout the years of war. The chief theme, suppressing all others, was the battle waged against fascism. The poets tried to reflect the force of Soviet patriotic feelings, the unity of the Soviet nations in their struggle in common, and the firm belief in final victory. The national motifs became originally blended with international ones: themes of the historic struggle of the Estonians for liberation from slavery, particularly topical during the war, and reminiscences of the

home country, which served, above all, as a challenge to contend with the enemy. In their manner, those poems tended to be popular, simple, and poignant, firm in rhythm and song-like in form. There was an abundance of topical poems and satirical verse deriding the enemy. Lyro-epical genres were enriched by long poems and ballads with a tendency to draw broader generalisations from actual events. In the grim years of war, several younger poets came to the fore, who had previously written but seldom or in other genres, e.g. D. Vaarandi, M. Nurme, P. Rummo, A. Kaal, and some entirely new authors, e.g. J. Smuul, R. Parve, M. Kesamaa, and others.

The first post-war collections of poems still contained, in their majority, war-time verse. Soon, however, the attention of the poets became concentrated of the work of reconstruction and on the ideological growth of people in the process of formation of the socialist mode of life. Lyro-epical poems were abundant, i.e. poems with a plot or stories in verse (J. Smuul, D. Vaarandi, M. Raud), in which the documentary element played a major part. Citizen-poetry with its social problems, particularly valued and commended at the time, pushed aside lyrical verse of a more intimate and subjective nature. The poems written were mostly concerned with the joy of work, the new attitude to life of the working people, the contrast between the bourgeois past and the Soviet present, and the transformation of life under the guidance of the Communist Party.

As a poetry based on immediate and concrete observations of actual life, the creation of J. Smuul found wide recognition and was awarded a State Prize in 1952. In poetry, a significant place was attributed to the portrayal of the life of the farmers and fishermen, particularly at the time of the establishment of collective farms and fisheries. The history of the revolutionary struggle was also a popular theme, especially its heroic and tragical episodes. However, abundant elements of advertising and a shallow rhetoric character penetrated into poetry, particularly into poems dealing with the motifs of the personality cult. In the early 1950s, the peace theme rose to prominence and, in connection with it, the anti-imperialist satire was enlivened. On the whole, the early post-war poetry was of a deliberately functional nature, oriented towards ideological and poetical aims; it was, above all, publicistic in tone. Poets

of a lyrical nature, too, tried to adjust themselves to the general trend.

A new widening of the range of poerty and the diversification of its content and means of expression began in the mid-fifties. More spontaneous and more emotional contacts with reality were established, and the original individualities of authors were revealed to a much greater extent than before. Illustrativeness and voluble pathos retreated before immediate contacts with life and with human phenomena. The thereto nearly ousted love and nature poetry was resuscitated. A critical and satirical treatment of the bourgeois survivals and contemporary shortcomings penetrated into poetry (U. Laht), and new, vigorous and humorous tones began to ring (P. Rummo, J. Smuul, F. Kotta). A more active perception of reality and a strengthening philosophical undercurrent contributed to a successful synthesis of individual and social elements, resulting in more plastic solutions of form and in outstanding achievements in philosophical poetry (J. Semper, M. Raud), topical poetry of an intellectual tendency (R. Parve, J. Kross, V. Beekman) and lyrical poetry of an intimate undertone (D. Vaarandi, E. Niit, M. Nurme). Some capable authors who had been inactive in the meanwhile (K. Merilaas, B. Alver, A. Sang) began to publish their new verse, once again. In the second half of the 'fifties, several new poets appeared, whose talents began maturing in the next decade.

At the end of the 1950s, a considerable innovation in the artistic manner of Estonian Soviet poetry began to take place. The general horizons of poetry became wider (including translations of foreign verse), and searchings for adequate means of expression and images for rendering the contemporary perception of life intensified. Free verse came in, the poetic imagery became more varied, and the structure of poems more complicated; associations gained in suggestiveness. Some poets (e.g. J. Kross) began almost systematically to write verse of an intellectual texture, using abrupt contrasts and dissonances; experiments were made on the lines of modern Western poetry, or in synthesising elements of Oriental verse with those of the ancient Estonian folk song.

Owing to the turning point in the arts life, new qualities became apparent in the works of the recognised poets, such as D. Vaarandi, R. Parve, K. Merilaas, etc. However, the most

notable phenomenon in the renovation of the manner of poetry in the 1960s was the appearance of several entirely new authors (P.-E. Rummo, M. Traat, E. Vetemaa, H. Runnel, V. Luik, and others). The most recent lyrical verse is very diverse in its content and approach, ranging from the horror of the conflicts breaking up the contemporary world to most tender feelings of nature, from militant, dynamical ideas to a revelation of most intimate emotions, from the dialectical tension of the philosophic thought to picturesque ethnographic sketches. The same diversity may also be stated in the form of poetry, where, next to the most advanced contemporary forms, we may also encounter traditional rhymed verse which had been considered outdated in the meanwhile; revival may also be observed in verse written in Estonian dialects. Parallel to lyrical poetry, the epical genre has also been enriched: the "idea-poem" of a lyrico-publicistic nature (V. Beekman, J. Kross, M. Traat, A. Siig, R. Rimmel) is one of the new forms which finds as much application as the poem with a plot. After a long interval, poems are written in the form of ancient folk songs (A. Annist). The general picture of contemporary Estonian poetry is colourful and rich in original talents.

Debora Vaarandi. There have always been outstanding lyrical poetesses in Estonia — Koidula, Haava, Under, Alver; Debora Vaarandi (born in 1916) may also be considered to class among them. She took up literary activities in the years of the Great Patriotic War in the Soviet rear of the front-line. At that time, her source of inspiration was her distant place of birth, reminiscences of the past and the heart-ache for the native land that had fallen prey to the fascists. These patriotic emotions expressed by her poetry expanded to an intensive feeling of unity with other Soviet nations, joined by a struggle in common, and to a conviction of the final victory. The wartime poems by D. Vaarandi were introduced to the readers by various Estonian publications printed in Moscow and Leningrad, and after the war, in the first collection of her poems "Under the Burning Sky", published in Tallinn in 1945. The majority of those poems are, in accordance with the manner of the poetess, of a concrete and autobiographical character, and at the same time penetrated by a romantic tone — which was quite natural in those times and circumstances when the thoughts and emo-



Debora Vaarandi

tions reacted to events with a heightened sensitivity. It is the spontaneity and personal appeal, the expression of the inmost feelings and of the heart-ache experienced, and the coincidence of personal elements with universal ones that made those poems of the young poetess particularly impressive.

In the following period of post-war construction work, it was of prime importance to instill people with energy and with the feeling of joy in work, and to show them vistas of the future. And D. Vaarandi did her duty, considering the needs of the people. The best poems of that period, collected in the books "The Roaring Coast" (1948) and "On a Bright Morning" (1950), contain a strong lyrical element, particularly those dealing with familiar and heart-near places — the Isle of Saaremaa and Tallinn. At that time, epic poems were appreciated, and D. Vaarandi, too, wrote some narrative verse that was beautiful and simultaneously instructive: about the drainage of bogs, establishment of collective farms, and construction of towns. The typical qualities inherent in those poems are enthusiasm about the rapid transformation of the people and of the community, and the discreet ringing of the verse written in a popularised simple style.

The new book of verse, "The Dreamer at the Window" (1959), may be considered to represent the contemporary stage of Estonian Soviet poetry. D. Vaarandi is now aware of her supreme duty and right — to create great, human poetry which is as wide and manysided as life itself. Firm in Communist ideas, she is not afraid of her verse being political, because today it is a matter of course that this quality belongs to the perfection of life. Neither does she deem it to be justified to limit or lower her poetical vision of life for reasons that do not pertain to art. In the above-mentioned book of poems, and in the following one, "The Bread of the Seaside Plain" (1965), which is of even more uniform standards, the creation of the poetess has attained a quality of content exceeding the limits of time, and a philosophical depth; the humane nucleus of her poetry has crystallised. The poetess is aware of being a human individual, first and foremost, —

Who wanders a-calling, a-starving	Kes otsib ja eksib ja hõikab
For another of his kind;	teist sarnast inimlast,
Who sits alone, a-carving	kes nukra pilli lõikab
A sorry bird-cherry pipe,	ärapõlatud toomingast,
To sing of grass that won't perish	et laulda tallatud heinast,
But rises again and again,	mis võrsub taas ja taas,
Of soil, that hearts so cherish,	ja rannalageda leivast,
Of bread from the seaside plain . . .	maast, hingeomasest maast . . .
Of blood from the scars of banners	Ja lippude haavaverest,
That hallows the droughty road	mis pühitseb põuast teed
Below the clouds leaden and roaring.	all pilvede kõmisevate.

The verse of the creative prime of D. Vaarandi has become richer not only in scope and in the variety of things seen and in the depth of the human emotions conveyed, but also in interpreting the world of emotions in an original manner. The poetess has found firm ground in sublimating all those things that man needs as much as his daily bread. Through her grasp of matters that are concrete and near, she has once again arrived at wide generalisations of developments in life, where light and shade may interchange, where one may encounter depressive and even tragic phenomena, and yet never lose one's attachment to life or one's belief in a better future. The means of expressing the new way of perception have also changed: simple transparence has given place to a greater compactness and many-sidedness, with a frequent alternation of motifs, abrupt transitions, unexpected turns or parallels of



"The Bread of the Seaside Plain"
(paper-jacket by S. Liiberg, 1965)

thought, meaningful and expressive images, and, on the whole, to a poetry richer in content and finer nuances. D. Vaarandi's verse represents one of the most striking examples of the new stage of development in contemporary Estonian Soviet poetry, both in form and content. D. Vaarandi has also been an efficient translator of both verse and prose (mainly from Russian, Finnish and German) and has written excellent articles and essays.

Mart Raud (born in 1903), a poet, prose-writer and playwright of the older generation, published his first three books of verse already in the 1920s. But those poems, characterised by their melancholy and exaggerated gloominess, followed to a great extent the romantic manner and were detached from actual reality. M. Raud's prose of the early period deserves more attention than his poems or ballads. His psychological novel "From Dusk to Dawn" and the collection of stories "Evening Echoes" treat, from different aspects, the theme that haunted him with particular intensity — the conflict and irreconcilability of dreams and actual life. The change from the romantic images of dreams to a more realistic treatment of the world found expression in his collection of poems "The

Distant Circle" (1935), illustrative of his new aims in life and his gaining his balance. The best works in M. Raud's production of the pre-war period were his novels with a critical and satirical undercurrent, "The Axe and the Moon" (1935) and "The Market" (1937), dealing with relations between art and life. In the first of them, the writer, by means of contrasts verging on the grotesque, exposes the inviability and impotence of aestheticism when confronted with the grim realities of life, whereas in the second he shows the typical drawbacks of bourgeois society — the predominating role of money, and spiritual prostitution. In those novels, M. Raud achieved fine results as an ironical and witty narrator, depicting striking, vivid types and concrete situations.

In 1940, M. Raud joined the forces of socialism and found new creative horizons. In his verse, he welcomed the revolutionary changes and the beginning of Soviet life in his country. He also wrote a short story depicting the conflict between the morales of different classes at that crucial time ("Brothers") and a play, "The Sword in the Gate" (1941), dealing with the struggle waged by political prisoners in bourgeois Estonia.

In the years of the Great Patriotic War, M. Raud attained maturity as a poet, becoming one of the best representatives of patriotic and militant verse, next to J. Kärner, J. Semper and J. Barbarus. His books of poetry of those years (the collections "The Word of War", 1943, and "New Bridges", 1945) conveyed, in the form of topical poems, or impressive scenes and episodes, his belief in the final victory of the Soviet people, the heroism of the defenders of his native country (particularly in poems and ballads about the guerilla warfare), the invigorating role of art in the days of hardships, the historical struggle of the Estonian people against their oppressors, and the friendship of the Soviet peoples, sealed with blood in the battle against their common enemy. At that time, M. Raud wrote heart-felt verse about his native country, the bitter fate of his people, and the hope for a better future. It was profoundly perceived, sincere and genuine poetry, written in a simple and truly popular form.

After the end of the war, M. Raud published some new books of poetry, wrote a play ("The Tempering", 1946) about rural life during the fascist occupation of Estonia, and trans-



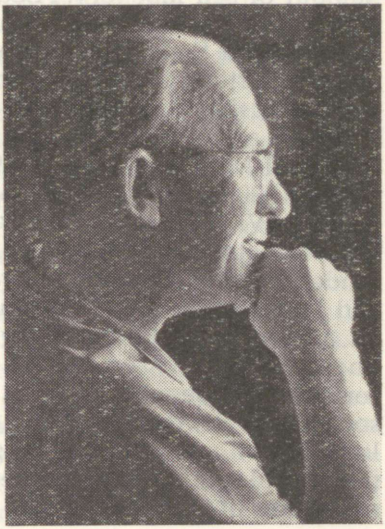
Mart Raud

lated verse (particular mention should be made of his translations of fables by Krylov). During that period, epic poetry acquired a predominant place in his production: he wrote a number of ballads, fables and narrative poems. Of the latter, "The Land is Growing" (in the book "Power and Light", 1948) is devoted to the establishment of collective farms, "Andrus Johani" — to the outstanding democratic Estonian painter murdered by the fascists, and "The Apple of the Eye" (in the collection "All Roads", 1953) — to the history of the revolutionary struggle. In part of M. Raud's verse of that period, one may observe a certain declarativeness in the treatment of socio-political themes.

In the latter half of the 1950s, M. Raud mainly wrote short prose (the collection of stories "Face to Face", 1959; the story "On the Threshold of Eternity", 1960). His observations of contemporary life are typified by the topicality of the problems, a laconic, but poignant portrayal of characters and situations, and an emotional, witty style, often penetrated by flashes of irony. In the comedy "A Midsummer-Night in Reality" (1962), the writer compared, in a lively and gay

manner, contemporary rural life with that of the pre-war times, interspersing the dialogue in prose with verse in an ingenious and peculiar way. In the later lyrical works by M. Raud (the books "Songs Never Die", 1961; "The Golden Autumn", 1966), his verse displays a realistic precision and original manner of expression. His poems deal with lyrical and heart-felt observations of nature and the native countryside, and meditations; besides, he has written a number of witty epigrams. In the verse of his mature years, the poet has retained his keen interest in life, and arrived, by fusing personal and general interests, at an interpretation of the experience and problems of his epoch, conveying his generalisations in a forceful, emotional and artistically ripe manner.

August Sang (1914—1969) gained recognition as a poet in pre-war Estonia. He mostly made use of the traditional form of the rhymed four-line stanzaic verse, which he endowed with a meaningful and sprightly content. In his first books of poems ("A Youth in Search of Happiness", 1936; "Stone Walls", 1939), a romantic keynote predominates, interspersed with tones of resignation and irony in respect to the petty-



August Sang

bourgeois mediocrity and the political stuffiness which reigned supreme in those years. The poet was less successful in those poems in which he tried to reflect the pathos of the somewhat abstract strivings of the younger generation. In the post-war years, A. Sang mainly concentrated on translation of verse, in which he attained remarkable virtuosity and achieved a splendid artistic quality. His fine renderings, as close to the originals as possible, cover a wide range of world literature, including "Faust" and lyrical poems by Goethe, selected poems by Heine, Lermontov, Nekrassov, Brecht, Nezval, and Tvardovski, a great number of verse by Pushkin and Becher, and plays by Molière and Schiller. Besides, he has translated prose as well, mainly from German. His own poetry of later years (the book of verse "A Sandwich with a Kiss", 1963) contains, above all, suggestive meditations on social themes, treated from an ethical point of view. Repudiating inertness and narrow-mindedness, the poet insists on the value of humaneness, human dignity and optimism, in spite of all the controversies existing in real life. The manner of those symbolic discourses is either publicistic or even didactic, at times, but always pensive and reflecting; the author expresses his own feelings extremely sparingly, by way of occasional flashes of whimsical humour or self-mockery. A Sang's own production was not very extensive (as it may be seen in the collection of selected poems "A Hundred Songs", compiled by himself), but significant and of high artistic standards; he knew how to attain his aims without using any poetical fireworks, by a seemingly very ordinary and simple wording, appealing in its ease.

Kersti Merilaas (born in 1913), who made her literary debut in the 1930s, published but one book of poems in the pre-war years ("Winds on the Highway", 1938). At the time when her fellow-poets of the circle of the so-called "Soothsayers" tended to treat intellectual problems, K. Merilaas indulged, first and foremost, in conveying her moods, her intuitive search for an aim in life, and her longing for simple, human happiness. Those youthfully emotional poems, expressing her yearning for life and beauty, were at the same time not indifferent to social matters, despite their intimate character: though bent on looking for and finding the good sides of life and people, the poetess also expressed some doubts, vague as yet, about the real state of things, and left some questions unanswered.



Kersti Merilaas

In 1940, K. Merilaas's poems reflected her hopes for a better future. The years of war, however, brought along conflicting hesitations, and the poetess wrote but little, except some verse for children.

The work of K. Merilaas's recent creative period, concentrated in her next books of poems — "The Bank Swallow" (1962) and "Paddocks in Spring" (1966) — belong to the ripest and weightiest creations of Estonian Soviet poetry. The verse of the poetess is of a profound and many-sided content, with social problems having risen to a significant place. The perception of a new epoch in the life of Soviet society has found an original and temperamental expression, rich in vivid images. The poetess extols the working people as the creators of all values and bearers of the noblest moral and social principles. In her deeply emotional patriotic verse — in which the bank swallow building her nest anew and anew serves as a powerful symbol — the concept of national dignity is blended with the idea of internationalism. The spirited poetry of K. Merilaas is vigorous and racy, and firmly rooted in contemporary life. At times, new shades of meaning are added by a humorous, epic tone. In its basic nature, K. Merilaas's

verse is penetrated by deep earnestness and a great sense of responsibility for the actual developments of life and for the dangers threatening both individuals and the entire world. That feeling has brought some discording notes into her otherwise optimistic poetry of recent years, and her innate cheerful attitude has been troubled by concern and anxiety. As a lyrical poetess, K. Merilaas renders the picture of the world as it is emotionally perceived by herself, not by discourse or meditation, but by using meaningful, actual images. And this constitutes the particular force of her poetic message, conceived in the name of life and the future.

Ralf Parve (born in 1919) wrote his war-time poems when he was an active Red Army soldier and a member of the editorial board of the paper of his division. He endeavoured to convey the militant spirit of the final period of the war and the belief in victory. Those poems were rather immature, in their artistic quality, as yet. In the following years, Parve's poems were devoted to themes of peace and international life, as well as to the history of the revolutionary struggle. However, that verse suffered from declarativeness and triteness or from a narrowly topical character (particularly in his political satire). Among Parve's works of that period, poems for children are of permanent value: in that sphere, he may be regarded a pioneer in Estonian Soviet literature; a great number of those works were translated into other Soviet languages.

The books of poems "The Open Gate" (1958) and "A Lyrical Shorthand Record" (1964), of a lyrical and autobiographical character, are a further step towards a synthesis of personal and social ideas and towards a more clearly pronounced individuality. Parve's verse has grown richer in form and in images, contributing to the impressiveness of his basic themes and to the new tonality and emotional colouring of his socio-political concepts. In the meditations on the experience and searchings of his own generation, a number of motifs of the verse of previous books by Parve have cropped up again, but this time they appear on a higher poetic and philosophical level. The new creative period of the poet may be characterised by a search for permanent values and by striving for firm bonds with all those things that are necessary for making life perfect: the native land, one's fellow-men, the efforts of



Ralf Parve

work and thought bent upon the future, and the struggle for everything that contributes to development and progress. Thus, those lyrical meditations gain in scope and in power of generalisation. In lyrical poems of a more intimate character, Parve is likewise mostly meditative, maintaining the poise of ripe individuality in his self-revelations. As often as not, a humorous note, or a wistful smile, flashes through his verse, mocking at himself and others.

Besides poetry, Parve has also written plays of an acute, publicistic genre. The satirical play "The Labyrinth of Beatitude" (1959) shows, in a distorting mirror, the political and ideological machinations of bourgeois Estonian émigrés abroad, and in another play "On the Day of the Seven Sleepers" (1964) the author mocks at petty-bourgeois survivals. The play "Darkness Means Night" (1970), which is based on documentary materials, is devoted to the revolutionary struggle in bourgeois Estonia in the 'thirties and to the prosecution of communists. Parve has also written a number of travel books in collaboration with L. Promet, and has become known as an essayist and critic.

Uno Laht (born in 1924), arrived on the literary arena as a journalist. In his poetry he has always adhered to the publicistic trend, according to the tradition set up by V. Mayakovski. At the beginning of the 1950s, he attracted attention by his immediate reactions to topical problems, treating them in a lively and witty manner. In his first books of poems ("Milk-Teeth", 1954; "Milk-Teeth (Filled)", 1956) popular satire and humour play a predominating part: feuilletons in verse, topical poems, and ingeniously ironical paraphrases of popular songs. All of them are directed against bureaucracy and irresponsibility, first and foremost, as well as against routine and stagnation of thought. From the very beginning, Laht's verse has excelled in freshness, impulsiveness and an ingenious use of words, though, at times, the author has been somewhat offhanded in his manner.

In the following years, the talent of the poet developed in breadth and depth. Laht proved himself (particularly in the book of poems "From a Greatcoat Pocket to a Pigskin Portfolio", 1958) as a political poet, possessing a firm grasp of the dialectics of social development and of the problems of class struggle and ideological conflicts; at the same time, he displayed his outstanding abilities as a lyrical poet. Discussing boldly the most complicated key questions of the time and the difficulties of development, the poet retains his inherent sober



Uno Laht
(caricature by R. Tiitus, 1966)

and frequently sharp critical attitude, but his view of the future is clear and optimistic. Without shutting his eyes on the contradictions and drawbacks in life, he succeeds, by the force of his ideas, to convince the reader of progress and the power of wisdom and humaneness. When Laht introduced serious tones into his poetry, he did not do it at the expense of ingenuity or strikingness of expression; at times, tragic motifs are combined with comic ones in an original and often even risky manner.

The publicistic inclinations of the poet have not abated. In the prevailingly satirical book of poems "The Songs of an Egoist" (1962) and in a later book, "An Angel Goes to the Chemist's" (1967), Laht continues his attacks on the petty-bourgeois, upstart mentality that has adapted itself to existing conditions. He also criticises greediness and bureaucratic torpidity. It is socially active citizen verse, whose mission is to shake the reader free of indifference and stolidity, and to present the topical problems of life in the light of a widened general understanding of the world and of the people. As a promoter of that kind of poetry, Laht belongs to the most original talents of Estonian Soviet literature. He has also scored success as a playwright with his satirical comedy "Atlantic Herring". Last, but not least, he has published a book of brilliant literary parodies in verse and prose.

Jaan Kross (born in 1920) displayed, already in his first book of poems "Coal Concentrator" (1958), a tension of thought, a keen sense of citizenship, a lively interest in social problems, and a striving for a profound understanding of the dialectics of progress. The beginning of Kross's literary career is characterised by ironical and satirical meditations directed against the phenomena impeding the progress of society. In cases where Laht would have reacted with a feuilleton in verse or a derisive couplet, Kross resorted to a striking development of thought, or to a pointed image, or to an exaggeration.

The ever deepening intellectuality of Kross's ensuing production as well as his intense experiments with free verse, and the complicity of his images made his poetry somewhat unwieldy and endowed it with a certain constructiveness (particularly in the collection "Stone Violins", 1964). His purposeful efforts to transform the bulk of swelling information into emotional poetic energy, and to enrich poetry with the

ever-expanding achievements of science resulted in but partial success. Kross attained better results in instances where he endeavoured to poetise the genuine emotionality of the perceptional grasp, to show the closeness of the individual world to the macrocosmos, to unite the distant with the near, the actual moment with history, and the discoveries made by single individuals with those of the entire mankind (e.g., in the extensive poem "The Discovery of the World"). In his following books of verse, in "Singers in the Prows" (1966) and especially in "The Rain Does Fine Things" (1969) the poet succeeded in widening the boundaries of the expressive means of poetry. His restless thought, wandering in superior categories, searches for apt means of expression in grandiose generalisations, and achieves an emotional effect by way of strong contrasts, bold associations and juxtapositions (e.g., in the poem "Campa-



Jaan Kross

nella"). The remarkable traits of Kross's poetry are the range of his themes, the diversity of form, the breadth of his grasp and his fine erudition. Next to his predominantly reflective or polemical verse, Kross has written good lyrical poems about love and nature. Allegoric-ironical poems also belong to the most typical works of the author; in those, he derides, in a brilliant style reminding that of Heine, the "vane-mentality", or epigonism in art, or the officially regulated, dry trend of thought. Kross deserves particular commend as an excellent translator of poetry and plays in verse from French (the selected poems by Béranger and Éluard), English, German, Russian, and Swedish, also as an author of essays and travel books. Recently, Kross has begun writing historical fiction, displaying outstanding abilities in recreating suggestive scenes of the past history of Tallinn.

Vladimir Beekman (born in 1929) began his literary career with youthful energy and optimism. However, the poetry of his first books was mostly reduced to declarations or reportages, and the pathos of his active participation in contemporary developments did not contribute to the effect desired. The ensuing collections — "The Wind in the Heather" (1958), and "The Milky Way" (1960), however, testified to the author's development towards a deeper, more individual interpretation of life and towards an imagery of a concreter nature. His patriotic and antimilitaristic verse and his meditations upon the place of the individual in life acquired here an adequate expression and a more emotional content.

The long poem "The Road Has not Come to an End" (in the last-mentioned collection), conceived as an imaginary discourse between the son and his father, who was killed in the last war, in its deep earnestness and in its immediate simplicity, turns into a meaningful generalisation of the past days of battle and of the bond connecting the generations. In Beekman's other extensive poem, "The Light of Eastern Europe" (1963), the author, with the help of aptly applied imagery and symbolic details, has succeeded in conveying the international content and the historical significance of the struggle for liberty of workers of different countries. In the name of the progress of socialism and of the bitter experience acquired in the warfare with fascism, the poet calls upon the people to be vigilant and to beware of the lurking forces of reaction of any



Valdimir Beekman

kind. The same aim is pursued in the poem "Five minutes" (in the book "The Blue Tulip", 1965), which is based on a tragic episode of the Great Patriotic War. By exposing the implacable nature of the conflict between antagonistic social forces, Beekman recalls the political and moral behests of those who perished in the combat with fascism. The poetic structure of those poems is in harmony with their content, and thus their emotional appeal is impressive.

The author's widening perception of the world becomes evident in the book of poems entitled "The Non-Existent Tree" (1969). That work is manysided in form and content, representing a many-faceted poetic meditation upon the complicated and dialectic nature of life in general and of the present era in particular, upon virtue and vice, reality and similitude, and upon evident and concealed matters, as well as upon the eternal alternation of those phenomena. This collection is also more diversified in form than the previous ones. Apart from

his activities as a poet, Beekman has also written some interesting prose works for juveniles. He has likewise published quite a number of travel books (the most interesting one being "Brazil — a Distant Land", 1963) as well as a novel, "The Transit Passenger" (1967), written in a publicistic manner. Beekman has also done numerous translations of both prose and verse, from the Russian, German, Swedish, and other languages.

Other poets. Paul Rummo (born in 1909), who began his literary career before the war as an author of juvenile plays, started writing poetry in a more consistent manner in the years of the Great Patriotic War. His first collections of poems, containing patriotic verse and external-political satire, do not yet yield a clear picture of P. Rummo as a poet. His poetic discovery of himself, however, is shown in the book of poems entitled "A Rolling Stone" (1955). Here we gain an idea of the author's ability to render both lyrical moods and humorous genre scenes; a particularly striking example of P. Rummo's style is the gay and lyrical poem "The Vacation Diary". The narrative documentary poem "Alfred and Anna" (in the collection "Prologue and Poems", 1961), devoted to the memory of a friend who had fallen victim to fascist terror, testifies to Rummo's further achievements in the epic genre. His other poems, too, are typified by a keen sense of citizenship and militant humanism. Rummo has great merits in musical dramaturgy (he is the author of several libretti for operas) and as an author of texts for songs. He has also written two books of verse for children. Rummo's activities as essayist have been likewise extensive and fruitful, as may be gained from two books of his collected works in this genre.

The first post-war books of poems by Felix Kotta (1910—1963), who had spent his youth in the Soviet Union and started his literary career by contributing poems to Estonian periodicals published there, contained, in the first line, verse of a political and agitative nature. Later, however, his range of themes got wider, and his manner became more diversified: he wrote a great number of humorous and satirical poems as well as philosophical and lyrical verse (collections "Features of the Face", 1958; "The Sunshine", 1960). He was one of the most eager promoters of Estonian Soviet poetry for children, having written seven books of verse for tiny tots. Kotta was also one of the chief translators of Mayakovski's poetry.

Minni Nurme (born in 1917), who had written prose before the war, made her debut in poetry in the years of the Great Patriotic War. Her first books of poems contain mostly verse written during the war. M. Nurme's virtue, however, consists in her intimately lyrical manner, and the best part of her work belongs to the contemporary period. The prevailing emotions of the poetess are connected with the native soil and with her people, with its past and present (the book of poems "The Roots in the Soil", 1957). M. Nurme has devoted many poems to her native place, to motherhood and children, and she has also written verse for the young. In her love poetry, a melancholy note prevails, but her verses dealing with nature and lyrical meditations are markedly optimistic (the books "On Monday Eve", 1960; "The Crab-Apple Tree", 1963). M. Nurme has also been an active translator from English (selected poems by Byron, Shelley and Frost).

Ellen Niit (born in 1928) is first and foremost a lyricist. The books of poems that she has published up to now, "The Earth Is Full of Discoveries" (1960) and "The Bird-Modeller" (1970), belong to the finest achievements of recent Estonian poetry. Its particular charm lies in the tender-toned love poems and emotional reflection of moods connected with nature. Meanwhile, E. Niit abandoned the traditional style of poetry, proceeding to the use of a more complicated imagery and to intellectual forms of expression. E. Niit also belongs to the most outstanding authors writing for juveniles; her numerous stories in verse and children's songs enjoy an immense popularity. She is also an excellent translator of poetry; her renderings of Petőfi's works deserve particular mention.

The character of Ain Kaalep's (born in 1926) verse is due to the author's literary erudition. In his poems (the books "The Dawn Landscapes", 1962; "The Lake Landscapes", 1968), the reflective thought stands in the first place. The author makes abundant use of symbolic imagery, leaving the readers ample possibilities of interpreting his poems in a number of different ways. A characteristic feature is the author's emotional reticence as well as a tone of slight irony or self-mockery. At times, however, Kaalep tends to over-construct or to overplay with his artistry of forms. Kaalep has substantial merits in introducing some rare forms into Estonian poetry, especially Oriental ones (tanka, haiku, ghazel, rubai). Particular

credit is due to Kaalep as translator of poetry, from ancient Greek and Central-Asian classics to contemporary African and Latin-American authors; he has published, as separate books, the selected poems of F. García Lorca and J. Prévert, as well as some plays in verse and works in prose. Besides, Kaalep has written two plays, numerous essays and critical articles.

Harald Suislepp (born in 1921) has given his best in narrative verse — be it a poetic account of a trip abroad, or a lyrical-humorous report of a hike in the native country, or a self-analysing autobiographical poem telling about his youth.

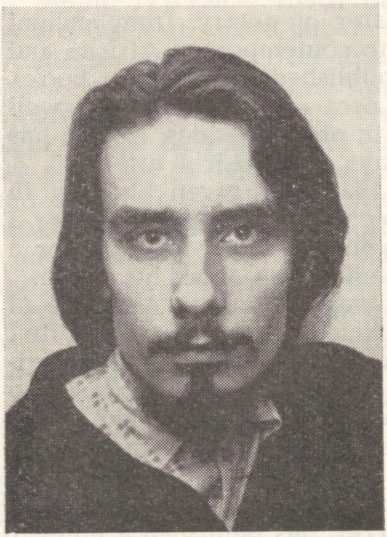
The war-time and early post-war poetry of Aira Kaal (born in 1911) used to be of a publicistic character, in the first line. Now, however, her verse has gained in spontaneity, originality and in philosophical depth of analysis. A. Kaal has also written a number of books in prose, the best being her travel notes and documentary narratives on the past and present of her native place.

Manivald Kesamaa (born in 1921), who made his debut in the days of the Great Patriotic War, has published a number of books of poems, mainly expressing his patriotic emotions. He is also the author of numerous books of verse for children.

Among the lyricists whose books of poetry have contributed to the enrichment of Estonian literature, we have to mention here Kalju Kangur, Helvi Jürisson, Lehte Hainsalu, Paul Haavaoks, Artur Alliksaar, Muia Veetamm, Tõnis Lehtmets, Ilmi Kolla (deceased in 1954, at the age of 19), and others. Heljo Mänd has been at her best in poems for children. Eha Lättemäe, a lyrical poetess, writes her works both in Estonian and Finnish.

The younger generation of poets. The search for wider boundaries of perception in poetry and for a diversification of the means of expression was bound to have an influence on the poets of the younger generation. Moreover, most of them, having acquired a knowledge of languages, could have access to both the poetical heritage and the multi-grained contemporary tendencies of world literature.

Paul-Eerik Rummo (born in 1942) has found recognition as one of the most forceful new talents in contemporary Estonian literature. His lyrical poems reflect the moods and images typical of the 1960s. In his first books of verse ("The Anchor-



Paul-Erik Rummo

Heaver", 1962; "Come Always to My Joys" 1964), there was more place for a youthful joy of life and inner harmony than in his later poems, which reflect his increasing inner conflicts and his anxiety connected with an apprehension of impending danger (the collection "Snowlight — Snow-Darkness", 1966). The search for communion does not deliver one from doubts, and reflections on the contemporary situation and the future of mankind arouse a feeling of unrest and concern. And yet, the poet, when moving through contradictions, does not give up his striving for integrity. There is a certain stoical optimism that he displays: to see things in their true light, and yet not to surrender, but to do one's duty, to share one's experience with others. This perceptual texture, the poetical interpretation of the conflicting universe has found expression in P.-E. Rummo's verse, which is characterised by a restless, impatient fluctuation of moods and associations, by suggestive poetic images, harmony of ideas and the music of words, abundant refrains, and the use of images and structural elements of the Estonian folk-song for conveying realities of contemporary life. The introduction of words in unusual associations and a play on

words, interspersed with flashes of irony, endow the verse with novel nuances. The more anxious P.-E. Rummo's poetic vision, the more complicated becomes his style: the chains of images, suggestive of immediate perception, often deviate from the formal logic and from the ordinary structure of speech, and the impetuous flow of associations frequently forms tempestuous swirls and rapids. In order to convey his picture of the world and his concept of life, P.-E. Rummo has also written an allegoric play.

Mats T r a a t (born in 1936) made his debut with a book of manly rustic and deliberately rough verse ("Angular Songs", 1962). In his later creation, the poet strives to seize, with an almost feverish eagerness and restlessness, the entire world in all its complexity, and attacks the provincial and petty-bourgeois mind with impatience and robustness (the book "The Knolly Land", 1964). His manner is originally forceful, challenging, as if deliberately irritating, and frequently tending to become complicated in an unwieldy way. His striving for virtue, light, manliness and sincerity is suggestively conveyed in the book "The Weighing-House" (1966). The range of the poet's themes is very wide, expanding from the soil-nearest everyday to cosmic visions, and the system of his foreshortenings and poetic images is just as varied. Traat does not care for the finish or elegance of style. In his works, everything is intertwined and alternated — lyrical elements with epical ones, publicism with philosophy, and rustic simplicity (frequently stressed by the use of dialect) with intellectual passion. His most genuine and emotional strain, however, best revealed in recent poems (in the books "Lanterns in the Fog", 1968 and "The Cardinal Points", 1970) is his direct closeness to the life of the working-people, and rural life in particular. Traat has also written a number of stories, treating the same problems with great earnestness and deep penetration.

Jaan K a p l i n s k i (born in 1941) has been greatly influenced, on the one hand, by the Romance spiritual world, and, on the other — by Oriental poetry and mentality. A supplemental factor has been his keen interest in the so-called primitive, nature-near cultures. In his initial creative period, Kaplinski mainly wrote romantic-symbolic, exquisitely melodious lyrical poems of love and nature, but his perceptual horizon has gradually become wider (the collection "Of Dust and Col-

ours", 1967). The poet perceives as a matter of course the connections between different eras, places and human cultures as well as the relations of man to his natural surroundings, to that biological whole of which he himself is an integral part. One of the peculiar features of Kaplinski is a frequent transition from prosaic facts to imaginary-romantic symbols, and vice versa, as well as the placing of well-known phenomena into unusual media and connections which open up new vistas of perception.

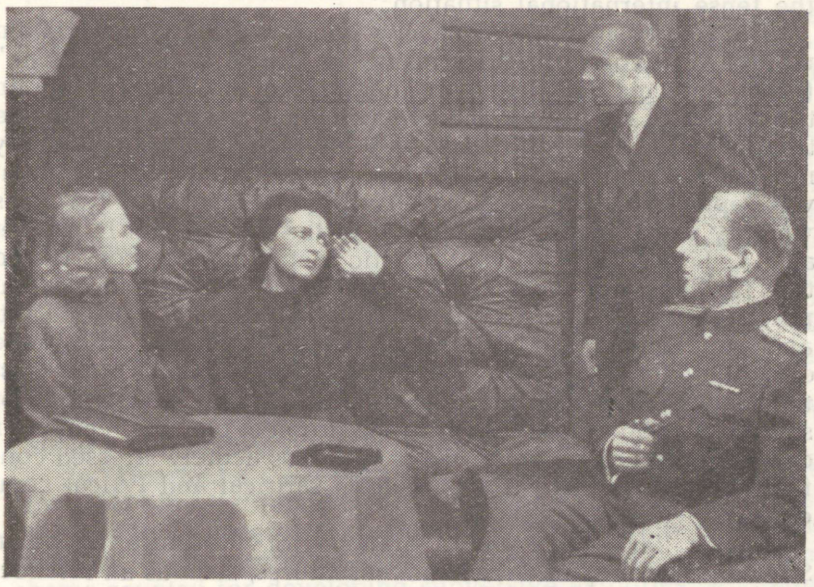
The contact with the native land and its nature is achieved in a more direct and intuitive, and perhaps more organic way by painter Aleksander S u u m a n (born in 1927). It is not noly the nature of the native countryside, but also the national closeness to nature and his own assimilation with the character of his people that find expression in his poetry and affect the reader like a folk song. The nature lyricism of the young poetess Viivi L u i k (born in 1946) is immediate and spontaneous; her sensitively caught moods and visions are mostly associated with the frailty of individual existence and its insecure position in the world. Hando R u n n e l (born in 1938) impresses as a soil-near poet who conveys the toiler's mentality in a grave and true-to-life manner. His lyrical, and recently also philosophical verse tries to penetrate deep into the contradictions of our era. Enn V e t e m a a entered the literary arena as an ironically ingenious urban poet, but now he is mainly active as a prosaist. The attitudes to life of our young city-dwellers and their inner problems have been treated, mainly in a publicistic manner, by poets Rudolf Rimmel and Arvi Siig. Quite a number of other young poets have made their debuts with books of verse, and there are also many promising young authors, whose works, as yet published in periodicals only, arouse expectations.

THE DRAMA

The first play published and staged in Soviet Estonia was "The Sword in the Gate" (1941) by M. Raud. The dramatic works written during the Great Patriotic War were mainly short plays theatrical companies for front-line soldiers. In 1944—45, J. Sütiste wrote a historical drama "The Hounds of the Cross", dealing with the heroic struggle of the Estonians against Ger-

man crusaders at the beginning of the 13th century. In the post-war period, however, the activities in the sphere of dramaturgy were considerably enlivened.

The events of the recent war and the inner conflicts of people in crucial years found reflection in the plays by A. Jakobson, M. Raud and J. Semper, published in 1946. "Life in a Citadel" by A. Jakobson, warning of an apolitical attitude, was a significant event in literary and theatrical life; it was also the first work by an Estonian author to be awarded a State Prize of the Soviet Union (1947). The play also served as a basis for a film of the same name, which enjoyed popularity as well. Jakobson became the leading Estonian playwright of the post-war period. In his plays he tackled, with a topical acuteness, the problems of the place of an individual in society, and the combat between the old and new principles — be it the class struggle in bourgeois Estonia, or the conflict of different conceptions of life in the circles of intellectuals, or difficulties connected with the



A scene from the performance of "Life in a Citadel" *(in Tallinn, 1946)*

construction of socialism. Proceeding from his aims, Jakobson shaped a peculiar type of play, best suited for his purposes, and called it a dramatic narrative. In those dramas a strong epical and publicistic element prevails, and they are intended both to be read and produced on the stage. The works by Jakobson fulfilled their task in our post-war literature, by presenting a wide range of problems and a gallery of sharply delineated social types. These plays enjoyed a popularity far beyond the borders of Estonia, as well. A. Hint and J. Semper wrote plays about the changes in the lives of fishermen and farmhands and about the overcoming of difficulties connected with reforms. In the second half of the 1940s, H. Raudsepp, a recognised author of comedies, also wrote some plays.

In the early fifties, A. Jakobson introduced, in his new plays, the subject of the defence of peace, treating it as a conflict between two antagonistic forces on the international arena. Those sharply anti-imperialistic plays, mainly typified by satirical exaggeration and topicality, were an immediate reaction to the tense international situation.

The role of an initiator of new trends was once again taken up by A. Jakobson, whose character drama, "The Old Oak" (1954), depicted the tragedy of an old scientist who, reposing on the laurels of his former achievements, had become an obstacle to progress. Estonian drama was gradually supplemented by new outstanding works, and the former one-sided treatment was replaced by a greater variety of genres. J. Smuul said his weighty word in the development of the drama, and E. Rannet and A. Liives, two different artistic temperaments, contributed to a further enrichment in this sphere. Interesting and original plays were created by R. Parve, E. Krusten, M. Raud, U. Laht, and some others. On the whole, the plays of that time were either devoted to contemporary topics or to problems of the past that had a bearing on the present, with a close intertwining of social and moral motifs. Next to the problem play and character drama, episodic and genre plays with less acutely stressed conflicts began cropping up, as well as satirical and lyrical comedies.

In the 1960s, like other branches of literature, Estonian Soviet drama acquired some novel features, such as an intellectual approach to philosophical problems, attempts at a wider generalisation by a deliberate use of conditionality both in

imagery and situations and in the development of the conflict (R. Parve, A. Kaalep, M. Unt, P.-E. Rummo, J. Smuul). An obvious source of inspiration for those searchings was provided by the creative principles professed by Brecht, and to some extent likewise by Anouilh, Beckett, and other modern playwrights.

Contemporary drama has a number of affiliated branches which have recently gained in popularity. In connection with the development of the national film art, the film scenario, too, has made its first notable steps (A. Hint, A. Saar, E. Rannet, A. and V. Beekman, J. Smuul, L. Promet, A. Valton). The radio play has developed and become widely popular (A. Liives, R. Kaugver, and others), and to a lesser extent the TV play. Writers have significantly contributed to the development of musical plays (libretti of operas, operettas and musicals by P. Rummo, J. Kross, U. Laht, A. Kaalep and A. Liives). The juvenile drama and puppet plays have also been experiencing a period of impetuous development (B. Kabur, E. Raud, U. Leies).

Egon Rannet. In contemporary Estonian drama, the trend initiated by A. Jakobson is, to a certain extent, represented in the plays by E. Rannet (born in 1911). He began his literary activities in the late 1940s as a journalist and writer of feuilletons, short plays on topical problems, political satire, and thereafter published two extensive documentary stories. His abilities as a playwright were clearly revealed in the play "Heartache" (1957), which treated essential contemporary problems presented in a major conflict, the characters involved being vivid and true-to-life. The main character is a leading worker in agriculture, an energetic and intelligent man, a communist, who struggles with conflicts in personal life and fails in his work. The author stresses the spiritual force of his hero, showing how, despite all his calamities, he manages not to be shaken in his beliefs, remaining a valuable member of the society and retaining his integrity.

In "Heartache", a certain epic element was still felt, whereas the next play by Rannet, "The Prodigal Son" (1958), testifies to the author's progress in dramatic composition. A ticklish subject — the story of a political émigré sent to his former home-country for developing subversive activities, who comes to realise the superiority of a socialist way of life — is given

by the author as a psychological drama. The "prodigal son" himself is by no means an unprincipled and mercenary character, but a man devoted to his native land. Having found, on his arrival, an essential difference between the actual state of things and his expectations, he changes his attitude to Soviet power and decides to retribute his guilt. "The Prodigal Son" was an unprecedented success, having been staged at about 200 different theatres all over the Soviet Union as well as in some other socialist countries.

The next play of Rannet, "The Poachers" (1960), was written for three acting personages, only. The nucleus of that play is the belief in man; that belief helps one to find one's proper place in life. Rannet has also written several film scenarios, of which "In Rain and Sunshine" (1959), devoted to the problems of the young, deserves mentioning. His plays of the 1960s — "The Geese", a comedy about collective farmers, "The Goblet and the Serpent", dealing with moral responsibilities of physicians, "The Blood-Red Rose", on themes of the Great Patriotic War, and "Criminal Tango", on the youth problems — are topical, have interesting conflicts and skilfully portrayed characters, but suffer from a certain artificiality in composition and didactic



Egon Rannet

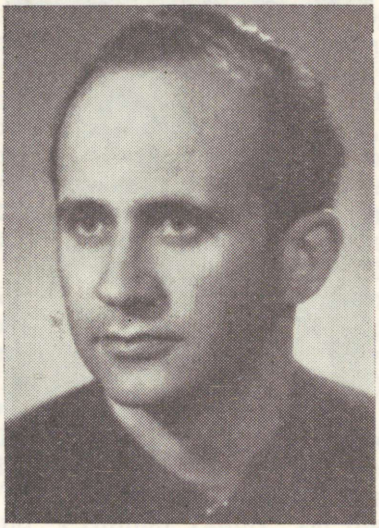


A scene from the perfomance of "The Prodigal Son" *(in Tallinn, 1958)*

tendencies. The writer prefers forceful, but not too complicated characters, tense situations and violent collisions. In his first plays, those traits were more of a novelty, and the author was able to achieve the emotional response expected, but due to a repeated application of the same means, their effect was greatly reduced.

Ardi Liives. An early awakened interest in the theatre and drama has made A. Liives (born in 1929) one of the most fruitful playwrights. His earnest preoccupation with writing began in the mid-fifties. In his plays, he raised a number of essential and necessary problems — of the moral criteria in relations between young people ("Stolen Confidence", a play about students), of the deadlock of a petty-bourgeois and hypocritic mentality ("The Birds Are Leaving Their Nests"), of relations between an individual and the collective (the comedy "Robert the Great", about actors). From the dramaturgical point of view, those plays were but partially successful.

The drama "New Year's Eve" (1958) deals with the inner conflicts and spiritual difficulties of a man whose life was wrecked in the whirl of the war and social upheavals. In comparison with the author's earlier works, the portrayal of charac-



Ardi Liives

ters is by far more profound and psychologically convincing, the dialogue reflects a strong inner tension, and the spectator is given ample opportunities of drawing his own conclusions. The tragedy "The Blue Rocket" (1959) is devoted to the events following the 1924 revolutionary uprising in Estonia. After re-writing it later as a psychological drama, the author gave it a new title, "The Mistress of the Mürgi Farm". The drama "The Staircase" (1964) is characterised by psychological treatment of the subject-matter and an original composition; it dwells upon various ethical problems and factors leading to an estrangement between people. "On This Side of the Horizon" (1962) is a genre play dealing with the life of the wood-cutters. The author has contrived to show the development of a new attitude to life and work in contemporary society, and the significance of a person's place in the working collective as a source of moral balance. In that type of plays, the tension of a psychological drama is missing and we become particularly aware of Liives's peculiar traits — his preference for subdued pastel tones in drawing characters and conflicts presented in a stressedly commonplace environment.

Among the comedies by Liives, "A Vienna Stamp" (1964) has

found the widest response. Here the author makes delightful fun of various survivals of the outdated mentality — cadging for the favour of superiors, hushing up shortcomings, saving one's skin, etc. In a genuinely comical plot, the author emphasises the value of a socially active attitude and uncompromising honesty. The rendering of the weak points in the present everyday life has attained a more drastic form in the satirical play "The Monolisque" (1969). Liives has also written libretti for operettas as well as for musicals. Besides, he is one of the most prolific writers of radio plays in Soviet Estonia.

Other playwrights. As seen from the above, the progress in Estonian Soviet dramaturgy is greatly due to contributions by authors whose main preoccupation is either poetry or prose-writing, and not play-writing, as such: A. Hint and J. Semper in the initial post-war period, and later J. Smuul and R. Parve, and in the 'sixties — a number of poets and prosaists of the younger generation.

Kulno Süvalep (born in 1929), producer and actor, tended to preach morals in his first plays, but attained better literary standards in his later works — e.g. the comedy "A Smile" and some other plays dealing with current ethical problems. Eino Alt (born in 1921) made a successful debut with his anti-militaristic play "The Blind Man", being, however, unable to reach the same level in his succeeding works. Of the numerous plays by Paul Kilgas (born in 1920), we have to mention here the drama "The Nightingale Sang at Dawn" (1961), in which the author convincingly and emotionally conveyed events of the fascist occupation of Estonia. Albert Uustulnd (born in 1925) is the author of several comedies and vaudevilles dealing with the life of Estonian fishermen. Further authors of plays presented on Estonian stages are Valdo Pant, Lydia Kompus, Male Schwarz, and others. Plays for amateur theatres have been written by Enn Vaigur and Mai Talvest. Particular success was scored by the play for children "Rops" (1964) and its suit, "Rops Helps Everybody" (1967) by Boris Kabur (born in 1917), in which the problems of virtue and vice are presented to youthful spectators by means of an ingenious theme — relations between man and robot — treated with a splendid sense of humour. Both plays have been performed in a great number of theatres in the Soviet Union as well as abroad (in Yugoslavia, Poland and Finland).

The events of the Second World War contributed to a dispersal of thousands of Estonians all over the world. Among the intellectuals who left their native country for good, there was a considerable part of Estonian writers. The reason that compelled them to abandon their home-country, at that time occupied by fascist Germany, were rather complicated. Some of them had compromised themselves by their relations to fascists, others had fallen victim to panic-engendering fascist propaganda. In a number of cases, those motives were combined and promoted by personal or occasional considerations. Thus, the renowned masters of Estonian poetry, Gustav Suits and Marie Under left their native land, and so did prosaists August Gailit and August Mälk, poet Henrik Visnapuu, literary critic Ants Oras, novelist Karl Ristikivi, poet Bernard Kangro, and several others.

Continuing their activities abroad, the Estonian writers assumed the role of political refugees and, despite their previous dissensions, provisionally found a language in common on the outdated bourgeois nationalist platform. The mission the Estonian refugees took upon themselves was to "maintain Estonian culture", since they assumed that national culture could not be preserved under the Soviet rule. A prominent role in promoting that standpoint was enacted by the Estonian émigré press, which had adopted a blind anti-Soviet attitude since the very beginning, getting further support in the atmosphere of intensifying "cold war". Besides, most writers of the younger generation who came to the fore abroad had been fighting in the Finnish or German military units against the Soviet Army during the war. Owing to those particular circumstances, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the production of the Estonian writers abroad bore the sign of a typically reactionary émigré literature.

At the beginning, the literary productivity of those writers was quite considerable, since part of their first works published had already been written at home. The preliminary quantitative prevalence and the absolutely negative attitude towards the socialist-minded works written in Estonia led those writers to boastful declarations to the point that the only contemporary Estonian literature of any value was that which was published abroad. Subsequent events, however, soon revealed the

illusory character of those standpoints and forced quite a number of authors to revise their previous views. With the development of Estonian Soviet literature, it became increasingly obvious that the writers abroad could not represent the main trend of Estonian literature, but merely its branch, the prospects of which were not to be overestimated. A truly national literature can only develop in an immediate connection with the actual life of the people. The production of writers, however able, who have been living in separation from their own people for decades, inevitably bears the impress of this abnormal situation.

The Estonians abroad for whom the production of those writers is intended, live dispersed in various parts of the world — West Europe, North America, Australia. It cannot be helped that part of them, the younger generation in particular, become assimilated to their surroundings, and that the circles of the Estonian reading public abroad get narrower and narrower. The main literary centre is Sweden, where Estonians live in a greater concentration. Most Estonian books are published there (by the Cooperative of Estonian Writers in Lund), as well as, since 1950, the small literary journal "*Tulimuld*" ("Scorched Earth"). Besides, since 1958, another literary journal, "*Mana*", has been appearing irregularly (in the last years in the USA). Both are characterised by either an outspoken or concealed anti-communist attitude. Owing to the restricted number of the reading public, the circulation of the works is scanty. The Estonian authors abroad, having no possibilities of supporting themselves by writing exclusively, must earn their living by working in other spheres. In spite of those unpropitious circumstances, some writers have been able to develop rather intensive literary activities.

Owing to the militantly anti-Soviet atmosphere, the works that appeared abroad in the first post-war years are typified by an idealised portrayal of life in bourgeois Estonia and by attempts at justifying emigration, so to speak, "historically". When further developments had annulled the hopes of a triumphant return to Estonia, "liberated" by imperialist forces, feelings of unease and hopelessness began to prevail. Some younger writers began to express their disillusionment and to protest against the trite nationalist slogans. In the 1950s the range of themes in the production of the Estonian writers

abroad was extended: next to the portrayal of life in bourgeois Estonia or abroad, subjects of a more general character began to prevail, and historical novel gained in significance. Political hullabaloo was replaced by intense searchings for a new world outlook, which often resulted in religious meditations, or in an expression of a sense of universal futility or doom, in which the tradegy of being isolated from one's native country was reflected either immediately or indirectly. Estonian writers abroad have been considerably influenced by their immediate and close contacts with Western modernism, both in the general world outlook and in their searchings for form. Poetry struck novel paths first of all; in fiction, elements of reality were often intertwined with mythical and symbolic imagery.

There is a number of talented Estonian authors abroad, whose works have also been translated into foreign languages. On account of the acute ideological struggle prevailing all over the world and due to the rigid attitude of the greater part of the refugees, Estonian writers abroad have not been able to restore close contacts with the native country, though quite a number of their works (by Under, Mälk, Ristikivi, Kangro, Lepik, Uibopuu, and others) have been published in Estonia, as well. Thanks to now more objective information about life in Soviet Estonia, the attitude of some authors has changed to a considerable extent in recent years. In the background of those developments, one may observe the sober realisation that literary production, of even the authors writing abroad, is likely to survive if it is able to obtain a place in the national literature.

Karl Ristikivi (born in 1912) emerged as a promising young prosaist in the late 1930s. He became popular at the very beginning, thanks to his striking epic talent, deep psychological insight, slight melancholy, subtle humour and fluent narration. His arrival in the literary world was welcomed by maestro A. H. Tammsaare. However, on account of subsequent developments, the further career of Ristikivi as a writer was neither steady nor untroubled.

The dates of publication of Ristikivi's so-called Tallinn trilogy coincided with the most crucial periods of social upheavals in Estonia: the first novel became available to the readers in the final years of bourgeois Estonia, the second — after the establishment of Soviet power, and the third — during the German fascist occupation of the country. However, all



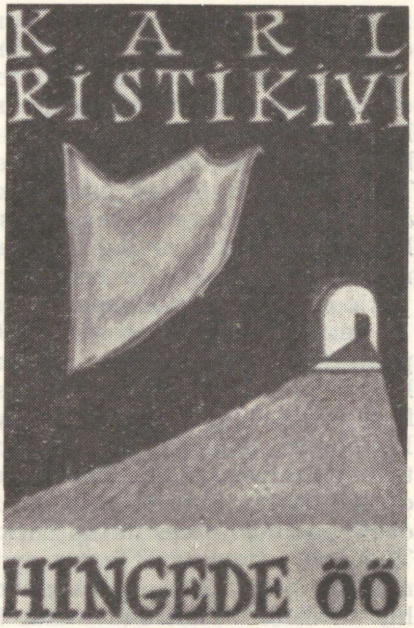
Karl Ristikivi

three constitute a succinct artistic whole, with plots more or less coinciding in time, in which the author, by tracing the fates of different characters, presented a survey of the development of Estonian society, from the end of the previous century up to the 1930s. A further trait in common to those novels is the arrival of the heroes, despite their different temperaments and social environments, at a stage of inner spiritual solitude, melancholy resignation, or even a realisation of complete defeat. In the novel "Fire and Iron" (1938), it is a former farmhand, who, coming to live in Tallinn and having become an industrial worker, gradually loses his enterprising spirit and joy of life. Years of dreary drudgery shatter his expectations and belief in life and turn him into a stern and solitary individual. In the novel "In a Strange House" (1940), in later editions "The Abode of a Just Man", the main character rises, true enough, from the status of a poor shop-assistant to the son-in-law of his employer and, finally, to a shopowner, but has to sacrifice his better self. Thus, the preliminary achievement of an illusory success results in an alienation of human relations, in embitterment and a sense of frustration. In the preceding novel the author depicts the life of the labourer with sympathy, becoming increas-

ingly ironical when tracing the career of the merchant. In the trilogy, the most poetic work is "The Garden" (1942), with the life of the hero reflecting the aspirations for culture of a young nation and the craving for classical ideals, which, however, get stuck in the bustle of everyday life. The touching sincerity and the naive literary ambitions of a semi-intellectual, a teacher, are presented with melancholy humour, and it is shown how that kind of man is bound to be misunderstood by the petty-bourgeois world surrounding him. The profundity of the problems in the trilogy, its epic breadth, the concreteness and exactitude of realistic portrayal, the fluency of narration and the author's brief, aphoristic comments, have been pointed out by critics who have stated the affinity of the trilogy to the English and German realistic novel of the beginning of the present century.

The writer's first two novels published abroad, in which he endeavoured to present a chronicle-like narration of the events of the final years of bourgeois Estonia, were not successful, and thereafter Ristikivi dropped writing for a long time. In the novel "All Souls' Night" (1953), he at last presented a generalisation of the impasse of the émigré-existence as a Kafka-like visionary wandering about in a "dead man's" house, followed by a trial of those accused of the seven deadly sins. That irreal whole composed of seemingly real details is an allegoric picture of the world as seen from an existentialist angle with the eyes of those who have been flung out of their previous orbits of life. In the prevailing chaos, everything is reduced to the absurd, concepts become dispersed and confused, and values seem to assume a contrary character. The writer does not accuse or preach, but presents sceptical questions. A strong satirical undertone rings through the queer scenes.

In the 1960s Ristikivi published series of historical novels with a profound philosophical undercurrent, in which the writer strove to reveal his own views by pointing to certain parallels between the distant and recent events. The interval of time between the prime and late Middle Ages, typified by the overthrowal of the thereto indisputable truths and by the deadlock of the conventional world order, has given ample sources for depicting, in the novels ("The Burning Banner", "The Last City", "Riders of Death", "Bridal Veil"), a struggle for a lost cause. Traditional values are crushed in an attack of brutality and in moral chaos. Those novels are written in a stylised manner,



"All Souls' Night"
(cover by K. Luts, 1953)

resembling old chronicles; they are penetrated by a romantic and tragic spirit, and, at the same time, they abound in picturesque scenes and in a thrill of adventure. A different book, in its tonality, is the satirical utopia "The Miraculous Island" (1964).

Ristikivi's recent works, in particular the novel "Song of Joy" (1966), show a different attitude, overcoming, to a certain extent, the one-sided fatalism of his earlier historical novels. Depicting the development of a Welsh youth, who gets to France in the days of the 100-year War and becomes a minstrel, the author shows the hardships his hero encounters and the painful searchings of a creative mind. "The Sorcerer's Disciple" (1967), based likewise on a historical theme from the late Middle Ages, represents, analogically, the attempts of scientific thought and outlook on life to liberate themselves from the fetters of blind dogma and superstition. In both above-mentioned novels, and in the last one in particular, a central place is attributed to the problem of relations between the ruling power and the

intellect. Here, like in the earlier works by Ristikivi, moral criteria form, above all, the basis determining the attitude of the writer. Man, with all his strivings and sufferings and with his contradictory relations to the surrounding environment, finds himself finally in loneliness and, realising the inevitability of human solitude, attains the stage of gentle unselfish resignation. The philosophy of seclusion and social scepticism is typical of a number of contemporary West-European writers — including Ristikivi, who must be regarded as such —, whose creation nilly-willy reflects an aspect of the attitude peculiar to the period of an ever-deepening social crisis.

Bernard Kangro (born in 1910), a member of the circle of poets "The Soothsayers", made his debut in the 1930s with lyrical poems. His observations of nature, as revealed in his first book ("Sonnets"), are very detailed indeed, and some of his poems remind one of a miniature drawing of nature, seen through a lens. At the same time, the author shows a tendency of identifying himself with nature, or suggesting the existence of mysterious forces in the background of external phenomena. The poet attempts at grasping the symbolism of the spirit of nature, which he tries to connect with the world of concepts of his ancestors. That endeavour becomes particularly evident in



Bernard Kangro

his next books of poems ("Ancient Houses" and "The Corn-drying Kiln"), in which he contemplates the eternal round of birth and death, and the alternation of exultation in life with apprehensions of transience. Preferring dark-shaded nocturnal moods, Kangro strives to find, through the medium of ethnographic objects and folkloristic traditions, a connection with the past and the mystical spirit of the nation. The classical structure of poetry is increasingly replaced by free verse, in which the poet draws, with an ever-growing mastery of style, soft, pastel-toned images.

War and exile brought great changes into the content of Kangro's verses. He, who used to be a lyricist, disinclined to treat topical or social themes, became a political poet, though in a way typical of a reactionary refugee. In particular, in the earlier books of his nine collections of poetry published abroad, the deep and tender affection for his native land is associated with a bourgeois-nationalist interpretation of recent historical events and with a prejudiced, one-sided attitude to Estonia of today. Kangro's poetry displays the traits peculiar to the literature of exiles — a fluctuation between illusionary hopes, self-justification and an ever-deepening sense of frustration. The conflict between the objective reality of historical developments and subjective ideas and sympathies constitutes the main content of Kangro's production. The poet has often succeeded in conveying his thoughts in fairly impressive images, using mostly motifs taken from nature and developing them in a symbolic manner. His poetry is predominantly elegiac, appealing and subtle, containing abundant autobiographical elements.

Kangro has also published eleven novels, including realistic portrayals of country-life at the end of the last and the beginning of the present centuries, e. g. his dilogy "The Longed-for Land" and "The Glow on the Horizon". The cycle of novels dealing with life in Tartu stands in the centre of Kangro's fiction. Those works are rich in lyrical elements, based on reminiscences. In order to convey the atmosphere of the university town of his times, Kangro has made use of surrealistic means of expression. The angle of view is often changed, both in time and space, and, simultaneously, realistic elements are intertwined with fantastic ones: actual images slip, imperceptibly, into a world of visions and symbols; the frames of rationality dis-

solve, giving way to dreams and mysteries. However, the author's perception of life as well as his socio-political bearings are extremely one-sided, showing strong nationalistic tendencies, and often contributing to a distortion of actual reality.

Valev Uibopuu (born in 1913), a prosaist who made his debut in Estonia prior to the war, has remained a representative of psychological realism. In his earlier short stories he mostly portrayed solitary, deprived people. The same trend prevails in Uibopuu's short stories written abroad. In the novel "Thirst" (1957), the author follows in detail, with the thoroughness of a psychologist, the trend of emotions of a consumptive, bed-ridden girl, on a background of changes taking simultaneously place in nature, from spring to autumn, achieving, with that device, a fine tracery of emotions, rich in subtle nuances.

One of the most interesting books by Uibopuu is the novel "The Changes of Markus" (1961), in which the author views critically the contemporary "prospering" society. The hero of the novel is a naive and sincere youth, an inexperienced idealist, who, owing to his frankness, charitable nature and will-



Valev Uibopuu

ingness to help, gets into increasingly embarrassing situations; in the ruthless surrounding world, these qualities contribute to his being considered not only a ridiculous world reformer, but an inferior and even suspicious individual.

The novels as well as the short stories by Uibopuu are mostly typified by a pensive manner and concentration of the narration on some moral problems whose significance evolves by itself, in the course of the development of the action. The variety of subject-matters is quite remarkable, and so is the author's ability to create the desired emotional atmosphere by using a fine gradation of striking details. In the somewhat dry and seemingly passionless presentation of events, one perceives an undercurrent of a predominantly tragic perception of life.

Kalju Lepik (born in 1920), a sensitive and manly lyrical talent, in the post-war period wrote verse reflecting the melancholy thoughts of an exile, which were combined with a youthful and sincere nationalism. When the initial illusions had faded, the poet soon arrived at a realisation of hopelessness, seeking to conceal or repel his desolation by defiant, robust humour, e. g. in the collection of poems entitled "The Fiddler". The poet tried to regain his balance by searching for a new



Kalju Lepik

support in life. He thought to find some consolation in religious reflections. However, due to his rational way of thinking, those reflections petered out in resignation (e.g. in the book of poems "Beggars on the Stairs"). The author began to use free verse already at the end of the 1940s; he has always revealed a keen interest in the form of poetry, carrying out various experiments in this field. The problems of poetic creation have come to occupy an important place in the content of his poems as well (e.g. in the book "Sea Bottom").

Lepik's poetic style has been continually changing, showing novel forms, but the range of his ideas and the tonality of his emotions have remained essentially the same. Melancholy and a sense of transience are the predominating emotions, but the poet does not complain and does not indulge in self-pity. The perceptions of irreparability and of the absurdity of existence arouse irony and a bitter sense of humour in the poet, inducing him to twist his thoughts to the border of the absurd. Like the majority of Estonian writers abroad, Lepik is aware of the hopelessness of the émigré existence and of the tragedy of having erred from his course. But still, with a certain stoicism, he deems it right to stay on the sinking ship; he condemns militarism and social injustice, and, at the same time, makes anti-Communist declarations. The poetry devoted to his native land is vulnerably tender, but it is also intertwined with out-dated political concepts; at the same time, he speaks ironically, sometimes rather pungently, about the impotent, verbose patriotism of the refugees. He suffers acutely from the given situation, but does not see a way out.

At the beginning of the 1950s Lepik wrote complicated poetry of an associative texture, tending to achieve a certain musical effect, viz. in his collection of poems "A Tale of Tigerland" (1955). Those poems show an abundance of images and an interchange of forms, rhythms; they are rich in melodious turns, but, at the same time, in deliberate discords as well, in analogy to modern music. At times, the peculiar flickering of concepts and words is replaced by an almost ascetic simplicity. Lepik makes masterful use of elements of Estonian folk songs, combining them with devices of contemporary poetry. That trait is particularly typical of his lyrical poems, mostly of an autobiographical character, collected in the book "Stone Quarry" (1958). Lepik's more recent poems are extremely compact and

laconical: the majority are very brief, sometimes but a few lines, but they convey eloquent pictures, moods, and the attitude of the author. Profound seriousness and simplicity, with an undercurrent of deep emotions form the appeal of the collection of poems "Yellow Heaths" (1965). Another device used by the poet to express an ever deepening hopelessness is the introductions of unexpected turns of thought and form, and associations of ideas and sounds, e.g. in the poems collected in the book "The Marble Refugee" (1968).

Other Estonian authors abroad. Pedro K r u s t e n, a prosaist of the older generation, was already known in pre-war Estonia as a representative of psychological realism. Of the numerous collections of short stories and novels published by Krusten abroad, the weightiest is the trilogy "The Tower above the Forest", "Song on the High Shore" and "The Maiden Went into the Rose Garden" (1959—63), which is based on themes from the autobiography and family chronicle of the author. Depicting the life of a gardener and his family on the background of a former manor, the author has succeeded in conveying the inner development of characters, despite the scantiness of external events and the restricted section of the life portrayed, and in showing the deeper currents and emotions determining the further fates of people.

Gert H e l b e m ä e (born in 1913) has published works dealing with themes of mediaeval Tallinn ("The Blackfriar", a novel in two volumes), as well as with the life at a refugee camp and the first year of Soviet rule in Estonia; the last-mentioned books show an anti-Soviet tendency. Several novels by Helbemäe are based on psychological observations, e.g. "The Sisters" (1955), treating the rather eventless life of four sisters, which nevertheless is full of inner tension and sharp conflicts. One of the best novels by that author, "Ship of Sacrifice" (1960), is the tragic love-story of a teacher and a Jewish girl, a pianist, in pre-war Tallinn.

Raimond K o l k (born in 1924) has published poetry borne by emotions of home-sickness, melancholy, and transience of life. The author's laconic verse is often enlivened by a soft, humorous touch and a skilful use of the melodious South-Estonian dialect. Of the three novels written by the author, "The Ice Is Breaking" (1958) depicts village life in pre-war Estonia and shows how people failed in human understanding. The other

two, "The Village Is Burning at Both Ends" (1955), and "Never to Win" (1969), showing the humorous and somewhat ironical manner peculiar to the author and depicting the relations of refugees to their new surroundings, describe the plight of a young Estonian abroad, wavering in his choice between a woman of his own nationality and a native of the foreign country.

The extensive production of Arvo Mägi (born in 1913) contains short stories and novels on contemporary and historical themes as well as psychological and allegoric ones. Next to realistic portrayals of village life (the novel "The Deluge", 1954; collections of short stories "They Won't Let Us Live", 1956, and "The Tempter", 1958), Mägi has written, particularly in more recent years, some prose works, in which he applies modern devices, but tends to constructionism and dryness. Asta Villmann (born in 1916) is the author of a five-volume novel "One Handful of Ashes and One of Dust" (1961—1968), portraying life in Tallinn in the years prior to the war. Her strong points are the epic breadth of the treatment, a rich gallery of types, and a lively narrative style. Salme Ekbaum's (born in 1912) numerous novels deal both with Estonian country-life prior to the war ("Süteoja"; "To Claim One's Right") and the life of the Estonians abroad ("The Rapids"; "The Gate-Crasher"). Of other Estonian prose-writers abroad, we should mention here Aino Thoen and Ain Kalmus, as well as the authors of the younger generation, Helga Nõu and Elin Toona, who made their debuts in the 1960s.

One of the most original Estonian poets abroad is Arno Vihalemm (born in 1911), who treats life and the surrounding reality with a fine humour bordering on the grotesque. By the way, he is also known as a capable black-and-whitist. He looks for and succeeds in finding angles from which the world looks different from the usual, and aims at conveying the futility of his surroundings by using absurd motifs and deliberately primitive verse; he conceals his melancholy outlook upon life behind a play on words or forms, or self-irony. Ivar Grünthal (born in 1924) strives for perfection of form in his poems. The greater part of his poetry reflects despondent reminiscences of a participant in a senseless war and the after-effects of outbursts of passion. One of the émigré poets adhering most steadily to surrealism is Ilmar Laaban (born in 1921). Further poets

whose collections have been published abroad are Aleksis Rannit, Ivar Ivask (who has also written in German), Harri Asi and Hannes Oja.

The literary reviews in the Estonian press abroad are mostly reciprocally appreciative and encouraging. The articles by A. Aspel and I. Ivask (who tries to elucidate the typical structural elements in the production of an author, in particular) are more up to the point. Political tendentiousness is a striking feature, not only in criticism, but also in literary-historical treatises and brief monographs of Estonian writers abroad. Of a more permanent value are some treatises on the classics of Estonian literature (a monograph on the early development of Kreutzwald by G. Suits and a monograph on E. Vilde's historical trilogy by H. Salu — both published in the Finnish language).

There are about thirty Estonian authors writing more or less continuously abroad, and their production has become quite sizeable in the course of time. With the foregoing notes, we do not aspire to present an exhaustive survey nor to draw categorical conclusions: in the case of literary works existing in those peculiar circumstances, in isolation from the main portion of the Estonian reading public and from the literary life of the home country, such conclusions might prove precipitate.

LITERARY CRITICISM

From 1940 onwards the new course of development in Estonian literary life was a crucial period for criticism. Instead of the previous diverse aesthetic tendencies, the principles of socialist realism began to predominate, mainly on examples of Russian Soviet criticism and theory of literature, which were already earlier known to the representatives of the democratic trend. However, the dispersal of literary forces during the years of war and the complicated conditions at the beginning of the post-war period impeded progress. Only a few critics and literary historians of pre-war Estonia went on with their work. The majority were newcomers, who contributed to criticism while pursuing journalistic activities or teaching literature at Tartu University. Consequently, the scantiness of critical works of interest during that period is to a certain extent understandable. The compilation of a history of Estonian literature started at

the Chair of Literature of Tartu State University was discontinued. Of the parts that appeared in print, the most remarkable was the treatise on critical realism by F. Tuglas (1947). At that time, the research work into the literary heritage carried out by the Institute of Language and Literature at the new-established Academy of Sciences bore a preparatory character.

The literary criticism of the post-war period laid main stress on the socio-pedagogical functions and communist ideology of literature, paying but slight attention to specific art problems. The vulgar-sociological tendencies in criticism became particularly strong from the end of the 1940s onwards. The simplified scheme of dividing literature into realistic and antirealistic, progressive and reactionary left its impress on the critical works of that period. The recovery from that infantile disease of leftism followed along with the general improvement of the socio-political and literary-aesthetical atmosphere in the mid-fifties. Since the latter half of the 'fifties, and particularly in the 'sixties, Estonian Soviet criticism and history of literature have been making remarkable progress.

A new generation of critics and literary historians trained in Soviet times has cropped up. As a result of the research work done at the Institute of Language and Literature, three first volumes of the exhaustive 5-volume "History of Estonian Literature" (editor-in-chief E. Sõgel) were published in 1965—1969. Extensive monographs have appeared on early Estonian secular literature, on Kreutzwald, Koidula, Kitzberg and Tammsaare (by A. Vinkel, A. Annist, V. Alttoa, H. Puhvel, and other researchers) and about twenty short monographs on the life and work of the most outstanding Estonian writers. In those works, literary problems are treated according to the methods of Marxist theory of literature, in close connection with the social and cultural trends of the epoch concerned. Valuable literary-historical materials and researches are published in the series of Communications of the Kreutzwald Museum of Literature as well as in the Transactions of Tartu State University. Next to the monthly "*Looming*", the tribune of contemporary Estonian criticism, another literary journal, "*Keel ja Kirjandus*" ("Language and Literature"; editor-in-chief O. Jõgi) has been published since 1958.

Literary criticism has gained in profundity and variety of treatment. Next to articles dealing with literary problems and



The journal "*Keel ja Kirjandus*"

annual reviews of the main literary genres, there are critical portraits, and, in recent years in particular, literary essays. As active expounders of literary problems, mostly of a polemical nature, N. Andresen and H. Siimisker should be mentioned. Several authors (P. Kuusberg, L. Remmelgas, O. Jõgi, H. Peep, O. Utt, and others) have published books of selected critical works. Specific art problems are receiving more attention, and theoretical knowledge is improving. The most outstanding critics analyse literary works in their inseparable entity of ideas and structural elements, revealing keen aesthetic perception and a sound knowledge of the new tendencies of development.

In contemporary Soviet Estonian literary thought, we find the same general stabilisation and impetus which are typical of the whole national cultural life under socialism. The overcoming of preliminary difficulties and the continuous appearance of young talented authors will undoubtedly contribute to criticism occupying a worthy place in the literary life of Estonia.

CONCLUSION

Some theoreticians have expressed doubts whether it is at all possible to speak about literary development. And indeed, if development were treated as a direct progress towards an ideal which is presented as a constant, then, in case of a rich literature of old traditions, those doubts might to a certain extent be comprehended. Is it really a fact that every following stage is on a higher level than the preceding ones? However, if we treat development as a rise of ever new, hitherto unknown and unexpected values, those doubts do not hold. It is not absolutely imperative that the literature of a given period should be in every respect better than that of the preceding ones, but it is an indisputable fact that it is a different one. In that variation, we see the reflection of the changes in the outlook upon life, in the human emotions, tastes, and relations — in a word, the changes in social psychology in connection with social transformations and with the new perceptions of reality at a new stage of general development. In that respect, we may observe a particularly rapid progress in relatively young literatures, where the advance is stimulated, apart from interior impulses, also by ever closer contacts with the older and richer literatures of other nations. The preceding survey of the history of Estonian literature should serve to prove this assertion.

Estonian literature, having been formed at a rather recent date, lagged behind the literatures of advanced European countries for a long period of time, in fact catching up with the general development as late as the present century. With Estonians launching upon the road of socialism, the literature got new landmarks, as well. This process could not be affected without difficulties and losses, but it must be considered as an objective historic reality. Contemporary Estonian literature, an integral part of the multilingual Soviet literature, but of an organic structure of its own, can and must be simultaneously regarded as a link in the socialist vanguard of world literature. Presenting a wide-ranged and many-sided picture of the progress of a people from the feudal system, through a period of capitalism, to socialism, and dealing with human fates and with the

formation of consciousness in the course of the thirty years of the construction of a classless society, Estonian literature as such may offer something of interest not to local readers, only. Likewise, the history of that literature, the chronicle of the self-perfection of a small nation that used to be regarded as provincial, ought to contain experience of general significance.

If we should return once more to the problem of the appearance of Estonian literature on the international arena, we can state here substantial progress, particularly in the Soviet period. The fact alone that in the recent thirty years more than 420 books (with the total of copies amounting to 16 million) by Estonian authors have appeared in Russian translations, speaks for itself; a popularisation of Estonian literature in another language on such a wide scale could not have been dreamt of in bourgeois Estonia. If we add to that number the translations of scores of Estonian literary works that have appeared in other Soviet republics and in socialist countries, we may get an impressive picture of the effectivity of the collaboration of brotherly nations in the sphere of culture. All that, however, can be regarded as preliminary progress of a mainly regional character. Beyond the borders of socialist countries, Estonian literature has been but sparingly popularised, and the choice of the books translated has been rather one-sided, as yet. Nevertheless, there are enough works in Estonian literature that are worth being made available to other nations, as well. Though this problem is connected with great difficulties (on account of the scanty number of Estonian-reading literati in foreign countries), and complications of translation (of poetry, in particular), we should like to hope that Estonian literature might arouse greater response on an international scale than hitherto. The wish to contribute towards that aim was one of the principal inducements in writing the present survey.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

concerning the principal authors

All dates are given in conformity with the present calendar. Earlier Estonian titles are given in their modern spelling.

Alle, August, born in Viljandi, Aug. 31, 1890, the son of a stonebreaker, worked as a druggist's apprentice in Russia and as a tutor in Lithuania. Passed his secondary school examinations as an external student in Orel in 1915, and studied medicine at Saratov in 1915—18. Was subsequently an official, journalist and professional writer in Estonia. Graduated from the Law Faculty of Tartu University in 1937, and worked as a lawyer. Upon the outbreak of the war he was evacuated to the Soviet rear. Editor of the literary journal "*Looming*" in 1946—52. Died in Tallinn, July 8, 1952. Publications: the collections of poems "To the Isles of Solitude" ("*Üksinduse saartele*", 1918), "Carmina Barbata" (1921), "The Swell on the Sea" ("*Ummiklained*", 1930) and "Harsh Rhythms" ("*Karmid rütmid*", 1934), a book of verse "A Song about a Light-blue Frock and a Pink Skirt" ("*Laul kleidist helesinisest ja roosast seelikust*", 1925), a selection of epigrams (1944), and a collection of critical feuilletons "The Lilac Elephant" ("*Lilla elevant*", 1923).

Alver, Betti (Elisabet L e p i k), born at Jõgeva, Tartumaa, Nov. 23, 1906, the daughter of a road-master. Graduated from secondary school in Tartu (1924), studied at the Faculty of Philosophy of Tartu University (1924—27). Since then a professional writer and translator in Tartu. Published a novel "The Wind's Paramour" ("*Tuulearmuke*", 1927), and two stories. Has written verse since the early 1930s when she published a number of narrative poems in literary journals and a collection of lyrics "Dust and Fire" ("*Tolm ja tuli*", 1936). During the post-war period A. worked mainly as a translator, especially of Pushkin. The collection "The Star Hour" ("*Tähetund*", 1966) contains her later poems. Awarded the title of Merited Writer of the Estonian S.S.R. in 1966.

Barbarus, Johannes (J. V a r e s), born Jan. 12, 1890, the son of a farmer at Heimtal, Viljandimaa. Graduated from secondary school in Pärnu (1910), studied medicine at Kiev University (1910—14); an army physician in the First World War, later a physician at Pärnu till 1939. Travelled in Western and Southern Europe, and also in the Soviet Union. A representative of the intellectuals opposed to the bourgeois regime, he became prime minister of the people's government in June, 1940, and chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian S.S.R. in August of the same year. During the war he worked in the Soviet rear. Died in Tallinn, Nov. 29, 1946. Publications: the collections of verse "Fata Morgana" (1918), "Man and the Sphinx" ("*Inimene ja sfinks*", 1919), "Disasters" ("*Katastroofid*", 1920), "Relations" ("*Vahekorrad*", 1922), "The Geometrical Man" ("*Geomeetriline inimene*", 1924), "Multiplied Man" ("*Multiplitseerit inimene*", 1929), "The World Is Open" ("*Maailm on lahti*", 1930), "E. R-c" ("*E. V.-r.*", 1932), "The

Focus" ("*Tulipunkt*", 1934), "Memento" (1936), "Fishes on Dry Land" ("*Kalad kuival*", 1937), "Crossing the Threshold" ("*Üle lävе*", 1939), "Armed Verses" ("*Relvastatud värsid*", 1943), and "On the Roads at the Front" ("*Rindeteedel*", 1944); the anthologies "The Triangle" ("*Kolmnurk*", 1921), "Against the Current" ("*Vastu voolu*", 1946), and "Step by Step to Victory" ("*Samm-sammult võidule*", 1946). He also produced publicistic writings and some short stories. Received the title of Merited Writer of the Estonian S.S.R. in 1945. His selected works in three volumes appeared in 1948—50. B's poems have been extensively translated into Russian and other languages of the Soviet Union.

Beekman, Aimée, born in the family of an official in Tallinn, Apr. 20, 1933. Studied at the Moscow Institute of Cinematography (1951—56), worked as a film operator at the Studio Tallinnfilm (1956—60); since then a professional writer. Has published novels "Small People" ("*Väikesed inimesed*", 1964), "The Mirror of the Well" ("*Kaevupeegel*", 1966), "The Flock of White Crows" ("*Valgete vareste parv*", 1968), "Potato-Bells" ("*Kartulikuljused*", 1969), "The Hurdy-gurdy" ("*Väntorel*", 1970), a travelogue about Italy "The Madonna with the Plastic Heart" ("*Plastmassist südamega madonna*", 1963), travel letters, a play and a film script (in collaboration with her husband Vladimir B.). Her novels have been translated mainly into Russian.

Beekman, Vladimir, born Aug. 23, 1929, in Tallinn, the son of a driver. Educated at the Tallinn Polytechnic Institute (1948—53). Worked in a publishing-house 1953—56, then a professional writer in Tallinn. Has travelled widely in Europe, South America, etc. Secretary of the Board of the Writers' Union of the Estonian S.S.R. since 1968. Published collections of verse "A Song about Youth" ("*Laul noorusest*", 1952), "The Path to Life" ("*Tee ellu*", 1955), "The Wind in the Heather" ("*Tuul kanarbikus*", 1958), "The Milky Way" ("*Linnutee*", 1960), "The Blue Tulip" ("*Sinine tulp*", 1965), "The Non-Existent Tree" ("*Olematu puu*", 1969), a long poem "The Light of Eastern Europe" ("*Ida-Euroopa valgus*", 1963), a novel "The Transit Passenger" ("*Transiitreisija*", 1967), a number of prose books for the young reader, including the historical novel "The Town of Sorrowful Stones" ("*Kurbade kivide linn*", 1959), travel books "Iceland 1958" ("*Island 1958*", 1959), "Autumn in the Kingdom of Sweden" ("*Sügis Rootsi kuningriigis*", 1960), "Brazil — a Distant Land" ("*Kauge maa — Brasiilia*", 1963), and together with Aimée B. — "At the Cross-roads of Europe" ("*Euroopa ristteedel*", 1965); in collaboration with Aimée B. — a play "The Court Is Coming" ("*Kohus tuleb*", 1961), and a film script "Men of One Village" ("*Ühe küla mehed*", 1962). Has translated verse and prose from Russian, German, Swedish, Bulgarian and other languages. His verse has been translated into Russian and other languages of the Soviet Union.

Bornhöhe, Eduard (E. Brunberg), born Feb. 17, 1862, the son of a granary-keeper on the manor of Kullaaru near Rakvere, Virumaa. Attended elementary and district schools in Tallinn; worked alternately as a clerk, teacher and journalist in Estonia and in different parts of Russia and Germany (mostly in Berlin). In 1888 passed the high school state examinations in Tallinn as an external student, in 1889 studied philology at Tartu University. 1893—1907 served as clerk of the court in Tallinn, 1907—17 as magistrate at Jõhvi, and 1919—23 in Tallinn. Died in Tallinn, Nov. 17, 1923. Published the historical romances "The Avenger" ("*Tasuja*", 1880), "The Struggles of Villu" ("*Villu võitlused*", 1890) and "Duke Gabriel, or the Last Days of

Pirita Cloister" ("*Vürst Gabriel ehk Pirita kloostri viimsed päevad*", 1893), a satire "The Fools at Tallinn" ("*Tallinna narrid ja narrikesed*", 1892), the travel book "Following the Footsteps of the Pilgrims" ("*Usurändajate radadel*", 1899), and a short novel "The Bugbears" ("*Kollid*", 1903). He is also the author of short stories, some translations and adaptations. 1962—64 B's works were published in three volumes. Some of his stories have been translated into Russian, Finnish and Lithuanian.

Faehlmann, Friedrich Robert, born Dec. 31, 1798, the son of the steward of the manor of Ao, Järvamaa. Graduated from secondary school in Tartu, from 1817 studied medicine at Tartu University. In 1824 began work as a physician in Tartu, in 1827 received the degree of Doctor of Medicine. 1843—45 delivered lectures to the Faculty of Medicine, 1842—50 also lectured in the Estonian language at the University. Proposed the foundation of the Learned Estonian Society, 1843—50 its President. Died at Tartu, Apr. 22, 1850. His report on the Kalevipoeg (1839) and the myths (published 1840—52) initiated the movement for the elaboration of Estonian folklore in a national and romantic spirit. Edited the almanac of the Society, in which published a number of short stories and poems. He also made studies of the Estonian language and the prosody of Estonian folk songs.

Gailit, August, born at Sangaste near Valga, Jan. 9, 1891, in the family of a building contractor. Attended municipal schools in Valga and Tartu and private schools in Tartu. Worked as a journalist in Riga (1911—14), later as an army correspondent. After 1916, a journalist in Tallinn and after 1918, in Tartu. Press attaché at the Estonian Legation in Riga in 1920—22. Lived in Germany, Italy and France in 1922—24. Was then a professional writer in Tartu (also director of the "Vanemuine" theatre, 1932—34), and subsequently in Tallinn. Fled to Sweden in 1944, died at Ormesta manor near Örebro, Nov. 5, 1960. Published the collections of short stories "The Devil's Merry-go-round" ("*Saatana karussell*", 1917), "Knights Errant" ("*Rändavad rüütlid*", 1919), "The Idiot" ("*Idioot*", 1924), "Towards Morning" ("*Vastu hommikut*", 1926), "The Crusaders" ("*Ristisõitjad*", 1927), the stories "When the Sun Sets" ("*Kui päike läheb looja*", 1910) and "The Death of August Gailit" ("*August Gailiti surm*", 1919), the collections of feuilletons "Clowns and Fawns" ("*Klounid ja faunid*", 1919), "Grimaces of Time" ("*Aja grimassid*", 1926) the novels "Fairyland" ("*Muinasmaa*", 1918), "Purple Death" ("*Purpurne surm*", 1924), "Toomas Nipernaadi" (1928), "Land of Our Fathers" ("*Isade maa*", 1935), "Rough Seas" ("*Karge meri*", 1938), "Ekke Moor" (1941), "The Flaming Heart" ("*Leegitsev süda*", 1945), "Over the Restless Sea" ("*Üle rahutu vee*", 1951), and three volumes of stories "Do You Remember, Dearest?" I—III ("*Kas mäletad, mu arm?*", 1951—59). G's works have been translated into German, French, Dutch, Hungarian, Czech, Swedish, Finnish, Lettish, Lithuanian, Danish and other languages.

Gross, Villem, born in a worker's family in Tartu, Jan. 11, 1922; attended secondary schools at Jõhvi and Rakvere. Served in the Soviet Army during the Great Patriotic War. A journalist in 1946—59, then a professional writer in Tallinn. Made his literary debut with some plays ("The Questionnaire" — "*Ankeet*", 1955), went on to write books for the young "A Boy's Summer" ("*Ühe poisi suvi*", 1956), "Spreading the Wings" ("*Tiivasirutus*", 1958), novels "An Unfinished One-Family House for Sale" ("*Müüa pooleliolev individuaal-elumaja*", 1962), "Deskmates" ("*Pinginaabrid*", 1964), "The School Fee" ("*Kooliraha*", 1967), a collection of short stories "Average Days"

("*Keskmised päevad*", 1966). Has also published critical reviews and publicistic writings. G's works have been translated into Russian, Lithuanian, Lettish, Moldavian and other languages of the Soviet Union.

Haava, Anna, born as a farmer's daughter at Kodavere, Tartumaa, Oct. 16, 1864. After attending the secondary school for girls at Tartu (1880—84), she worked as a governess here. 1894—99 worked in St. Petersburg first as a teacher, then as a nurse, later returned to her birthplace. From 1906 lived in Tartu as a professional writer. In 1954 H. was awarded the title of People's Writer of the Estonian S.S.R. Died at Tartu, March 13, 1957. Published collections of verse: "Poems" I—III ("*Luuletused*", 1888, 1890, 1897), "Waves" ("*Lained*", 1906), "Cross Waves" ("*Ristlained*", 1910), "Children of the North" ("*Põhjamaa lapsed*", 1913), "Our Days" ("*Meie päevist*", 1920), "Yet Life Is Beautiful" ("*Siiski on elu ilus*", 1930), and "I Sing My Estonian Song" ("*Laulan oma eesti laulu*", 1935), collection of short prose pieces "Little Scenes from Estonia" ("*Väikesed pildid Eestist*", 1911). In 1954 published a selection "Poems" ("*Luuletused*"). Her several poems have been translated into Finnish, German, Russian and other languages.

Hindrey, Karl August, born at Abja manor, Pärnumaa, Aug. 13, 1875, the son of a brewer. Graduated from secondary school in Pärnu, studied at the Stieglitz Art School in St. Petersburg (1894—98); spent some time in Munich and Paris. Beginning with 1904, a journalist and cartoonist in Tartu and Tallinn, engaged also in theatrical and literary criticism. Since 1928 a professional writer in Tartu. Died at Iru, Jan. 9, 1947. Publications: the novels "Ararauna" (1930), "Rowne Wanders About" ("*Rowne rändab*", 1933), "The Rudiments of Dying" ("*Suremise eod*", 1935), "Urmas and Merike" I—II (1935—36), "An Eventless Summer" ("*Sündmusteta suvi*", 1937), "The Decline" I—II ("*Loojak*", 1938), "About the World and People..." ("*Ja ilma ja inimesi...*", 1939), "The Meteoric Flight of Taaniel Tümm" ("*Taaniel Tümmi tähelend*", 1943); the collections of short stories "The Light of Lightning" ("*Välkvalgus*", 1932), "The Love Letter" ("*Armastuskiri*", 1933), "The Destruction of Sigtuna" ("*Sigtuna häving*", 1937), "The Hearts" ("*Südamed*", 1938), "Destruction on Lake Mälar" ("*Hukatus Mälaril*", 1938); a play "The Manor of Raidaru Church" ("*Raidaru kirikumõis*", 1937), the travel books "A Trip to the Congo" ("*Kongosõit*", 1929) and "Wandering, Shores, the Riviera, the Sister Islands and Savoy" ("*Rännud, rannad, Riviera, Sõsarsaared ja Savoy*", 1937); five volumes of memoirs (1929—31); numerous books for children (illustrated by the author), stories for young readers, popular-scientific books, biographical works, etc.

Hint, Aadu (Adolf), born Jan. 10, 1910, on Muhu Island, the son of a seaman. Graduated from Kuressaare secondary school in 1929; worked as an elementary school teacher on Saaremaa Island and (1936—40) in Tartu. Edited the literary journal "*Viisnurk*" in 1940—41. In the Soviet rear during the Great Patriotic War. Since the war a professional writer in Tallinn, has travelled in Europe and Canada. Publications: the novels "Leprosy" ("*Pidalitõbi*", 1934), "At the Vatku Leper Asylum" ("*Vatku tõbilas*", 1936), "The Golden Gate" ("*Kuldne värav*", 1937), "The Trimmer" ("*Tulemees*", 1939), a 4-volume epopee "The Coast of the Winds" ("*Tuuline rand*", 1951—66); the collections of short prose writings "Wild Geese" ("*Metshaned*", 1945), "Portraits of Workmen" ("*Töömeeste portreid*", 1948), and "The Last Coastal Pirate" ("*Viimne vandiraiuja*", 1970); the plays "The Fishing Schooner of

the Men of Tagaranna" ("*Tagaranna meeste kalakuunar*", 1947), "Where Are You Going, Comrade Director?" ("*Kuhu lähed, seltsimees direktor?*", 1949) and "The Prophecy» ("*Ennustus*", 1968); books for the young and publicistic writings, film scenarios. Awarded the titles of Merited Writer of the Estonian S.S.R. (1955) and People's Writer of the Estonian S.S.R. (1965), Soviet Estonian Prize (1968). H's main work "The Coast of the Winds" has been translated into Russian, Latvian, Czech, Finnish and other languages. Part 3 of the novel has been made into a film "The Gladiator" ("*Gladiaator*") as has the tale "Breaking-up of the Ice" ("*Jääminek*").

Jakobson, August, born in a worker's family in Pärnu, Sept. 2, 1904. Graduated from Pärnu secondary school in 1926, studied economics and later medicine at Tartu University. Worked as a professional writer in Tartu till 1940; chairman of the Estonian Writers' Union from 1939; editor-in-chief of the State Literary Publishing House (1940—41); worked in the Soviet rear during the Great Patriotic War. After the war employed again in a publishing house and was chairman of the Writers' Union of the Estonian S.S.R. (1950—53), chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian S.S.R. (1950—58). Died in Tallinn, May 23, 1963. Published the novels "The Poor Sinners" I—II ("*Vaeste-patuste alev*", 1927), "The Ash-gray Horse" I—IV ("*Tuhkur hobune*", 1928—33), "The Path of Three Troubles" ("*Kolme vaeva tee*", 1930), the cycle of novels "The Andruksons" ("*Andruksonide suguvõsa*") which included "The Crime of Miika Valtsberg" ("*Miika Valtsbergi roim*", 1931), "The Beginning of Work" ("*Töö algus*", 1932) and "The Conquerors" ("*Vallutajad*", 1934); "The Old Guard" ("*Vana kaardivägi*", 1935), "The Path of the Beast" ("*Metsalise rada*", 1936), "The New Man" ("*Uus inimene*", 1938); the cycle "The Eternal Estonians" ("*Igavesed eestlased*") which included the novels "The Quiet Evening" ("*Vaikne õhtu*", 1937), "The October Wind" I—II ("*Oktoobrituul*", 1938), and "The Snow Melts" ("*Lumi sulab*", 1940); the collections of short stories and tales "Joonatan Hingemaa's Strayings" ("*Joonatan Hingemaa eksirännakud*", 1930), "The Eaglet" ("*Kotkapoeg*", 1932), "The Travellers at the Terminus" ("*Reisijad lõppjaamas*", 1934), "Private Soldier Mattias" ("*Reamees Mattias*", 1935), "The Recluses" ("*Üksiklased*", 1935), "The First Manly Deeds" ("*Esimesed meheteod*", 1936), "Memories of a Singing Starling" ("*Mälestusi laulvast kuldnokast*", 1939), "In Fire and Blood" ("*Tules ja veres*", 1942), "The Path of Giants" ("*Hiiglaste tee*", 1944), and "The Urge to Grow" ("*Kasvutung*", 1949); the selections of stories "The Harbour behind the Fog" ("*Sadam udu taga*", 1945), "The Dawn-light" ("*Aovalgus*", 1946), and "A Red-hot Day" ("*Tulikuum päev*", 1949); a collection of fairy-tales for children "The Nightingale and the Blindworm" ("*Ööbik ja vaskuss*", 1947); the plays "The Apparitions" ("*Viirastused*", 1939), "Life in a Citadel" ("*Elu tsitadellis*", 1946), "The Struggle without a Front-line" ("*Võitlus rindejooneta*", 1946), "Rust" ("*Rooste*", 1947), "Two Camps" ("*Kaks leeri*", 1948), "Our Life" ("*Meie elu*", 1949), "The Builders" ("*Ehitajad*", 1950), "On the Border between Night and Day" ("*Öö ja päeva piiril*", 1950), "The Jackals" ("*Šaakalid*", 1951), "The Guardian Angel from Nebraska" ("*Kaitseingel Nebraskast*", 1952), "Dying" ("*Suremine*", 1953), "The Old Oak" ("*Vana tamm*", 1954), and "Knots of the Storm" ("*Tormisõlmed*", 1962), a dramatic chronicle consisting of six plays. Awarded the title of Merited Writer of the Estonian S.S.R. (1945) and that of People's Writer of the Estonian S.S.R. (1947), State Prizes of the Soviet Union (1947 and 1948). Selected works in 15 volumes published in 1954—69. J's plays have been

translated into Russian and other languages of the Soviet Union as well as into German, Czech, Polish, Rumanian, Hungarian, English, French, Spanish, Serbo-Croatian, Chinese, etc. Screen versions have been produced of "Life in a Citadel" and "The Jackals" ("Silver Dust" — "*Hõbedane tolm*").

Jannsen, Johann Voldemar, born May 16, 1819, at Vändra, Pärnumaa, the son of a miller and innkeeper. In 1838 began to work as an assistant schoolteacher, in 1842 became parish clerk and parish schoolmaster at Vändra. 1850—63 taught at an elementary school in Pärnu. From 1857 edited the weekly "*Perno Postimees*", 1864—80 in Tartu the weekly "*Eesti Postimees*". On his initiative the society *Vanemuine* was founded at Tartu in 1865 and the first song festival was held here in 1869. Died at Tartu, July 13, 1890. Made his debut in literature by translating hymns and compiling works on religion. Published seven volumes of stories — partly translated, partly adapted — under the title of "Messenger" ("*Sanumetooja*", 1848—60) and "The Old Soldier's First Village Stories for Village People" ("*Püssipapa esimesed külajutud külarahvale*", 1854). In addition published stories in the "*Eesti Postimees*", and in its supplement and almanac. "Estonian Song-Book" ("*Eesti laulik*", 1860) contains mostly translated or adapted choral-songs. J. is also the author of three farces.

Kallas, Aino, born Aug. 2, 1878, in Finland, the daughter of J. Krohn, Professor of Helsinki University. In 1895 left the Helsinki secondary school for girls. In 1900 married Oskar Kallas, an Estonian philologist. Up to 1903 lived in St. Petersburg, after that at Tartu till 1918. Her husband's diplomatic duties led her back to Helsinki (1918—22), and then to London (1922—34). 1934—44 lived in Tallinn. 1944 emigrated to Sweden, passing back to Finland in 1953. Died in Helsinki, Nov. 9, 1956. Made her literary debut with a collection of poems (1897) and another of short stories (1899) published under the pseudonym of A. Suonio. First works on subjects drawn from an Estonian background are the short story collections "From beyond the Sea" I—II ("*Mere tagant*"; in Finnish 1904—05, in Estonian 1905 and 1908) and "The Town of Departing Ships" ("*Lahkuvate laevade linn*", 1913), the brief novel "Ants Raudjalg" (1907), a biography of Koidula "The Flight of the Star" ("*Tähelend*", 1915 in Finnish, 1918 in Estonian), and the collection of essays "Young-Estonia" ("*Noor-Eesti*", 1918 in Finnish, 1921 in Estonian). Next followed the stories "Barbara von Tisenhusen" (1923 in Finnish, 1924 in Estonian), "The Vicar of Reigi" ("*Reigi õpetaja*", 1926 in Finnish, 1928 in Estonian), "The Bride of the Wolf" ("*Hundimõrsja*", 1928 in Finnish, 1929 in Estonian), and "The Revenge of the Holy River" ("*Püha Jõe kättemaks*"; 1930 in Finnish, 1932 in Estonian). In the 1930s produced a number of plays based on earlier prose works: "Bathsheba in Saaremaa" ("*Patseba Saaremaal*"), "Bernhard Riives", "The Bride of the Wolf", "Mare and Her Son" ("*Mare ja ta poeg*"). She also published two travel books "A Sheaf of Light" ("*Kiirtepild*", 1928) and "Under the Spell of Morocco" ("*Maroko võlus*", 1931). During her later years published three books of verse, several volumes of short stories, memoirs and a diary runnig into five volumes (in Finnish 1952—56, in Estonian 1954—60). Her works have been translated into English, German, French, Italian, Swedish, Hungarian, Dutch and other languages.

Kangro, Bernard, born Sept. 18, 1910, at Vana-Antsla. Võrumaa, the son of a farmer. Graduated from Valga secondary school in 1929, studied at the Faculty of Philosophy of Tartu University, graduating in 1938 with the Mag. Phil. degree. Worked as a university lecturer, and later as a

dramatist for the "Vanemuine" theatre. Emigrated to Sweden in 1944, where he is editor of a literary journal "*Tulimuld*" and director of a publishing cooperative. Has published the collections of verse "Sonnets" ("*Sonetid*", 1935), "Ancient Houses" ("*Vanad majad*", 1937), "The Corn-drying Kiln" ("*Reheahi*", 1939), "The Burnt Tree" ("*Põlenud puu*", 1945), "Sunday" ("*Pühapäev*", 1946), "The Seventh Night" ("*Seitsmes öö*", 1947), "The Hearth" ("*Tulease*", 1949), "February" ("*Veebruar*", 1951), "No Man's Land" ("*Eikellegi maa*", 1952), "Midsummer" ("*Suvihari*", 1955), "September" (1964), and "Land of Shadows" ("*Varjumaa*", 1966); an anthology "Timeless Memory" ("*Ajatu mälestus*", 1960); the novels "The Longed-for Land" ("*Igatsetud maa*", 1949), "The Glow on the Horizon" ("*Kuma taevarannal*", 1950), "Lake Peipsi" ("*Peipsi*", 1954), "The Keys of Heaven" ("*Taeva võtmed*", 1956), "The Azure Gate" ("*Sinine värav*", 1957), "Icy Fountains" ("*Jäälätted*", 1958), "The River Emajõgi" ("*Emajõgi*", 1961), "Tartu" (1962), "The Stone Bridge" ("*Kivisild*", 1963), "The Black Book" ("*Must raamat*", 1965), and "Whirlfire" ("*Keeristuli*", 1969). K. has also published "A History of the Estonian Sonnet" ("*Eesti soneti ajalugu*", 1938), works of literary criticism, bibliographies, etc. His poems have been translated into German, English, Finnish and other languages.

Kärner, Jaan, born in a farmer's family at Kirepi, Tartumaa, May 27, 1891. Studied history for some time at the Shanyavski University in Moscow. After 1910 a journalist in Tallinn, Tartu and Viljandi, engaged in political activities during the revolution. Beginning with 1921 a professional writer in Elva and Tartu. Edited the literary journals "*Looming*" (1927—29) and "*Tänapäev*" (1936—38). Evacuated to the Soviet rear during the war. 1944—46 worked in a Tallinn publishing-house and as editor of "*Looming*". Having lost his capacity for work because of illness K. lived after 1946 mainly in Tartu where he died Apr. 3, 1958. Publications include the collections of verse "Shadows of the Stars" ("*Tähtede varjud*", 1913), "In the Earthly Cycle" ("*Maises ringis*", 1919), "Songs of the Time" ("*Aja laulud*", 1921), "Harvest Month" ("*Lõikuskuu*", 1925), "Flowering Autumn" ("*Õitsev sügis*", 1926), "The Wanderer Whistles" ("*Rändur vilistab*", 1928), "Lyre of the Storm" ("*Tormilüüra*", 1929), "At the Cross-Roads" ("*Inimene ristteel*", 1932), "With Word-Coals" ("*Sõna-sütega*", 1936), "From Traversed Roads" ("*Käidud teedelt*", 1939), "The Behest of the Homeland" ("*Kodumaa käsk*", 1943), "Hatred, Only Hatred" ("*Viha, ainult viha*", 1944), the anthologies "Songs of Struggle" ("*Võitluslaule*", 1940), "Selected Poems" ("*Valitud luuletused*", 1941 and 1945), "An Anthology" ("*Luulevalimik*", 1951), and "Selected Poems" ("*Valitud luuletused*", 1957), a verse novel "Bianka and Ruth" (1923), the novels "A Woman from the World of the Poor" ("*Naine vaesest maailmast*", 1930), "The Forgetten River Emajõgi", ("*Unustatud Emajõgi*", 1930), "Modern Slavery" ("*Moodne orjus*", 1931), "A Chronicle of Sodom" ("*Soodoma kroonika*", 1934), "The Rising People" I—II ("*Tõusev rahvas*", 1936—37), "The Winds Veer Westward" ("*Tuuled pöörduvad läände*", 1937), "The Feast Continues" ("*Pidu kestab*", 1938), "The Cities Glow at Night" ("*Öösiti kumavad linnad*", 1939), also some plays and a book of memoirs "From the Dim Past" ("*Kadunud aegade hämarusest*", 1935). K. produced many critical writings, selections of which were published in "Leaves into the Wind" I ("*Lehed tuulde*", 1924) and II (1937). He also wrote about the history of the theatre as well as about other historical subjects, and translated German and Russian literature. In 1946 K. received the title of Merited Writer of the Estonian S.S.R.

Kitzberg, August, born Dec. 29, 1855, at Halliste, Pärnumaa, in a poor peasant family. Received his education from his elder brother, who was a schoolmaster. From 1872 worked at different places as a clerk or office-worker; from 1901 was business manager of the Tartu *"Postimees"*, 1904—20 a clerk for the municipal credit bank. Died at Tartu, Oct. 10, 1927. His main plays include "Mart Pung and Kaarel Uba" (*"Punga Mart ja Uba-Kaarel"*, 1894), "Tailor Õhk" (*"Rätsep Õhk"*, 1903), "Caught in the Whirlwind" (*"Tuulte pöörises"*, 1906), "On Püve Farm" (*"Püve talus"*, 1910), "The Werewolf" (*"Libahunt"*, 1912), "The God of Lucre" (*"Kauka jumal"*, 1915), "Before Cockcrow and Sunrise" (*"Enne kukke ja koitu"*, 1919), "The Incendiary" (*"Laurits"*, 1919) and "The Cursed Farmstead" (*"Neetud talu"*, 1923). He has also written a musical comedy "Going a-Courting" (*"Kosjasõit"*, 1915) and short plays. Plays for children, some of which are adaptations, were collected and published posthumously in 1928. His prose works include the historical narrative "Maimu" (1892); stories of village life, published in different newspapers and magazines and collected later under the title "Village Stories" I—V (*"Külajutud"*, 1915—21); numerous feuilletons of which two collections were published in 1920 and 1923; children's stories (collected in 1925), and memoirs "Youth Memories of an Old Good-for-Nothing" (*"Ühe vana "tuuletallaja" noorpõlve mälestused"*, I 1924, II 1925). In 1955 Kitzberg's selected works were published in two volumes. His plays have been staged in Finland, Latvia, Hungary, Italy, the Ukraine and elsewhere. A screen version of "The Werewolf" was released in 1969.

Koidula, Lydia (née Lydia Emilie Florentine Jannsen, married name: Michelson), born Dec. 24, 1843, at Vändra, Pärnumaa, the daughter of J. V. Jannsen. Educated at a girls' school in Pärnu (1854—61). Assisted her father in editing the *"Perno Postimees"* and later the Tartu *"Eesti Postimees"*, especially in compiling its literary supplement. She was also an active member of the *Vanemuine* society, through which in 1870 helped to lay the foundations of the Estonian theatre. In 1873 married the army physician E. Michelson, with whom moved to Kronstadt. In 1876—78 visited Breslau, Strasbourg and Vienna together with her husband. Died at Kronstadt, Aug. 11, 1886; her remains were brought to Estonia in 1946. Made her debut as a poetess in the columns of the *"Eesti Postimees"* in 1865, published two collections of poetry "Meadow Flowers" (*"Vainulilled"*, 1866) and "The Nightingale of the Emajõgi" (*"Emajõe ööbik"*, 1866). Her later lyrics appeared in the *"Eesti Postimees"*, in its supplement and almanac. The literary supplement to this newspaper also published most of Koidula's tales, mainly free translations and adaptations, as well as her story-books "The Miller on the Stream and His Daughter-in-Law" (*"Ojamölder ja tema minia"*, 1863), "Judith or the Last of the Maronians in the Island of Jamaica" (*"Juudit ehk Jamaika saare viimsed maroonlased"*, 1870), "Martinique and Corsica" ("Martiniiko ja Korsika", 1874) and others. Comedies "The Cousin from Saaremaa" (*"Saaremaa onupoeg"*, 1870) and "Such a Bumpkin" (*"Säärane mulk"*, 1872) were published during her lifetime; "Maret and Miina" (staged in 1870) and "The Betrothal" (*"Kosjaviinad"*) were not printed till 1946. Selected works in two volumes were published in 1957, a critical edition of poems in 1969. Many of Koidula's poems have been translated into Russian; some of them have been published in several other languages.

Kreutzwald, Friedrich Reinhold, born Dec. 26, 1803, in the manor of Jõepere, Virumaa, in the family of a serfage shoemaker. 1815—18 was edu-

cated at the Rakvere elementary and district schools and 1819—20 at a district school in Tallinn. Worked as an elementary school teacher in Tallinn and 1824—25 as a private tutor in St. Petersburg. Studied medicine at Tartu University (1826—33), subsequently serving as municipal practitioner at Võru (1833—77). Died in Tartu, Aug. 25, 1882. Published prose books "The Scourge of Drink" ("*Viina katk*", 1840), "The Ant" ("*Sipelgas*", I 1843, II 1861), "The World and Something of What It Contains" ("*Maailm ja mõnda, mis seal sees leida on*", 1848—49), "Reynard the Fox" ("*Reinuvader Rebane*", 1850), "Pictures from Land and Sea" ("*Maa ja mere pildid*", I 1850, II 1857, III 1861), "A Few Steps along the Road of Travel" ("*Paar sammukest rändamise teed*", 1853), "The Land of Fools" ("*Kilplased*", 1857), etc. 1846—60 and 1864—74 edited the appendix to "The Useful Calendar" ("*Kasuline Kalender*"), where also published his stories and poems. Principal works are the epic "Kalevipoeg" (1857—61) and the "Fairy Tales of the Estonian People" ("*Eesti rahva ennemuistsed jutud*", 1866). Other publications include the poem "War" ("*Sõda*", 1854), a book of poetry "Songs of a Viru Bard" ("*Viru lauliku laulud*", 1865), three collections of verse translations and two translated tragedies; the poem "Lembitu" (1885) appeared posthumously. K. was elected to honorary membership of the Learned Estonian Society in 1849, and became a corresponding member of the Finnish Literary Society in 1855 and of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1871. His selected works were published in five volumes in 1953, and four volumes of his correspondence in 1953—62. A critical edition of "Kalevipoeg" appeared in 1961—63. Principal works have been translated into German, Russian, Hungarian, Finnish, Lettish, Lithuanian, Czech and other languages.

Kross, Jaan, born in a worker's family in Tallinn, Feb. 19, 1920. Graduated from a secondary school in Tallinn (1938), studied law at Tartu University (1938—44), a university teacher 1944—46. Since 1954 a professional writer in Tallinn; has travelled in the Mediterranean countries, Hungary, etc. Publications include the collections of verse "Coal Concentrator" ("*Söerikastaja*", 1958), "Stone Violins" ("*Kivist viiulid*", 1964), "Singers in the Prows" ("*Lauljad laevavööridel*", 1966), "The Rain Does Fine Things" ("*Vihm teeb toredaid asju*", 1969), and the long poem "Juku of the Wind" ("*Tuule-Juku*", 1963), a story "Four Monologues concerning St. George" ("*Neli monoloogi Püha Jüri asjus*", 1970) and a historical novel "Between Three Plagues" ("*Kolme katku vahel*", 1970), the collection of critical writings and essays "Leisure Readings" ("*Vahelugemised*", 1968), and (together with E. Niit) a travel book "Earth and Marble" ("*Muld ja marmor*", 1968), the libretto of the opera "Barbara von Tisenhusen" (based on A. Kallas's story of the same name). K. has made translations of poetry and verse dramas from English, French, German, Russian, Swedish and Hungarian.

Krusten, Erni (Ernst Krustein), born near Tallinn, Apr. 30, 1900, the son of a manor gardener. Studied till 1915 at a secondary school in Tallinn, then worked mainly as a gardener and at odd jobs in various places in Estonia, publishing his first books at the same time. Since 1945 a professional writer in Rakvere, later in Tallinn. Has published the collections of short prose works "Heather" ("*Kanarbik*", 1927) "Blind Love" ("*Pime armastus*", 1941), "Turning-Points" ("*Pöördepunktid*", 1946), "In the Name of Peace" ("*Rahu nimel*", 1951), "The Funeral of the Whip" ("*Piitsa matused*", 1957), "Unfortunate Love" ("*Õnnetu armastus*", 1957), "In Search of Spring" ("*Kevadet otsimas*", 1960), "Five Tales" ("*Viis lugu*", 1968); the stories "The Old Rascal" ("*Vana võru-*

kael", 1966), "A Very Bad Mark" ("*Väga halb hinne*", 1967) and "Occupation" ("*Okupatsioon*", 1969); a collection of prose miniatures and verse "Yucca" ("*Juka*", 1963); the novels "In Pursuit of the Past" ("*Mineviku jahil*", 1928), "The Love of Org Mägedi" ("*Org Mägedi armastus*", 1939), "The Book of the Pekses" ("*Pekside raamat*", 1946), "The Hearts of the Young" I—II ("*Noorte südamed*", 1954—56), "Like a Droplet of Water in the Ocean" ("*Nagu piisake meres*", 1962); the plays "I Live" ("Mina elan", 1956) and "The Americans Came" ("*Ameeriklased tulid*", 1959); also several books for children and some skits. Received the title of Merited Writer of the Estonian S.S.R. in 1959. K's works have been translated into Russian and other languages of the Soviet Union as well as into French, Bulgarian, Finnish, etc.

Kuusberg, Paul, born in Tallinn, Apr. 30, 1916, the son of a construction worker. Worked on construction sites until 1940. Served in the Estonian Infantry Corps of the Soviet Army during the war, edited a divisional newspaper 1944—46. Subsequently a journalist in Tallinn, editor of the literary journal "*Looming*" 1957—66, and again since 1968; secretary of the Board of the Writers' Union of the Estonian S.S.R. 1960—68. Published work includes the novels "The Walls" ("*Müürid*", 1957), "The Two Selves of Enn Kalm" ("*Enn Kalmu kaks mina*", 1961), "The Case of Andres Lapeteus" ("*Andres Lapeteuse juhtum*", 1963), and "In Midsummer" ("*Südasuvel*", 1966), short prose items in periodicals, the collections of critical and publicistic writings "A Word in Between" ("*Sõna sekka*", 1959) and "About Our Time, the World Citizen and Other Matters" ("*Ajast, maailmakodanikust ja muust*", 1967). Screen versions have been made of "Enn Kalm" and "Andres Lapeteus". In 1966 K. was given the title of Merited Writer of the Estonian S.S.R. Soviet Estonian Prize 1965. His novels have been translated into Russian, Finnish, Lithuanian, Lettish and other languages.

Laht, Uno, born in the family of an official at Valga, Apr. 30, 1924. Educated at a secondary school in Tallinn. Evacuated to the Soviet rear during the war. Beginning with 1942 served in the Estonian Infantry Corps and later in the State Security Service. A journalist in Tallinn 1946—53, a professional writer since 1953. Publications include the collections of verse "Milk-Teeth" ("*Piimahambad*", 1954), "Milk-Teeth (Filled)" ("*Piimahambad (plombeeritud)*", 1956), "From Greatcoat Pocket to a Pigskin Portfolio" ("*Sinelitaskust seanahkse portfellini*", 1958), "Smoked Eels and Dewy Roses" ("*Suitsuangerjad ja kastemärjad roosid*", 1960), "Verses of This Summer" ("*Selle suve värsid*", 1960), "The Songs of an Egoist" ("*Kümne küüne laulud*", 1962), "An Angel Goes to the Chemist's" ("*Ingel läheb apteeki*", 1967), the anthologies "A Bird's-Nest in a Steel Helmet" ("*Linnupesa teraskiivris*", 1961) and "Poems" ("*Poeemid*", 1965). L's satirical comedy "Atlantic Herring" ("*Atlandi heeringas*") was staged in 1959. L. has translated poetry and prose from English and Russian, he has also produced publicistic writings, critical reviews of poetry, and the libretto of the opera "The Iron Home" (based on E. Tammlaan's play of the same title). His poems have been translated into Russian and other languages of the Soviet Union.

Leberecht, Hans, born in St. Petersburg, Dec. 1, 1910, the son of a worker. Graduated from a secondary school in Leningrad, thereafter a factory worker, studying at the same time at an evening university of literature 1935—37. Worked in the restoration workshop of an Arts Centre 1939—41. Saw active service in the war during the defence of Leningrad and later in the ranks of the Estonian Infantry Corps. A journalist in Tallinn 1945—51, later a profes-

sional writer. L. wrote in Russian, authorised translations of his works appeared in Estonian. Won a State Prize in 1949, received the title of Merited Writer of the Estonian S.S.R. in 1959. Died in Tallinn, Nov. 10, 1960. Publications include the stories "Light at Koordi" ("*Valgus Koordis*", 1949), "On the Road" ("*Teel*", 1951), and "In a House Together" ("*Ühes majas*", 1958), the novels "Captains" ("*Kaptenid*", 1956), "The Soldiers Are Going Home" ("*Sõdurid lähevad koju*", 1957), "The Palaces of the Vassars" ("*Vassarite paleed*", 1960), a collection of short stories "The Bronze Ring" ("*Pronkssõrmus*", 1961) appeared posthumously. L's collected works have been published in five volumes (1963—69). Film versions have been produced of "Light at Koordi", "In a House Together" and "Captains". In addition to the languages of the Soviet Union, L's works have been translated into English, German, French, Spanish, Polish, Czech, Finnish, Hungarian, Rumanian, Bulgarian, Chinese, Vietnamese and other languages.

Lepik, Kalju, born in the family of an official in the borough-town of Koeru, Järvamaa, Oct. 7, 1920. Graduated from a secondary school in Tartu (1941). Studied philology for a short while at Tartu University. Served in the German army. Has been living in Sweden since 1944, working as a lithographer, book-keeper etc. in Stockholm. Studied literature at Stockholm University. Publications include the verse collections "A Face in the Home Window" ("*Nägu koduaknas*", 1946), "The Fiddler" ("*Mängumees*", 1948), "Beggars on the Stairs" ("*Kerjused treppidel*", 1949), "Sea Bottom" ("*Merepõhi*", 1951), "A Tale of Tigerland" ("*Muinasjutt Tiigrimaast*", 1955), "Stone Quarry" ("*Kivimurd*", 1958), "Yellow Heaths" ("*Kollased nõmmed*", 1965), "The Marble Refugee" ("*Marmorpagulane*", 1968), and an anthology "The Raven Is a Singing Bird" ("*Ronk on laululind*", 1961).

Liiv, Juhan, born at Alatskivi, Tartumaa, Apr. 30, 1864, the son of a poor farmer. 1879—84 attended the parish school at Kodavere and then, for a short while, a private college at Tartu. Worked as a newspaperman in Tallinn, Viljandi and Tartu. Publications include a collection of short prose "Ten Tales" ("*Kümme lugu*", 1893) and longer narratives "The Cuckoo of Käkimäe" ("*Käkimäe kägu*", 1893), "The Shadow" ("*Vari*", 1894) and "The Witch's Daughter" ("*Nõia tütar*", 1895). Poor living conditions and overwork undermined his mental health. He became deranged in 1894, and after a few months in hospital spent most of his time at his birthplace. During his temporary spells of sanity, when he was able to work, he continued to produce poems and short pieces in prose. In 1904 the newspaper "*Uus Aeg*" ("New Times") issued a supplement compiled from his earlier published works "A Collection of Writings" ("*Kirjatööde kogu*"). The *Noor-Eesti* group published his "Poems" ("*Luuletused*", 1909 and 1910). A collection of prose miniatures "About the Depths of Life" ("*Elu sügavusest*", 1909) also saw the light of day during the author's lifetime. L. died Dec. 1, 1913. His "Collected Works" ("*Kogutud teosed*", 1921—35) were edited by F. Tuglas. Later a one-volume collection appeared in 1954, and again in 1956. L's poetry has been translated into Russian and other languages.

Liives, Ardi, born in Tallinn, Aug. 31, 1929, the son of a player in a theatre orchestra. Graduated from a school of finance (1947), studied law at Tartu University (1948—53). Worked as a journalist in Tallinn (1953—62), thereafter a professional writer in Tallinn. Has published the plays "Stolen Confidence" ("*Varastatud usaldus*", 1954), "The Birds Are Leaving Their Nests" ("*Linnud lahkuvad pesast*", 1956), "Robert the Great" ("*Robert Suur*", 1957),

"New Year's Eve" ("*Uusaasta öö*", 1958), "The Blue Rocket" ("*Sinine rakett*", 1959), "On this Side of the Horizon" ("*Siinpool horisonti*", 1962), "The Staircase" ("*Trepp*", 1964), "A Vienna Stamp" ("*Viini postmark*", 1964). "Dearer than the Dearest" ("*Kallimast kallim*", 1966), "A Day and a Half of Worry" ("*Poolteist päeva muret*", 1967), and "The Monolisque" ("*Monolisk*", 1969); some of L's staged plays have not been published. L. has likewise written a number of texts of operettas and musicals and eight radio plays. "A Vienna Stamp" has been made into a film. L. has likewise been active as a theatrical critic. His plays have been staged also by Russian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Czech and other theatres.

Luts, Oskar, born in the parish of Palamuse, Tartumaa, Jan. 7, 1887, the son of an artisan. Graduated from a secondary school in Tartu, worked at chemist's shops in Tartu, Narva and Tallinn, did his military service in St. Petersburg. Studied pharmacy at Tartu University (1911—14), mobilised and served in the army as a pharmaceutist (1914—18). Employed thereafter in the library of Tartu University; ran a book-shop. Beginning with 1922 a professional writer. Received the title of People's Writer of the Estonian S.S.R. in 1945. Died in Tartu, March 23, 1953. Publications include the stories "Spring" I—II ("*Kevade*", 1912—13), "It Stands Written..." ("*Kirjutatud on...*", 1914), "Summer" I—II ("*Suvi*", 1918—19), "Letters to Maarja" ("*Kirjad Maarjale*", 1919), "The Caravan" ("*Karavan*", 1920), "Toots's Wedding" ("*Tootsi pulm*", 1921), "The Course of Andres's Life" ("*Andrese elukäik*", 1923), "A Week-Day" ("*Äripäev*", 1924), "A Gust of Wind" ("*Iiling*", 1924), "Olga Nukrus" (1926), "Walter the Apprentice" ("*Õpilane Valter*", 1927), "Fog" ("*Udu*", 1928), "Bankruptcy" ("*Pankrot*", 1929), "With Open Eyes" ("*Avasilmi*", 1932), "In the Backyard" ("*Tagahoovis*", 1933), "The Wind's Apprentices" ("*Tuulesellid*", 1933), "A Quiet Nook" ("*Vaikne nurgake*", 1934), "The Youth of Väino Lehtmets" ("*Väino Lehtmetsa noorpõlv*", 1935), "Autumn" ("*Sügis*", 1936), and "Jüri Pügal" (1945); numerous short plays ("The Cabbage" — "*Kapsapea*", 1913, etc.), plays for children, collections of feuilletons and topical satires as well as a series of memoirs in 15 volumes (1930—41). L's collected works appeared in 27 volumes (1937—40), his selected works in 11 volumes (1952—66). L's stories have been repeatedly staged, film versions have appeared of "In the Backyard" and "Spring". The latter has been translated into Russian, Hungarian, Polish, Czech, Slovak, Ukrainian, Lithuanian, Latvian and other languages.

Mälk, August, born in Lümanda, Saaremaa Island, Oct. 4, 1900, the son of a farmer. Graduated from Kuressaare secondary school in 1916, worked as an elementary school teacher on Saaremaa Is. A professional writer from 1936 onwards. 1937—44 lived near Tallinn on a farm which had been presented to him by the state. Emigrated to Sweden in 1944, lives in Stockholm, working in the archives of the Royal Drama Theatre. M. has published the novels "The Butterfly" ("*Kesaliblik*", 1926), "Ruin" ("*Hukkumine*", 1928), "Fugitive of Fortune" ("*Õnnepagulane*", 1928), "Through the Night" ("*Läbi öö*", 1929), "Stony Nest" ("*Kivine pesa*", 1932), "One of That Ilk" ("*Üks neistsinatseist*", 1933), "Dead Houses" ("*Surnud majad*", 1934), "Flowering Sea" ("*Õitsev meri*", 1935), "Masters of the Baltic" ("*Läänemere isandad*", 1936), "Under the Face of the Sky" ("*Taeva palge all*", 1937), "Stones in the Fire" ("*Kivid tules*", 1939), "The Good Harbour" ("*Hea sadam*", 1942), "Night Birds" ("*Öised linnud*", 1945), "Expatriated" ("*Kodumaata*", 1947), "The Way to the Well" I—II ("*Tee kaevule*", 1952—53), "Sun over the Village" ("*Päike küla kohal*", 1957), "Toomas

Tamm" (1959), and "Vernal Soil" ("*Kevadine maa*", 1963), the tales and collections of short stories "The Death of the Dead" ("*Surnu surm*", 1926), "Anne-Marie" (1927), "Dead Life" ("*Surnud elu*", 1929), "Seaside Stories" ("*Rannajutud*", 1936), "The Open Gate" ("*Avatud värav*", 1937), "In the Winds of the Sea" ("*Mere tuultes*", 1938), "The Lost Sun" ("*Kadunud päike*", 1943), "In the Winds of God" ("*Jumala tuultes*", 1949), "The Fire in Thy Hand" ("*Tuli sinu käes*", 1955), "Farewell, O Sea!" ("*Jumalaga, meri!*" 1967), a book for young readers "Stories about Birds" ("*Jutte lindudest*", 1934); the plays "A Modern Cain" ("*Moodne Kain*", 1930), "The Poor Man's Ewe Lamb" ("*Vaese mehe ututall*", 1932), "The Virgins with the Lamps" ("*Neitsid lampidega*", 1933), "The Way of Our Fathers" ("*Isade tee*", 1934), "The Man from the Sea" ("*Mees merelt*", 1935), "Billy-Goats at the Well" ("*Sikud kaevul*", 1938), etc. His novels and short stories have been translated into German, Swedish, Finnish, Lettish, Czech and Dutch.

Merilaas, Kersti (K. S a n g), born in Narva, Dec. 7, 1913, the daughter of a worker. Graduated from Tapa secondary school (1932), thereafter earned her living as an office-worker and by doing casual jobs. After the war a professional writer in Pärnu and Tallinn. Publications include the verse collections "Winds on the Highway" ("*Maantee tuuled*", 1938), "The Bank Swallow" ("*Rannapääsuke*", 1962), "Paddocks in Spring" ("*Kevadised koplid*", 1966), an anthology "Lunaria" ("*Kuukressid*", 1969), books of verse for children "Dear Home" ("*Kallis kodu*", 1944) and "In the Sunshine" ("*Päikese paistel*", 1948). M. has also written texts for operas. Her poems have been translated into Russian, Armenian and other languages of the Soviet Union.

Metsanurk, Mait (Eduard H u b e l), born at Kärkna, Tartumaa, Nov. 19, 1879, the son of a farmer. Attended school in Tartu, worked as a clerk and elementary school teacher, after 1905 a journalist in Tallinn. Edited the popular-scientific and literary journal "*Agu*" (1923—24). Thereafter a professional writer; was repeatedly chairman of the Estonian Writers' Union (for a longer period in 1930—37). Died in Tallinn, Aug. 21, 1957. Publications include the collections of short stories "God's Children" ("*Jumalalapsed*", 1910), "Doomsday" ("*Viimne päev*", 1927), "Life Breaks In" ("*Elu murrab sisse*", 1931), and "The Earthly Yoke" ("Maine ike", 1933), the stories "Blossoms of the Fatherland" ("*Isamaa õilmed*", 1908), "Epp" (1920), "The Search for God" ("*Jumalata*", 1921), "Toho-oja Anton" (1924), "Taniel Struggles On" ("*Taniel heitleb*", 1932), the novels "Villem from Vahesaare Farm" ("*Vahesaare Villem*", 1909), "The Slaves" ("*Orjad*", 1912), "Behold the Man!" ("*Ennäe inimest*", 1918), "The Life and Death of Taavet Soovere" ("*Taavet Soovere elu ja surm*", 1922), "The White Cloud" ("*Valge pilv*", 1925), "The Unmarked Grave" ("*Jäljetu haud*", 1926), "The Red Wind" ("*Punane tuul*", 1928), "F. Arraste & Sons" ("*Fr. Arraste & Pojad*", 1930), "On the River Ümera" ("*Ümera jõel*", 1934), "Soosaare Farm" ("*Soosaare*", 1936), "The Selected and Ordained" ("*Kutsutud ja seatud*", 1937), "The Fire under the Ashes" ("*Tuli tuha all*", 1939), "The Summer Turning-Point" ("*Suvine pööripäev*", 1957); the plays "In a New Flat" ("*Uues korteris*", 1908), "The Life of the Devout" ("*Vagade elu*", 1923), "The General's Son" ("*Kindrali poeg*", 1925), "The Son of a Peasant" ("*Talupoja poeg*", 1929), "The Spirit of Revolt or the People of the Outskirts Go Down in History" ("*Mässuvaim ehk agulirahvas läheb ajalukku*", 1931), "Successful in Life" ("*Haljal oksal*", 1932), "C. R. Jakobson" (1935), and "Maret in the School of Life" ("*Maret elukoolis*", 1938); a book of memoirs "At the Beginning of the Way" ("*Tee algul*", 1946); numerous critical and publicistic writ-

ings. An extensive series of M's selected works began to appear in 1957. M's works have been translated into Finnish, Hungarian, Russian, Lettish and other languages.

Parve, Ralf, born in Rakvere, June 25, 1919, the son of an artisan. Graduated from a secondary school in Tallinn, worked as a sports reporter. A soldier and newspaper correspondent in the Estonian Infantry Corps during the war, later a journalist in Tallinn (1946—51), and subsequently a professional writer. P. has travelled widely in Europe. Publications include the collections of verse "From a Soldier's Heart" (*"Sõduri südamest"*, 1945), "About a Time That Is Austere, Lovely and Precious" (*"Ajast karmist, kaunist ja kallist"*, 1946), "On the Battle-Ground" (*"Võitluspostil"*, 1950), "The Shadow of the Statue of Liberty" (*"Vabadussamba vari"*, 1953), "The Open Gate" (*"Avatud värav"*, 1958), "A Lyrical Shorthand Record" (*"Lüüriline stenogramm"*, 1964), an anthology "Arrows of the Wind" (*"Tuulenooled"*, 1969), numerous books of verse for children (the anthologies "The Wind in the Banners" — *"Tuul puhub lippudes"*, 1956; "Verses for Children" —*"Lastevärsse"*, 1966), the plays "The Labyrinth of Beatitude" (*"Õndsuse labürint"*, 1959), "On the Day of the Seven Sleepers" (*"Seitsmemagajapäeval"*, 1964), and "Darkness Means Night" (*"Pimedus tähendab ööd"*, 1970), a short monograph about the poet August Alle (1960), a collection of critical and publicistic writings "Journeys in Thought" (*"Mõttematkad"*, 1963), the travel books (together with L. Promet) "The Thrice-Packed Suitcase" (*"3 × pakitud kohver"*, 1958), "A Rendezvous with Marianne" (*"Kohtumine Marianne'iga"*, 1963), and "Seven Letters from Poland" (*"7 kirja Poolast"* 1965). P. has translated poetry from German, English and Russian. In 1959 P. received the title of Merited Writer of the Estonian S.S.R. Soviet Estonian Prize 1970. P's poems have been translated into Russian and other languages of the Soviet Union.

Peterson, Kristjan Jaak, born in the family of a sexton in Riga, March 14, 1801. Elementary and secondary education in Riga, studied 1819—20 theology and philology at Tartu University. After that supported himself in Riga by giving private language lessons until his early death, Aug. 4, 1822. Published articles on the Estonian language and an adaptation of C. Ganander's treatment of Finnish mythology, translated from Swedish into German (*"Finnische Mythologie"*, 1821). The manuscripts of his poems and his diary did not become known to a wider public till the beginning of the present century; finally published in full in 1922.

Peterson-Särgava, Ernst, born in the family of a village schoolmaster at Vändra, Pärnumaa, Apr. 29, 1868. Educated at the Vändra and Tori parish schools, 1886—89 at the Tartu Teachers' Seminary. Worked as a teacher at Vändra, Sindi, Põltsamaa, Rakvere and elsewhere; 1906—50 taught at different schools in Tallinn. In 1957 he was awarded the title of People's Writer of the Estonian S.S.R. Died in Tallinn, Apr. 12, 1958. He is the author of the narratives "Never!" (*"Ei iialgi!"*, 1895) and "An Unhappy Happy Man" (*"Õnnetu õnnelik"*, 1899), the series "Ulcers" I—III (*"Paised"*, 1899, 1900, 1901), the novel "The Teacher of the People" (*"Rahvavalgustaja"*, 1904), the collection of short prose pieces "Tales" (*"Jutustused"*, 1916), and two plays "The Fern Blossom" (*"Sõnajalaõis"*, 1920) and "The New Minister" (*"Uus minister"*, 1922). He has also published adaptations of fairy-tales for children. His "Collected Works" (*"Kogutud teosed"*) appeared in three volumes in 1938—39. The historical novel "Let Us Go to Town!" (*"Lähme linna kirjutama, oma elu kergendama!"*) was published in two volumes in 1968.

Pöögelmann, Hans, born Dec. 30, 1875, the son of a farmer from the parish of Paistu, Viljandimaa. 1888—92 attended the Alexander School at Põltsamaa. Worked as a teacher, as a clerk at a post-office, as a newspaperman on the staff of the Tartu "*Postimees*" (1899—1901), and then for the "*Teataja*" in Tallinn (1901—03). 1903—05 continued his studies at the Leipzig commercial university, after which resumed his post on the staff of the "*Teataja*" in Tallinn, at the same time plunging into the revolutionary struggle. In 1907 P. went into exile, living successively in Helsinki, Paris and London. Returning secretly to Estonia in 1909, he was arrested and deported to Narym in Siberia. 1911 fled to the U.S.A. where edited the Estonian-language Marxist newspaper "*Uus Ilm*". After the February Revolution of 1917 returned to Estonia, played a leading part in the proletarian revolution, occupying important positions in Soviet state organs. After the civil war P. worked in Leningrad, mainly in the field of education (professor at the Herzen Pedagogical Institute and a lecturer at the party school). Edited the Estonian magazines "*Oras*", "*Klassivõitlus*", "*Leegid*" and "*Kommunismi Teel*". P. was a long-standing member of the central organs of the Estonian Communist Party and the Comintern. In 1937 he fell a victim to the repressions, died 1938. P. published many works on social and political questions, popularising the doctrine of Marxism; translated into Estonian and edited Estonian translations of works by the classic exponents of Marxist and Leninist thought. As a poet published a collection of satirical verses "Rough Lines" ("*Jämedad jooned*") in 1910, and a more representative collection of poems "Spring Winds" ("*Kevadetuuled*") in 1926. He is also the author of a series of epic poems "To Those Who 'Fell Fighting for Their Brothers'" ("*Neile, kes "langesid võitluses vendade eest"*", 1936), and of the collection of articles "From the Literary Front" ("*Kirjanduslikult rindelt*", 1933). A collection of P's works has been published in Soviet Estonia under the title of "Poems" ("*Luuletused*", 1957).

Promet, Lilli, born in Petseri, Feb. 16, 1922, the daughter of an artist. Studied ceramics at the Tallinn Art School (1935—40). Evacuated to the Soviet rear during the war. Took part in preparing Estonian-language radio broadcasts in Leningrad (1943). 1944—51 a journalist in Tallinn and since then a professional writer. P. has published collections of stories, short stories and other items of short prose: "Only Out of Pure Love" ("*Ainult puhtast armastusest*", 1958), "The Disciples of Holy Art" ("*Püha kunsti jüngrid*", 1958), "The Pink Hat" ("*Roosa kübar*", 1961), "The Reclining Tiger" ("*Lamav tiiger*", 1964), and "Who Spreads Anecdotes?" ("*Kes levitab anekdoote?*", 1967), a novel "A Village without Men" ("*Meesteta küla*", 1962), a collection of critical writings and essays "A Strange Book" ("*Imelik raamat*", 1965), and three travel books in collaboration with R. Parve (see above). Four of P's stories have been translated into Russian, Finnish, Polish, Czech, German, French, *laps mustas*"), "Water-Colours of One Summer" ("*Ühe suve akvarellid*") and "At the Time of Darkened Windows" ("*Pimedate akende ajal*"). P's works have been translated into Russian, Finnish, Polish, Czech, German, French, Hungarian, Swedish, Japanese and other languages.

Rannet, Egon, born in Tallinn, Nov. 29, 1911, the son of a railway technician. Left an orphan at an early age, R. earned his living in various professions. During the war he served in the Estonian Infantry Corps of the Soviet Army. Subsequently an employee of the Ministry of the Interior and the Prosecuting Magistracy. Since 1948 a professional publicist and writer.

Publications include a collection of feuilletons and satirical writings "The American Way of Life" ("*Ameerika elulaad*", 1951), documentary stories "The Comrades from Tori" ("*Seltsimehed Torist*", 1953), and "The Way of the Strong" ("*Tugevate tee*", 1954), the plays "Heartache" ("*Südamevalu*", 1957), "The Prodigal Son" ("*Kadunud poeg*", 1958), "The Poachers" ("*Salakütid*", 1960), "The Geese" ("*Haned*", 1964), "The Goblet and the Serpent" ("*Karikas ja madu*", 1966), "The Blood-Red Rose" ("*Veripunane roos*", 1967), and "Criminal Tango" ("*Kriminaaltango*", 1968), a travel book "Impressions of a Trip to Denmark" ("*Kilde Taani-reisilt*", 1960), scenarios for the films "In Rain and Sunshine" ("*Vihmas ja päikeses*", 1960) and "A Friend of Song" ("*Laulu sõber*", 1961). In 1961 R. received the title of Merited Writer of the Estonian S.S.R. His plays, in particular "The Prodigal Son", "The Poachers" and "Criminal Tango" have been staged in various languages throughout the Soviet Union as well as by German, Bulgarian, Czech, Polish and other theatres.

Raud, Mart, born at Aidu, Viljandimaa, Sept. 14, 1903, the son of a village shopkeeper. Educated at a secondary school in Viljandi (1918—23). Worked mainly as a professional writer in Tartu and Tallinn. During the war R. was evacuated to the Soviet rear, has lived later in Tallinn. Publications include the collections of verse "Mirages" ("*Kangastused*", 1924), "In Bloom" ("*Äitsmik*", 1925), "The Ruins" ("*Rusemed*", 1927), "The Distant Circle" ("*Kauge ring*", 1935), "The Word of War" ("*Sõjasõna*", 1943), "New Bridges" ("*Uued sillad*", 1945), "Two Receptacles" ("*Kaks astjat*", 1946), "For the Election-Days" ("*Valimispäeviks*", 1947), "Power and Light" ("*Jõud ja valgus*", 1948), "All Roads" ("*Kõik teed*", 1953), "Songs Never Die" ("*Laulud ei lõpe*", 1961), and "The Golden Autumn" ("*Kuldne sügis*", 1966), the novels "From Dusk to Dawn" ("*Videvikust varavalgeni*", 1927), "On the Ways of the Winds" ("*Tuulte teedel*", 1928), "The Axe and the Moon" ("*Kirves ja kuu*", 1935), "The Market" ("*Turg*", 1937), the collections of short stories "Evening Echoes" ("*Õhtused kajad*", 1936), "Face to Face" ("*Silmast silma*", 1959); the stories "The Young Hero" ("*Noor kangelane*", 1943) and "On the Threshold of Eternity" ("*Igaviku lävel*", 1960), the plays "The Sword in the Gate" ("*Mõõk väravas*", 1941), "The Tempering" ("*Karastus*", 1946) and "A Midsummer-Night in Reality" ("*Suveöö ilmsi*", 1962). R. received the title of Merited Writer of the Estonian S.S.R. in 1946. His selected works appeared in five volumes in 1963—67. R's works have been translated into Russian and other languages of the Soviet Union.

Raudsepp, Hugo, born at Vaimastvere manor, Tartumaa, July 10, 1883, the son of a gardener. Graduated from a municipal school in Tartu (1900), worked subsequently as a shop-assistant, and (in 1907—24) as a journalist in Valga, Tartu, Pärnu, Viljandi and Tallinn. Beginning with 1925 a professional writer at Elva, after 1936 in Tartu and in post-war period in Tallinn. Died in Sept. 16, 1952. Published plays: "The Demobilised Head of the Family" ("*Demobiliseeritud perekonnaisa*", 1923), "The American Christ" ("*Ameerika Kristus*", 1926), "The Mayors of Kikerpill" ("*Kikerpilli linnapead*", 1926), "Samson the Judge" ("*Kohtumõistja Simson*", 1927), "Sinimandria" (1927), "The Signs of Sinai" ("*Siinai tähistel*", 1928), "Behind the Back of St. Michael" ("*Püha Miikaeli seljataga*", 1928), "Mikumärdi Farm" ("*Mikumärdi*", 1929), "The Blessing of a Cracked Brain" ("*Põrunud aru õnnistus*", 1931), "The Sluggard" ("*Vedelvorst*", 1932), "In Drawing-Room and Cell" ("*Salongis ja kongis*", 1933), "Rose-Coloured Spectacles" ("*Roosad prillid*", 1934), "Flags

in the Storm" ("*Lipud tormis*", 1937), "The Man with the Trumps" ("*Mees, kelle käes on trumbid*", 1938), "Mustahamba Farm" ("*Mustahamba*", 1939), "The Compromise" ("*Kompromiss*", 1940), "The Rats" ("*Rotid*", 1946), "Tiisenoosen of Tagatipu Farm" ("*Tagatipu Tiisenoosen*", 1946), "The Masters of Tillereinu Farm" ("*Tillereinu peremehed*", 1948), etc.; "The Cotter's Shocks" ("*Vaheliku vapustused*"), a play staged in 1943, has not been published. R. also produced the collections of short prose items "Bonds and Knots" ("*Sidemed ja sõlmed*", 1919), "A Mixed Company" ("*Kirju rida*", 1920), "Topical Stories" I—II ("*Vested*", 1921—24), "The Cross-Roads" ("*Ristteed*", 1926), "The Mills of God" ("*Jumala veskid*", 1936), "Carved in Stone" ("*Kivisse raiutud*", 1942), a story "Imbi" (1920), a novel "The Last European" ("*Viimne eurooplane*", 1941), a volume of memoirs "My First Homes" ("*Minu esimesed kodud*", 1947). R. was likewise a prolific literary and theatrical critic, he also wrote essays about literary movements and a monograph "Mait Metsanurk and His Period" ("*Mait Metsanurk ja tema aeg*", 1929).

Ristikivi, Karl, born in Paadremaa, Läänemaa, Oct. 16, 1912. Attended a commercial school in Tallinn; while working as a shop-assistant he graduated from secondary school. Studied geography at Tartu University (1936—41). Emigrated to Finland in 1943, and settled in Sweden in 1944. Has been employed as an office clerk in Stockholm. While in Estonia R. published the novels "Fire and Iron" ("*Tuli ja raud*", 1938), "In a Strange House" ("*Võõras majas*", 1940; known in later editions as "The Abode of a Just Man" — "*Õige mehe koda*"), "The Garden" ("*Rohtaed*", 1942); some books for children and young readers. In emigration R. has published the novels "All That Has Ever Been" ("*Kõik, mis kunagi oli*", 1946), "Nothing Happened" ("*Ei juhtunud midagi*", 1947), "All Souls' Night" ("*Hingede öö*", 1953), "The Burning Banner" ("*Põlev lipp*", 1961), "The Last City" ("*Viimne linn*", 1962), "Riders of Death" ("*Surma ratsanikud*", 1963), "The Miraculous Island" ("*Imede saar*", 1964), "Bridal Veil" ("*Mõrsjalinik*", 1965), "Song of Joy" ("*Rõõmulaul*", 1966), "The Sorcerer's Disciple" ("*Nõiduse õpilane*", 1967); a collection of stories "The Gates of Sigtuna" ("*Sigtuna väravad*", 1968), and also a short history of Estonian literature ("*Eesti kirjanduse lugu*", 1954).

Rummo, Paul-Erik, born in the family of the writer P. Rummo in Tallinn, Jan. 19, 1942. Studied literature at Tartu University (1959—65); a professional writer since 1967. Publications include the collections of verse "The Anchor-Heaver" ("*Ankruhiivaja*", 1962), "Come Always to My Joys" ("*Tule ikka mu rõõmude juurde*", 1964), "Snowlight — Snow-Darkness" ("*Lumevalgus — lumepimedus*", 1966), an anthology "Verses 1960—1967" ("*Luulet 1960—1967*", 1968), and a play "The Cinderella Play" ("*Tuhkatriinumäng*", 1969). R. has also written a television play and critical reviews of poetry, translated contemporary Russian, Finnish, Polish, Caribbean and African poetry. R's poems have been translated into Russian, Lettish, Finnish and other languages.

Sang, August, born in Pärnu, July 27, 1914, the son of a post-office clerk. Graduated from a secondary school in Pärnu (1932), studied in the Faculty of Philosophy of Tartu University (with breaks 1934—42). Earned his living as an employee of museums, scientific societies, etc. A professional writer from 1946 onwards, active mainly as a translator. In 1969 received the title of Merited Writer of the Estonian S.S.R. Died in Tallinn, Oct. 14, 1969. Published collections of verse "A Youth in Search of Happiness" ("*Üks noormees otsib õnne*", 1936), "Stone Walls" ("*Müürid*", 1939), "A Sandwich with a Kiss" ("*Võileib suudlusega*", 1963), and an anthology "A Hundred Songs" ("*Sada*

laulu", 1965). Wrote a biography of H. Heine (1938). Translated poetry, verse dramas, and some prose works, more extensively from German (Goethe's "Faust", selected poems by Heine and Brecht), Russian (Nekrassov, Tvardovski), French and Czech.

Semper, Johannes, born in Tuhalaane, Viljandimaa, March 22, 1892, the son of an elementary school teacher. Graduated from secondary school in Pärnu (1910), studied Germanic and Romance philology at the University of St. Petersburg (1910—14), and architecture in Moscow (1915—16). Mobilised into the tsarist army, S. graduated from a military school in Moscow in 1917. Participated in political activities during the revolution. Studied in Berlin (1921—25) and at Tartu University, graduating from the latter in 1928 with the degree of Mag. Phil. A lecturer in Tartu University until 1940, at the same time editor of the journal "*Looming*" (1930—40) and chairman of the Estonian P.E.N. club (1928—40). Travelled on several occasions in Central and Western Europe, also visited South America. In 1940 occupied leading posts in the cultural life of Soviet Estonia. During the war he continued his work in the Soviet rear. In 1946—50 was chairman of the Writers' Union of the Estonian S.S.R., in 1958—66 its vice chairman. Made numerous trips abroad. Died in Tallinn, Feb. 21, 1970. Publications include the collections of verse "Pierrot" (1917), "Tracks in the Sand" ("*Jäljed liival*", 1920), "Land and Seaside Rhythms" ("*Maa- ja mereveersed rütmid*", 1922), "The Five Senses" ("*Viis meelt*", 1926), "The Sun in the Gutter" ("*Päike rentslis*", 1930), "The Wind-Driven Toy" ("*Tuuleratas*", 1936), "One Cannot Remain Silent" ("*Ei vaikida saa*", 1943) and "How Would You Live?" ("*Kuidas elaksid?*", 1958); the collections of short stories "The Chinese Chain" (" *Hiina kett*", 1918), "The Bridge Girders" ("*Sillatalad*", 1927), "Ellinor" (1927); the novels "Jealousy" ("*Armukadedus*", 1934), "Stone upon Stone" ("*Kivi kivi pääle*", 1939), "Red Carnations" ("*Punased nelgid*", 1955); the plays "Behest of the Time" ("*Aja käsk*", 1946), "The Crisis" ("*Murrang*", 1949), "People in the Cross-Winds" ("*Inimesed risttuultes*", 1960); the travel books "Criss-Crossing Europe" ("*Risti-rästi läbi Euroopa*", 1935), "Under the Southern Cross" ("*Lõuna Risti all*", 1937), "Through Lands and over Seas" ("*Mööda maid ja meresid*", 1958); a book of memoirs "A Journey into the Past" I ("*Matk minevikku*", 1969); the selections of critical writings and essays "Masks" ("*Näokatted*", 1919), "The Paths of Our Literature" ("*Meie kirjanduse teed*", 1927), "The French Spirit" ("*Prantsuse vaim*", 1934); the special studies "An Analysis of the Folk-Lore Motifs about Kalevipoeg" ("*Kalevipoja rahvaluule motiivide analüüs*", 1924), "The Structure of André Gide's Style" ("*André Gide'i stiili struktuur*", 1927). Selected works appeared in 8 volumes (1962—70). S. translated a great deal of poetry and prose from French, Italian, Spanish, English, German, and Russian. Received the title of Merited Writer of the Estonian S.S.R. (1945) and People's Writer of the Estonian S.S.R. (1964). Works by S. have been translated into Russian and other languages of the Soviet Union, likewise into German, Finnish, Polish, Hungarian, French, Bulgarian, etc.

Sirge, Rudolf, born in a worker's family in Tartu, Dec. 30, 1904. Attended the Tartu Teachers' Seminary (1921—24), worked subsequently in different parts of the country as a casual labourer and as a clerk in Tartu. Graduated from an evening secondary school in 1928 and studied economics in Tartu University for a short while. Beginning with 1929 a journalist in Tallinn; made several trips abroad, and spent some time as a correspondent in Warsaw. Imprisoned by the fascists in 1941—42, worked later on a farm. A professional

writer during the post-war period. On several occasions a member of the editorial board of "*Looming*". Publications include the collections of tales and short stories "Foreign Power" ("*Võõras võim*", 1927), "On the Highway" ("*Maanteel*", 1927), "Small Wishes" ("*Väikesed soovid*", 1935), "The Flights That Failed" ("*Luhtunud lennud*", 1937), "Before the Dawning Day" ("*Algava päeva eel*", 1947), "In the Rhythm of Joint Work" ("*Ühise töö rütmis*", 1951), "The Inviting Path" ("*Kutsuv rada*", 1954) and "Tangled by the Wind" ("*Tuultest sasitud*", 1965), the novels "Peace! Bread! Land!" ("*Rahu! Leiba! Maad!*", 1929; thoroughly revised and published in 1962 as "Lights on the River-Plain" — "*Tulukesed luhal*"), "Bleak Summer" ("*Must suvi*", 1936), "Shame in the Heart" ("*Häbi südames*", 1938), "The Land and the People" ("*Maa ja rahvas*", 1956), "Three at Table" ("*Kolmekesi lauas*", 1969); the travel books "Present-Day Russia" ("*Tänapäeva Venemaa*", 1930, in collaboration with A. Antson), "From Different Quarters" ("*Mitmest kaarest*", 1964), and "With Those Living across the Ocean" ("*Meretaguste juures*", 1969). S. has been active as a publicist and critic, he has translated prose from English and Russian. Merited Writer of the Estonian S.S.R. since 1957. In addition to Russian, S's works have been translated into Finnish, Polish and other languages.

Smuul, Juhan (S c h m u u l until 1954), born Feb. 18, 1922, the son of a farmer on Muhu Island. During the war worked in the Soviet rear, underwent military training in the Estonian Infantry Corps. A journalist in Tallinn 1944—46, then a professional writer. Awarded a State Prize in 1952. Since 1953 chairman of the Writers' Union of the Estonian S.S.R. Has travelled widely in Europe, Africa, etc.; visited the Antarctic in 1957—58. Publications include the collections of verse "Hard Youth" ("*Karm noorus*", 1946), "The Järvesuu Boys' Team" ("*Järvesuu poiste brigaad*", 1948), "So that the Apple-Trees Might Blossom" ("*Et õunapuud õitseksid*", 1951), "Between the Sea and the Sky" ("*Mere ja taeva vahel*", 1959); the longer poems "The Son of the Storm" ("*Tormi poeg*", 1947), "Poem to Stalin" ("*Poeem Stalinile*", 1949), "I — a Komsomol" ("*Mina — kommunistlik noor*", 1953), etc.; the anthologies "Poems" ("*Luuletused. Poeemid*", 1953) and "Songs of the Sea. The Son of the Storm" ("*Merelaulud. Tormipoeg*", 1961); the books of prose "Letters from the Village of the Benighted" ("*Kirjad Sõgedate külast*", 1955), "The Strange Adventures of Muhu Islanders at the Jubilee Song Festival in Tallinn" ("*Muhulaste imelikud juhtumised Tallinna juubelilaulupeol*", 1957), "The Icy Book" ("*Jäine raamat*", 1959), "The Sea of Japan, December" ("*Jaapani meri, detsember*", 1963), "Muhu Monologues. The Colonel's Widow" ("*Muhu monoloogid. Polkovniku lesk*", 1968); the plays "The Atlantic" ("*Atlandi ookean*", 1957), "Lea" (1960), "Jõnn of Kihnu Island, or the Wild Captain" ("*Kihnu Jõnn ehk metskapten*", 1965), "The Life of the Penguins" ("*Pingviinide elu*", 1968), a film scenario "The Midday Ferry" ("*Keskpäevane praam*", 1968), a story for children "Murka the Seaman" ("*Meremees Murka*", 1958), a collection of publicistic writings and essays "When There Is No Flying Weather" ("*Kui pole lennuilma*", 1963). Merited Writer of the Estonian S.S.R. since 1955, and People's Writer of the Estonian S.S.R. since 1965. S's works have been extensively translated into the languages of the Soviet Union and into foreign languages; his plays have been staged by theatres abroad. S's "Icy Book", which won a Lenin Prize in 1961, has been translated into Russian and all the languages of the Union republics of the U.S.S.R. as well as into English, German, Swedish, Finnish,

Hungarian, Dutch, Czech, Rumanian, Bulgarian, Japanese, Chinese, and Mongolian. S's other works have been translated into French, Polish and other languages. A screen version has been produced of S's "Letters from the Village of the Benighted".

Sööt, Karl Eduard, born in the mill rented by his father at Lohkva, near Tartu, Dec. 26, 1862. 1878—81 attended the district school at Tartu. Worked as village registrar in different localities in the neighbourhood, and 1886—93 as an office clerk at Tartu. After that obtained possession of a bookshop and publishing-house, which he managed right up to the beginning of the First World War. S. was an active member of many cultural organisations. 1920—23 served on the editorial board of the newspaper "*Postimees*". Died at Tartu, Sept. 1, 1950. His published poetry collections include: "Meadow Blossoms" I—II ("*Aasa õied*", 1890—91), "Joy and Sorrow" ("*Rõõm ja mure*", 1894), "Destiny" ("*Saatus*", 1899), "Memories and Hopes" ("*Mälestused ja lootused*", 1903), "Home" ("*Kodu*", 1921), "Sheaves Cut by the Sickle of the Moon" ("*Kuusirbi õsu*", 1937) and a collection of children's poems "Childhood Daydreams" ("*Lapsepõlve Kungla*", 1923). His "Collected Poems" ("*Kogutud luuletused*") were published in 1943.

Suits, Gustav, born in the family of an elementary school teacher at Võnnu, Tartumaa, Nov. 30, 1883. 1896—1904 attended a secondary school at Tartu. Then entered Tartu University, passing in 1905 to Helsinki University, from which he graduated in 1910 with the degree of Mag. Phil. Worked at the library of Helsinki University, and later, until 1917, as a secondary school teacher. 1914 made a trip to Paris. 1921—44 occupied the professorship of Estonian and general literature at Tartu University. 1944 passed to Finland, and thence to Sweden. Was employed on the staff of the library of the Nobel Institute. Died in Stockholm, May 23, 1956. Already as a secondary-school pupil Suits edited the literary album "*Kiired*" I—III ("Rays", 1901—02). The founder and spiritual leader of the *Noor-Eesti* group, editing both its albums and its magazine. Published his poems in the collections "The Fire of Life" ("*Elu tuli*", 1905), "The Land of Winds" ("*Tuulemaa*", 1913) and "The Whole of Life Is but a Dream" ("*Kõik on kokku unenägu*", 1922). To these should be added the ballad "Childbirth" ("*Lapse sünd*", 1922) and two books of selected poems "Sacrificial Smoke" ("*Ohvrisuits*", 1920) and "At the Window of the Years" ("*Aastate aknal*", 1933). His "Collected Poems" ("*Kogutud luuletused*") appeared in 1938. In emigration Suits published a new volume of poetry "Flames and Wind" ("*Tuli ja tuul*", 1950). He is also the author of numerous short literary studies, a collection of essays "From the Pastures of *Noor-Eesti*" ("*Noor-Eesti nõlvakult*", 1931), a monograph in Finnish "The Young Kreutzwald" ("*Nuori Kreutzwald*", 1953) and "A History of Estonian Literature" I ("*Eesti kirjanduslugu*", 1953). S. was an honorary member of the Finnish League of Writers, 1935 became an honorary doctor of Upsala University, from 1938 was a member of the Estonian Academy of Sciences. In 1959 an extensive collection of S's selected poems was published in Soviet Estonia; in 1963 his "Collected Poems" ("*Kogutud luuletused*") were printed in Sweden. S. translated abundantly Finnish, Swedish and Dutch poetry. His poems have been translated into Finnish, Swedish, German, English, Russian and other languages.

Sütiste, Juhan (Johannes S c h ü t z until 1931), born in Tähtvere, near Tartu, Dec. 28, 1899, the son of a construction worker. A watchmaker's apprentice in Tartu, graduated from an evening secondary school (1922), studied in the

Philosophy and Law Faculties of Tartu University (1923—31). Subsequently a professional writer and teacher at the Theatrical Studio in Tartu. Imprisoned by the German fascist authorities in 1941—42. Died in Tallinn, Feb. 10, 1945. Publications include the verse collections "Restlessness" ("*Rahutus*", 1928), "From Lake Peipsi to the Sea" ("*Peipsist mereni*", 1930), "Down with Peace!" ("*Maha rahu!*", 1932), "Two Camps" ("*Kaks leeri*", 1933), "Midsummer" ("*Südasuvi*", 1934), "Awaiting the Sun" ("*Päikese ootel*", 1935), "Harbours and Islands" ("*Sadamad ja saared*", 1936), "The Circuit" ("*Ringkäik*", 1937), "Light and Shadows" ("*Valgus ja varjud*", 1939), "Oppressive Days" ("*Umbsed päevad*", appeared posthumously in 1945). S. also published the plays "Revolt of the Gods" ("*Jumalate mäss*", 1933), "The First Swallow" ("*Esimene pääsuke*", 1937), "The Hounds of the Cross" ("*Ristikoerad*", 1946); unfinished are the works "The Avalanche Moves" ("*Laviin liigub*") and "The Avalanche Breaks Up" ("*Laviin puruneb*", 1956). Other publications are a story in verse for children, an opera libretto, articles of theatrical and literary criticism. Selected works appeared in two volumes in 1956. S's poems have been translated into Russian and other languages of the Soviet Union as well as into Finnish, French, etc.

Tamm, Jakob, born at Nõo, Tartumaa, May 7, 1861. Educated at the Tartu Teachers' Seminary (1878—81). Worked as a teacher at different schools in Central Estonia. From 1893 up to his death, July 26, 1907, principal of the Väike-Maarja parish school, in Virumaa. His poems began to appear in print from 1882; the collection "Awakened Voices" I—II ("*Ärganud hääled*") was published in two volumes in 1892; another, more complete, collection entitled "Ballads" ("*Lugulaulud*") appeared posthumously in 1914. T. was also a translator, especially of classical Russian poetry (Krylov, Pushkin, Lermontov). A general collection, containing most ot his original works as well as his finest translations, was published in 1959 under the title of "Selected Poems" ("*Kogutud luuletused*").

Tammlaan, Evald, born in Vihula manor, Virumaa, Feb. 15, 1904, the son of a miller. Graduated from secondary school in Rakvere in 1926. Worked as a journalist mainly in Tallinn. Made several longer voyages as a newspaper correspondent. Arrested in 1941 by the German occupation authorities. Died in the concentration camp at Stutthof, March 17, 1945. Published the plays "The White Plain" ("*Valge lagendik*", 1937) and "The Iron Home" ("*Raudne kodu*", 1938), a children's story "Tuhk — the Ship's Dog" ("*Laevakoer Tuhk*"), numerous publicistic writings, travel letters, topical satires, etc. in periodicals.

Tammsaare, A. H. (Anton Hansen), born at Albu, Järvamaa, Jan. 30, 1878, the son of a farmer. Educated at a private secondary school in Tartu (1898—1903). Worked as a journalist in Tallinn; studied law at Tartu University 1907—11; in the Caucasus for medical treatment 1912—13; lived subsequently in retirement in a secluded forest village in North Estonia. In 1919 T. became a professional writer in Tallinn where he lived until his death, March 1, 1940. Literary debut in 1900 with short prose items in periodicals. Publications include the stories "The Money Pit" ("*Raha-auk*", 1907), "Under Investigation" ("*Uurimisel*", 1907), "Long Steps" ("*Pikad sammud*", 1908), "Young Souls" ("*Noored hinged*", 1909), "Across the Border" ("*Üle piiri*", 1910), "The Old and the Young" ("*Vanad ja noored*", 1913), "Nuances" ("*Varjundid*", 1917), "The Fly" ("*Kärbes*", 1917); a collection of miniatures and fairy tales "The Boy and the Butterfly" ("*Poiss ja liblik*", 1915); a collection of stories "Tom Thumb" ("*Pöialpoiss*", 1923), "Two Couples and the Single One, and Other Stories" ("*Kaks paari ja üksainus ning teised jutustused*", 1924); the novels

"The Master of Kõrboja Farm" ("*Kõrboja peremees*", 1922), "Truth and Justice" I—V ("*Tõde ja õigus*", 1926—33), "Life and Love" ("*Elu ja armastus*", 1934), "I Loved a German Girl" ("*Ma armastasin sakslast*", 1935), "The New Vanapagan of Põrgupõhja" ("*Põrgupõhja uus Vanapagan*", 1939), the plays "Judith" (1921) and "The King Feels Cold ("*Kuningal on külm*", 1936). T. was also an active essayist and publicist (the collections "Thoughts of War" — "*Sõjamõtted*", 1919, and "Sic Transit...", 1924; the essay "About Language and Poetry" — "*Keelest ja luulest*", 1915; a survey "China and the Chinese" — "*Hiina ja hiinlane*", 1938). T. translated from English and Russian, his own works have been translated into German, Russian, French, Lettish, Hungarian, Finnish, Swedish, Dutch, Lithuanian and other languages. T's novels have been dramatised and repeatedly staged. A screen version has been made of "The New Vanapagan of Põrgupõhja" (1964).

Traat, Mats, born at Arula, Palupera, Tartumaa, Nov. 31, 1936. Worked as a tractor-driver in several parts of Estonia. Studied at the Literature Institute in Moscow (1959—64), an editor at the Studio Tallinnfilm (1964—68), at present a student of script-writing in Moscow. Publications include "Angular Songs" ("*Kandilised laulud*", 1962), "The Knolly Land" ("*Küngasmaa*", 1964), "The Weighing-House" ("*Kaalukoda*", 1966), "Lanterns in the Fog" ("*Laternad udus*", 1968), "The Cardinal Points" ("*Ilmakaared*", 1970), a long poem "Cassiopeia" (1968), a collection of short stories "Knock at the Yellow Window" ("*Koputa kollasele aknale*", 1966), and a story "The Odd Young Man" ("*Irdinimene*", 1967).

Tuglas, Friedebert, born in the family of a carpenter at the manor of Ahja, Tartumaa, March 2, 1886. Attended first a municipal school and then a private secondary school (1904—05) at Tartu. One of the leading members of the *Noor-Eesti* group. Served a short spell in a Tallinn prison for his participation in the events of the revolution. In 1906 went into exile where remained till 1917, living alternately in Finland and in Paris, and travelling in other West-European countries (Italy, Belgium, Switzerland, Spain). From 1917 onwards T. palyed a leading role in Estonian literary life. He edited the literary journals "*Odamees*", "*Ilo*", and "*Tarapita*"; was the first chairman of the Estonian Writers' Union and the first editor of the journal "*Looming*"; 1929—40 president of the Estonian Literary Society. Meanwhile travelled widely, visiting many West-European countries and North Africa. 1928 T. was elected to honorary membership of the Finnish League of Writers, 1937 he became an honorary member of the London P.E.N. Club. 1946 T. was awarded the title of People's Writer of the Estonian S.S.R., becoming at the same time a corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences of the Estonian S.S.R. Has published a story "His Own Plot of Land" ("*Hingemaa*", 1906); many collections of short stories, including "Two Together" ("*Kahekesi*", 1908), "The Hour-Glass" I—II ("*Liivakell*", 1913), "Destiny" ("*Saatus*", 1917), "The Spirit of Gloom" ("*Raskuse vaim*", 1920) and "The Transmigration of Souls" ("*Hingede rändamine*", 1925); two novels "Felix Ormusson" (1915) and "Little Illimar" ("*Väike Illimar*", 1937); and the travel books "A Journey to Spain" ("*Teekond Hispaania*", 1918) and "A Journey to North Africa" I—III ("*Teekond Põhja-Aafrika*", 1928—30). Essays and articles on literary criticism have been collected in eight volumes under the title of "Criticism" ("*Kriitika*", 1935—36). T. has also published three monographs "The Departure of Ado Grenzstein" ("*Ado Grenzsteini lahkumine*", 1926), "Juhan Liiv" (1927) and "Society of Estonian Literati" ("*Eesti Kirjameeste Selts*", 1932). His memoirs include "Mem-

ories of My Youthful Days" ("*Noorusmälestused*", 1940), "My First Trip Abroad" ("*Esimene välisreis*", 1945) and "Reminiscences" ("*Mälestused*", 1960). T's most significant achievements in the field of translation are his Estonian renderings of Alexis Kivi's "The Seven Brothers" and Alexei Tolstoi's "Peter the First". 1957—62 a selection of T's works was published in eight volumes. His works have been translated into Finnish, German, Russian, Lettish, Lithuanian, Hungarian, Polish, Bulgarian, Serbo-Croatian, Esperanto and other languages.

Uibopuu, Valev, born at Vana-Antsla, Võrumaa, Oct. 19, 1913, the son of a forester. Attended the secondary school at Otepää; worked as a journalist in Valga and Tallinn. Went to Finland in 1943 and thence to Sweden in 1944, where he continued his journalistic activities and worked later in the publishing line. Graduated from the Philosophical Faculty of Lund University in 1958. While in Estonia U. published a story "Under the Gate" ("*Väravate all*", 1936), a collection of short stories "The Barren Tree" ("*Viljatu puu*", 1940), and some books for children. Abroad he has published the collections of short prose works "Caged Birds" ("*Linnud puuris*", 1946), "Alas for By-gone Days" ("*Kahju läinud aegadest*", 1949), "The Everlasting Village" ("*Igavene küla*", 1954), and "Mosaic" ("*Mosaiik*", 1962), the novels "Alien Home" ("*Võõras kodu*", 1945), "Nobody Hears Us" ("*Keegi ei kuule meid*", 1948), "Four Lights" ("*Neli tuld*", 1951), "Thirst" ("*Janu*", 1957), "The Changes of Markus" ("*Markuse muutumised*", 1961). U's works have been translated mainly into Finnish, but also into Swedish and Lettish.

Under, Marie, born in Tallinn, March 27, 1883, the daughter of an elementary school teacher. Educated at a German-language school for girls (1891—1900). Became more active in the literary field beginning with 1917; a professional writer in Tallinn, travelled widely in Europe, elected an honorary member of the London P.E.N. Club in 1937. Emigrated to Sweden in 1944, worked at the Theatrical Museum in Stockholm (1945—57). Publications include the collections of verse "Sonnets" ("*Sonetid*", 1917), "First Flowering" ("*Eelõitseng*", 1918), "The Azure Sail" ("*Sinine puri*", 1918), "Bleeding Wound" ("*Verivalla*", 1920), "Heritage" ("*Pärisosa*", 1923), "Voice from the Shadows" ("*Hääl varjust*", 1927), "Delight in a Beautiful Day" ("*Rõõm ühest ilusast päevast*", 1928), "Eclipse of Happiness" ("*Õnnevarjutus*", 1929), "Under the Open Sky" ("*Lageda taeva all*", 1930), "A Stone Off the Heart" ("*Kivi südamelt*", 1935), "With Sorrowing Lips" ("*Mureliku suuga*", 1942), "Sparks under Ashes" ("*Sädemed tuhas*", 1954), and "On the Brink" ("*Ääremail*", 1963). U's work has also been published in the form of anthologies and collections: "And Flesh Turned into Word" ("*Ja liha sai sõnaks*", 1936), "Collected Works" I—III ("*Kogutud teosed*", 1940), "Bridge of Words" ("*Sõnasild*", 1945), "The Core" ("*Südamik*", 1957), "Collected Poems" ("*Kogutud luuletused*", 1958), "Selected Poems" ("*Valitud luuletused*", 1958), etc. U. has translated much poetry and many dramas in verse from German, French, Russian, Norwegian, Swedish, etc. U's own poems have been translated extensively into English, German, French, Swedish and Russian, also into Hungarian, Finnish, Czech, Esperanto, Japanese and other languages.

Vaarandi, Debora, born at Võru, Oct. 1, 1916, the daughter of a postal official. Graduated from Kuressaare secondary school in 1935, a student of the Faculty of Philosophy of Tartu University in 1936—40. Subsequently a journalist in Tallinn. In the Soviet rear during the war; returned to Tallinn and continued her journalistic work till 1946 when she became a professional writer. Publications include the collections of verse "Under the Burning Sky"

("*Põleva laotuse all*", 1945), "The Roaring Coast" ("*Kohav rand*", 1948), "On a Bright Morning" ("*Selgel hommikul*", 1950), "The Dreamer at the Window" ("*Unistaja aknal*", 1959), and "The Bread of the Seaside Plain" ("*Rannalageda leib*", 1965); the anthologies "Poems" ("*Luuletused*", 1953 and 1956) and "Selected Poems" ("*Valik luuletusi*", 1966); a book entitled "Towns of Renewed Memories" ("*Uuenevate mälestuste linnad*", 1964) which contains publicistic writings, essays and short prose items, and a travel book "Beyond Your Yard and Gate" ("*Välja õuest ja väravast*", 1970). V. has translated poetry form Russian, Finnish and German, prose works from Russian. Awarded the title of Merited Writer of the Estonian S.S.R. in 1954, a Soviet Estonian Prize in 1965. V's poetry has been extensively translated into Russian and other languages of the Soviet Union.

Vallak, Peet, (Peeter P e d a j a s), born at Voltveti, Pärnumaa, June 23, 1893, the son of a farmer. Graduated from an intermediate secondary school at Pärnu in 1911. Studied art mainly in St. Petersburg until 1915, thereafter a journalist in Tartu and Tallinn. Beginning with 1922 a professional writer in Tartu, died there March 17, 1959. Publications include the collections of short stories "The Black Cross" ("*Must rist*", 1925), "The Punjaba Potter's Workshop of Epp Pillapart" ("*Epp Pillapardi Punjaba potitehas*", 1925), "The Revolt of Brains" ("*Ajude mäss*", 1926), "Confrontation of Weapons" ("*Relvad vastamisi*", 1929), "Lynch Law" ("*Omakohus*", 1932), "Four Winds Underfoot" ("*Neli tuult jalge all*", 1934), "Topsy-Turvy Deeds" ("*Teod pahurpidi*", 1935), "Bread of Charity" ("*Armuleib*", 1936), and "Ribald Tales of Näps the Stealer of Sheep" ("*Lambavarga Näpsi lorijutte*", 1938), the anthologies "Grain from Several Bins" I—III ("*Vilja mitmest salvest*", 1945—48) and "Selected Novels" ("*Valitud novelle*", 1955 and 1958), a comedy "The Nightmares" ("*Luupainajad*", 1924), and a novel "The Vagrant" ("*Hulgus*", 1927).

Valton, Arvo (A. V a l l i k i v i), born in the borough of Märjamaa, Dec. 14, 1935, the son of a worker. Graduated from Märjamaa secondary school, studied at the Tallinn Polytechnic Institute (1954—59). Employed as an engineer at a plant in Tallinn, in addition to his work studied script-writing at the Moscow Cinematographic Institute in 1961—66. Publications include the collections of short prose works "A Strange Desire" ("*Veider soov*", 1963), "Under the Wheels" ("*Rataste vahel*", 1966), "Eight Japanese Girls" ("*Kaheksa jaapanlannat*", 1968), and "The Swan Bog. The Merry-go-round" ("*Luikede soo. Karussell*", 1968); wrote the scenario for the film "The Last Relic" ("*Viimne reliikvia*", 1970; based on E. Bornhöhe's book "Duke Gabriel"). V's works have been translated into Russian, Lettish, Lithuanian, Finnish, French and other languages.

Vetemaa, Enn, born in Tallinn, June 20, 1936, the son of an architect. Graduated from a secondary school in Tallinn (1954), and from the Tallinn Polytechnic Institute as a chemical engineer (1959). Worked at a paper mill. Studied composition at the Tallinn Conservatoire (1960—65), worked as literary and art editor of Estonian Television (1965—69). Publications include the collections of verse "Breaking of the Voice" ("*Häälemurre*", 1962), "The Snow-Ball Fight" ("*Lumesõda*", 1966), the short novels "The Monument" ("*Monument*", 1965), "Illime, a Poet" ("*Pillimees*", 1967), "A Small Requiem for the Mouth-Organ" ("*Väike reekviem suupillile*", 1969) and "Eggs Served in the Chinese Fashion" ("*Munad hiina moodi*", 1969), short prose items in periodicals, texts for oratorios and an opera. V's works have been translated into Russian, French, Finnish and other languages.

Vilde, Eduard, born March 4, 1865, the son of an overseer of work at the manor of Pudivere, Virumaa. Attended elementary school, then a district school in Tallinn (1875—82). From 1883 worked as a journalist in Tallinn and Tartu, later in Riga (1889—90), Berlin (1890—92), and then again Tartu (1893—96); spent 1896—97 in Moscow. 1897—98 was editor of the newspaper "*Virmaline*" at Narva. 1898—1904 V. was working once more as a newspaperman in Tallinn, and 1904—1905 in Tartu. After taking an active part in the revolution of 1905, V. fled to Switzerland at the beginning of 1906. Later in the same year he launched a satirical magazine "*Kaak*" in Helsinki. 1906—11 lived in different parts of Western Europe (Copenhagen, South Germany, Brussels, Vienna and elsewhere). In 1911 visited the U.S.A., returning before the end of the year and 1911—17 living once again in Copenhagen. After the February Revolution of 1917 V. returned to Estonia. 1919—20 in diplomatic service (head of the press bureau at Copenhagen and Estonian envoy at Berlin). Afterwards lived as a professional writer, first in Germany and later in Tallinn. In 1928 he was elected to honorary membership of the Finnish League of Writers; in 1929 Tartu University bestowed on him the honorary degree of Doctor of Philosophy. V. died in Tallinn, Dec. 26, 1933. The narratives and full-length novels published during his early period (either in book form or as newspaper supplements) include: "Off the Norwegian Coast" ("*Norra rannas*", 1885), "The Man in the Black Cloak" ("*Musta mantliga mees*", 1886), "Two Fingers" ("*Kaks sõrme*", 1887), "Where the Sun Does not Shine" ("*Kuhu päike ei paista*", 1887), "A Workingman's Daughter" ("*Töömehe tütar*", 1887), "Secret Bonds" ("*Salasidemed*", 1888), "Black Flames" ("*Mustad leegid*", 1889), "Pockmarked" ("*Rõugearmid*", 1889), "Our Fellow-Countryman Johannes" ("*Suguvend Johannes*", 1891), "Stolen Wings" ("*Röövitud tiivad*", 1892), "Like Fathers, Like Sons" ("*Kännud ja käbid*", 1892), "A Sop to the Bridegroom" ("*Peiu käsiraha*", 1892), "The Poisoned Chalice" ("*Karikas kihvti*", 1893), "The Skipper's Opiate" ("*Kippari unerohi*", 1893), "The *Linda* Shares" ("*"Linda" aktsiad*", 1894), etc.; here also belong several volumes of humorous stories and entertainment fiction, e. g. "The Mysteries of Tallinn" ("*Tallinna saladused*", 1887), "Tickle Your Fancy" ("*Kõtistamise kõrred*", 1888), "Laughing is Good for You" ("*Naer on terviseks*", 1891), etc. To the period of full maturity belong the novels "To the Frozen North" ("*Külmale maale*", 1896), "Iron Hands" ("*Raudsed käed*", 1898), "The Peasant War at Mahtra" ("*Mahtra sõda*", 1902), "When the Men of Anija Went to Tallinn" ("*Kui Anija mehed Tallinnas käisid*", 1903), "Prophet Maltsvet" ("*Prohvet Maltsvet*", 1905—1908); the stories "Against the Pricks" ("*Astla vastu*", 1898) and "At Dawn" ("*Koidu ajal*", 1904). During his years of exile the author published two more novels: "Redemption" ("*Lunastus*", 1909) and "The Dairyman of Mäeküla" ("*Mäeküla piimamees*", 1916); the story "Suffragettes" ("*Naisõiguslased*", 1908); the prose collections "Stories" ("*Jutustused*", 1912), "Guffaws" ("*Muiged*", 1913) and "Asta's Sacrifice" ("*Asta ohver*", 1913); the plays "The Inscrutable Mystery" ("*Tabamata ime*", 1912) and "The Hobgoblin" ("*Pisuhänd*", 1913); later was published the play "The Link" ("*Side*", 1922). V's "Collected Works" ("*Kogutud teosed*") in 33 volumes, revised by the author himself, appeared in 1923—34. A collection of 14 volumes has been published in Soviet times (1951—61). V's works have been translated into Russian, German, Hungarian, Finnish, Lettish, Ukrainian, Lithuanian, Kazakh and other languages. Film versions of "The Dairyman of Mäeküla" and "To the Frozen North" were released in 1965.

Visnapuu, Henrik, born at Leebiku, Viljandimaa, Jan. 2, 1890, the son of a farm-hand. Graduated from a municipal school in Tartu (1907), then worked as an elementary school teacher. Passed his secondary school-leaving examinations as an external student in 1916, studied philology for a short while at Tartu University and in 1922 at Berlin University. Subsequently a professional writer in Tartu and from 1935 onwards in Tallinn, where he edited the literary journal "*Varamu*" (1937—40). Fled in 1944 to Germany, proceeded in 1949 to the U.S.A. Died in New York, April 3, 1951. Publications include the collections of verse "Amores" (1917), "Farewell, Ene!" ("*Jumalaga, Ene*!", 1918), "The Meadow Violet" ("*Käoorvik*", 1920), "Silver Sleigh-Bells" ("*Hõbedased kuljused*", 1920), "The Height of Winter" ("*Talihari*", 1920), "Flint" ("*Ränikivi*", 1925), "Songs about Maarjamaa" ("*Maarjamaa laulud*", 1927), "The Idols" ("*Puuslikud*", 1929), "The Wind-Sieve" ("*Tuulesõel*", 1931), "Sun and River" ("*Päike ja jõgi*", 1932), "The Northern Lights" ("*Põhjavalgus*", 1938), "The Mother of the Wind" ("*Tuule ema*", 1942), "Ancestral Graves" ("*Esivanemate hauad*", 1946), and "Mare Balticum" (1948); the anthologies "Over the Home-Hill" ("*Üle kodumäe*", 1934), "Two Beginnings" ("*Kaks algust*", 1940), "Stormy Voyage" ("*Tuuline teekond*", 1946), etc.; the long poems "The Death of Jehovah" ("*Jehoova surm*", 1927) and "Parsilai" (1927); a novel in verse "The Shadow of Satan" ("*Saatana vari*", 1937). "Collected Poems" I—II ("*Kogutud luuletused*", 1964—65). V. has also written the comedies "The Boys of Our Village" ("*Meie küla poisid*", 1932), "Madame Sohk and Sons" ("*Madaam Sohk ja Pojad*", 1933), and the historical drama "For the Freedom of the Country" ("*Maa vabaduse eest*", 1938), a book of essays "Poets Old and New" ("*Vanad ja vastsed poeedid*", 1921), etc; a book of memoirs "Sun and River" ("*Päike ja jõgi*") appeared posthumously in 1951.

Wuolijoki, Hella (née Murrik), born at Taagepera, Viljandimaa, July 21, 1886, the daughter of a rural district secretary. Graduated from a secondary school in Tartu (1904), studied folklore and literature at Helsinki University (1904—08), took the degree of Mag. Phil. Worked as a correspondent of Finnish and Estonian newspapers in Helsinki, later went into business. Imprisoned during the war for anti-fascist activities (1943—44). Chief director of the Finnish Broadcasting Service (1945—49). Died in Helsinki, Feb. 2, 1954. Earlier works written in Estonian, later ones in Finnish. Publications include the novels "Screened by the Mist" ("*Udutagused*", 1914), "Leeni in Tartu" ("*Udutaguste Leeni Tartus*", 1933); the plays "The Children on the Farm" ("*Talulapsed*", 1912), "Koidula" (1932), "The Vagrant's Waltz" ("*Kulkurivalssi*", 1935; in Estonian "*Hulkurivalss*", 1936), "The Women of Niskavuori" ("*Niskavuoren naiset*", 1936; in Estonian "*Niskamäe naised*"), "Burning Land" ("*Põlev maa*", 1937), "Justiina" (1937; in Estonian 1938), "Hulda of Juurako" ("*Juurakon Hulda*", 1937; in Estonian "*Juuraku Hulda*", 1938), "Green Gold" ("*Vihreä kulta*", 1938), "Niskavuori Bread" ("*Niskavuoren leipä*", 1938; in Estonian "*Niskamäe leib*", 1939), "The Antidote" ("*Vastamyrkky*", 1939), "The Young Mistress of Niskavuori" ("*Niskavuoren nuori emäntä*", 1940), "The Unknown Judge" ("*Tuntematon tuomari*", 1945), "The King as Court Jester" ("*Kuningas hovinarrina*", 1945), "The Master of Iso-Heikkilä and His Farm-hand Kalle" ("*Iso-Heikkilän isäntä ja hänen renkinsa Kalle*", 1946), "Heta of Niskavuori" ("*Niskavuoren Heta*", 1953), "But What Now, Niskavuori?" ("*Entäs nyt, Niskavuori?*", 1953); two collections of short plays (1937 and 1945); five volumes of memoirs (1944—53). W's plays have been staged in many countries. Several plays have been made into films in Finland.

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Aavakivi, R. 145
Aavik, J. 159
Adams, V. 241, 243, **266**
Adamson, H. 240, **265—266,** 283
Adson, A. 182, 186, 240, **265,** 284
Aho, J. 147
Alexander III 103
Alle, A. 182, 184, 186, 197, 240, 242, **264—265,** 274, 279, 280, 285, 330, **380,** 393
Alliksaar, A. 351
Alt, E. 361
Alttoa, V. 376
Alver, B. 243, **262—264,** 283, 332, 333, **380**
Andresen, N. 197, 274, 287, 377
Angervaks, H. 195, 279, 324
Annist, A. 275, 276, 333, 376
Anouilh, J. 357
Ansomardi (Pitka, P. A.) 175
Anto, H. 175
Antson, A. 266, 272, 279, 283, 398
Apollinaire, G. 252
Aren, P. 270
Arndt, J. 48
Arvelius, F. G. 52
Asi, H. 375
Aspe, E. 111
Aspel, A. 276, 375
Auerbach, B. 119, 120
Aun, E. 114

Balzac, H. 292
Barbarus, J. 170, 182, 184, 186, 187, 197, 198, 204, 240, 242, **251—253,** 277, 279, 280, 285, 330, 337, **380—381**
Barbusse, H. 187
Baudelaire, Ch. 262
Becher, J. R. 292, 340
Becker, R. Z. 52
Beckett, S. 357
Beekman, A. **326—327,** 357, **381**
Beekman, V. 296, 324, 332, 333, **347—349,** 357, **381**
Béranger, J. P. 292, 347
Bergmann, J. 99, 113
Bjørnson, B. 119, 120
Bornhöhe, E. **108—109, 381—382,** 403
Brandes, G. 161, 167
Brecht, B. 177, 216, 340, 357, 397
Brocmann, R. 41
Buk, V. 153, 181, 193
Bunyan, J. 48
Bürger, G. A. 55, 76, 79
Byron, G. G. N. 292, 350

Campanella, T. 346—347
Campe, J. H. 79
Canth, M. 147
Carlyle, T. 161
Cendrars, B. 252
Charles XI 42
Chekhov, A. 147, 292

D'Annunzio, G. 237
Daugell, A. 32
Defoe, D. 79
Dickens, Ch. 147, 223
Divoire, F. 252
Dostoevski. F. 119

Eelma, H. 214
Eessaare Aadu (Anvelt, J.) 182, 193, 289
Eisen, J. G. 49
Eisen, M. J. 99, 106, 114
Ekbaum, S. 374
Éluard, P. 292, 347
Engels, F. 52
Enno, E. 169

Faehlmann, F. R. **64—67,** 70, 72, 97, **382**
Flavius Josephus 43
Fleming, P. 41
Fontane, T. 109
Forselius, B. G. 39, 40
France, A. 314
Freiligrath, F. 76
Freundlich, C. W. 78
Frost, R. 292, 350

Gailit, A. 182, 184, 201, 203, 205, 206, **225—227,** 274, 283, 284, 362, **382**
Galsworthy, J. 215
Ganander, C. 64, 393
García Lorca, F. 292, 351

Gautier, T. 262
Gehlhaar, T. 22
Gellert, C. F. 51, 55, 58
Gide, A. 256
Goethe, J. W. 70, 76, 84, 292, 340, 397
Gogol, N. 119, 135
Gori 269
Gorki, M. 135, 147, 292
Göseken, H. 38
Grenzstein, A. 104, 401
Grenzstein, T. 92
Grimm, J. and W. 75
Gross, V. 282, 295, **321—322, 382—383**
Grotjan, J. H. 43
Grünthal, I. 374
Gutslaff, J. 38
Gutsleff, H. 44

Haava, A. 115, 121, **141—143,** 333, **383**
Haavaoks, P. 351
Hain, V. 91
Hainsalu, L. 351
Hamsun, K. 147, 238
Hasenclever, W. 245
Hauff, W. 76
Hauptmann, G. 147
Hebbel, F. 209
Hehn, J. M. 51
Heiberg, M. 170
Heine, H. 76, 84, 142, 258, 262, 292, 340, 347, 397
Helbemäe, G. 374
Helle, A. Th. 44, 47
Henrik of Latvia (Henricus de Lettis) 18, 34
Herder, J. G. 53, 70
Herzen, A. 394
Hermann, K. A. 104, 110
Heym, G. 245
Heyse, P. 119
Hiir, E. 202, 241, 242, 266, 279, 280
Hikmet, N. 292
Hindrey, K. A. 207, **236—237,** 283, **383**
Hint, A. 207, 239, 278, 279, 281, 286, 294, 295, **303—307,** 356, 357, 361, **383—384**
Hjärne, Th. 20
Hoeneke, B. 18
Holberg, L. 55
Holtz, O. R. 54
Homer 292
Horn, W. O. 80
Hornung, J. 39
Houwald, E. C. 76
Hugo, V. 147
Hupel, A. W. 51
Hurt, J. 87, 105, 106

Ibsen, H. 147
Ignatius, M. 48
Ilus, V. 295, **323**
Ivask, I. 375

Jacobsen, J. P. 165
Jaik, J. 207, 239
Jakobson, A. 202, 204, 206, 207, **229—233,** 236, 272, 278—280, 286, 293, 355—357, **384—385**
Jakobson, C. R. 82, 90, **95—96,** 98, 101—104, 392
Jakobson, P. 114
Jannau, H. J. 49
Janno, R. 207
Jannsen, J. V. **80—82,** 84, 86, 90, 99, **385,** 387
Järv, E. 221
Järv, J. 104, 110
Jõgi, O. 376, 377
Johani, A. 338
Jókai, M. 119
Juhkum, V. 194
Jürisson, H. 351
Jürna, M. 239

Kaal, A. 279, 281, 295, 296, 324, 331, 351
Kaalep, A. **350—351,** 357
Kaaver, V. 196
Kabur, B. 357, 361
Kafka, F. 329, 366
Kalinin, M. 145
Kallas, A. 95, **171—173,** 201, 207, 272, **385,** 391
Kallas, O. 385
Kallis, O. 129
Kalmus, A. 374
Kampmaa, M. 275
Kangro, B. 243, 267, 283, 284, 362, 364, **368—369, 385—386**
Kangur, K. 351

Kaplinski, J. **353—354**
Kärner, J. 185, 186, 189, 206, 240, 242, **257—259,** 268, 272, 274, 276, 279, 280, 285, 330, 337, **386**
Käsu Hans 43
Kaugver, R. 295, **323,** 357
Keerdo, P. 195, 280
Kelch, Chr. 20
Kesamaa, M. 282, 331, 351
Kibuvits, L. 207, 239
Kiik, H. 324
Kilgas, P. 361
Kingissepp, V. 182
Kippel, E. 239, 279, 282
Kitzberg, A. 110, 113, 121, **132—135,** 173, 174, 208, 267, 376, **387**
Kivikas, A. 184, 186, 202, 203, 205, **238,** 284
Klinger, F. M. 53
Klopstock, F. G. 63
Koell, J. 35
Koidula, L. 82, **90—95,** 97, 98, 100, 112, 115, 141, 142, 173, 176, 333, 376, 385, **387**
Kolk, R. 373
Kolla, I. 351
Kompus, L. 361
Königseer, C. M. 49
Koort, J. 159
Körber, M. 84
Körner, T. 94
Korolenko V. 119
Kõrv, J. 104
Kotsar, K. 175
Kotta, F. 195, 279, 332, **349**
Kotzebue, A. F. F. 55
Kreutzwald, F. R. **68—77,** 84, 88, 91, 94, 96—98, 106, 115, 131, 208, 375, 376, **387—388,** 399
Krohn, J. 385
Kross, J. 296, 332, 333, **345—347,** 357, **388**
Krusten, E. 239, 279, 284, 286, 293—295, **300—303,** 356, **388—389**
Krusten, P. 239, **373**
Kruusvall, J. 330
Krylov, I. 84, 114, 338, 400
Kuhlbars, F. 97
Kunder, J. 99, **112**
Kuusberg, P. 282, 294, 295, **314—317,** 377, **389**
Laaban, I. 374
Lagerlöf, S. 147
Laht, U. 282, 332, **344—345,** 356, 357, **389**
Laikmaa, A. 152
Laretei, H. 302
Lättemäe, E. 351
Leberecht, H. 282, 286, 293, 294, **307—310, 389—390**
Lehtmets, T. 351
Leies, U. 357
Leino, E. 161
Lembitu 16
Lenau, N. 76
Lenin, V. 149, 296, 398
Lepik, K. 364, **371—372, 390**
Lermontov, M. 114, 292, 340, 400
Lessing, G. E. 70, 94
Lichtwer, M. G. 51
Liiberg, S. 336
Liiv, Jakob 112, 114
Liiv, Juhan 115, 121, **137—140,** 159, 161, 167, 174, **390,** 401
Liives, A. 356, 357, **359—361, 390—391**
Lilienbach, J. **152—153,** 181, 193
Linde, B. 170
Lintrop, J. 175
Lönnrot, E. 66
Löwe, F. 74
Luce, J. W. L. 54
Luiga, G. E. 110, 175
Luik, V. 333, 354
Luther, M. 51
Luts, K. 367
Luts, O. 174, 176, 185, 206, **221—224,** 272, 285, **391**

Maasik, E. 324
Macpherson, J. 71
Madarik, J. (Lauristin, J.) **195—196,** 280, 282
Mägi, A. 374
Mägi, K. 159
Maisaar, E. 16
Mälk, A. 207, **234—236,** 272, 283, 284, 305, 362, 364, **391—392**
Malm, C. E. 84
Mänd, H. 351
Mändmets, J. 175, 185, 234, 305
Mango Hans 48
Mann, Th. 215

Männik, E. 281, 286, 293, **320**
Mannteuffel, P. A. F. 52, **58—59**
Marpurg, G. G. 54
Martna, M. 145
Masing, O. W. **55—58,** 60, 63, 70, 82
Masing, U. 267
Maupassant, G. 119, 147
Mayakovski, V. 292, 344, 349
Meisel, P. 194
Meri, L. 324
Merilaas, K. 243, 267, 279, 332, **340—342, 392**
Merkel, G. H. 53, 66
Metsanurk, M. 175, 185, 188, 205, 207, **218—221,** 268, 272, 283, 285, **392—393,** 396
Metsar, L. 323
Michelson, E. 387
Mölder, V. 153, 181, 195
Molière, J.-B. 111, 340
Müller, G. 36
Münther, O. 153
Murdmaa, A. 130

Napoleon I 54
Nekrassov, N. 114, 292, 340, 397
Neruda, P. 292
Neus, A. H. 71
Nezval, V. 292, 340
Nietzsche, F. 116
Niit, E. 296, 332, **350,** 391
Nõu, H. 374
Nurme, M. 281, 331, 332, **350**

Oja, H. 375
Oks, J. 171
Oldekop, G. A. 54, 55
Olearius, A. 41
Opitz, M. 41
Oras, A. 276, 362

Palgi, D. 202, 274, 275
Pangsepp, R. 299
Panso, V. 324
Pant, V. 361
Parijõgi, J. 207, 239
Parker, L. 195, 279
Pärn, J. 100
Parve, R. 281, 286, 296, 320, 331, 332, **342—343,** 356, 357, 361, **393,** 394
Päts, K. 145, 198
Peegel, J. 282, 295, 323
Peep, H. 377
Peterson, K. J. **61—64,** 159, **393**
Peterson-Särgava, E. 121, **135—136,** 174, 268, **393**
Petőfi, S. 292, 350
Petri, J. Chr. 53
Põdder, M. 111
Pöögelmann, H. 150—151, 181, 193, 275, 289, **394**
Prévert, J. 351
Promet, L. 295, 296, **317—320,** 343, 357, 393, **394**
Prus, B. 147
Puhvel, H. 376
Pukk, H. 282, 324
Pushkin, A. 114, 119, 261, 262, 264, 340, 380, 400

Quandt, J. C. 47

Rängel, E. 324
Rannaleet, A. 194
Rannamaa S. 324
Rannap, J. 324
Rannet, E. 282, 294, 356, **357—358, 394—395**
Rannit, A. 375
Raud, E. **324,** 357
Raud, Kr. 30, 74
Raud, M. 207, 239, 243, 279, 280, 286, 295, 331, 332, **336—339,** 354—356, **395**
Raudsepp, H. **268—271,** 272, 274, 280, 283, 285, 356, **395—396**
Reindorff, G. 76
Reinvald, A. **98—99**
Remmelgas, L. 377
Renner, J. 20
Ridala, V. 170, 275
Riis, V. 324
Rimmel, R. 333, 354
Ristikivi, K. 207, 239, 280, 283, 284, 362, **364—368, 396**
Rochow, F. E. 52
Rodenbach, G. 165
Roht, R. 184, 205, 206, **238,** 285
Rolland, R. 215
Rosegger, P. 119
Rosenplänter, J. H. 53, 55, 60
Rossihnius, J. 38
Roth, J. P. 54

Rummo, P. 280, 331, 332, **349,** 357, 396
Rummo, P.-E. 333, **351—353,** 357, **396**
Rumor, K. 237
Runnel, H. 333, 354
Russow, B. 19
Russow, F. N. 84
Rutoff (Rajasaare), C. 175
Ruven, J. 239, 283

Saaber, K. 330
Saal, A. 109
Saar, A. 282, 324, 357
Saar, V. 323
Saleman, G. 38
Salu, H. 375
Saluri, R. 330
Sang, A. 243, 267, 332, **339—340, 396—397**
Schiller, F. 70, 76, 84, 292, 340
Schlater, Fr. 61, 65
Schlegel, C. H. J. 53
Schnitzler, G. 237
Schubert, H. 48
Schwabe, J. G. 52
Schwarz, M. 361
Scott, W. 109
Semper, J. 170, 182, 184—187, 197, 200, 206, 207, 240, 242, **253—257,** 274—276, 279, 280, 287, 294, 312, 330, 332, 337, 355, 361, **397**
Sergo, H. 282, 295, **322**
Severyanin, I. 249
Shakespeare, W. 111, 292
Shanyavski, A. 386
Shaw, G. B. 211
Shelley, P. B. 292, 350
Shevchenko, T. 292
Sholokhov, M. 308
Sienkiewicz, H. 147
Siig, A. 333, 354
Siimisker, H. 377
Sikemäe, I. 282, 324
Sillaots, M. 207
Sinkel, A. 324
Sirge, R. 206, 207, 239, 279, 283, 286, 293, 294, 296, **297—300, 397—398**
Smuul, J. 281, 286, 293, 295, 296, **310—314,** 331—332, 356, 357, 361, **398—399**
Sõgel, E. 376
Sööt, K. E. 115, 121, **140—141,** 174, **399**
Speek, P. A. 145
Spengler, O. 225
Stadler, E. 245
Stahl, H. 37, 38
Stalin, J. 287, 310, 398
Steinsberg, P. A. J. 55
Stenders, G. F. 51
Stieglitz, A. 383, 386
Suburg, L. 101
Sudermann, H. 119
Suislepp, H. 282, 351
Suits, G. 154, 156, **159—164,** 179, 185, 186, 197, 273, 275, 276, 284, 289, 362, 375, **399**
Sütiste, J. 197, 202, 241—243, **259—262,** 272, 279, 283, 285, 330, 354, **399—400**
Suuman, A. 354
Süvalep, K. 361
Suve Jaan (Sommer, J. F.) 78

Tael, K. 69
Tagore, R. 267
Talvest, M. 361
Talvik, H. 243, 266, 283
Tamm, J. **114,** 121, **400**
Tammlaan, E. **272—273,** 279, 283, 389, **400**
Tammsaare, A. H. 170, 174, 176, 185, 197, 201, 204, 205, **208—218,** 268, 272, 364, 376, **400—401**
Tassa, A. 170, 186
Tennov, E. 295, 324
Thoen, A. 374
Tigane, A. 324
Tigane, L. 324
Tiitus, R. 344
Tolli, V. 312
Tolstoi, L. 119, 135, 147, 218, 292
Tominga, H. 330
Tõnisson, J. 144, 146
Tooming, O. 283, 286, 293, 295, **320—321**
Toona, E. 374
Traat, M. 296, 329, 333, **353, 401**
Trein, K. 194
Triik, N. 139, 155, 159, 162, 183
Tuglas, F. 154, 156, **164—169,** 182, 184, 186, 188, 189, 201, 204, 207,

273—276, 278, 283, 287, 289, 312, 376, 390, **401—402**
Turgenev, I. 119, 303
Tuulik, J. 330
Tuulik, Ü. 330
Tvardovski, A. 292, 340, 397
Twain, M. 119, 123

Uhland, L. 76
Uibopuu, V. 284, 364, **370—371, 402**
Ulas, P. 318
Under, M. 170, 182, 184, 186, 201, 240, **243—248,** 283, 284, 289, 333, 362, 364, **402**
Unt, M. 296, **329,** 357
Urgart, O. 202, 274
Utt, O. 377
Uustulnd, A. 361

Vaarandi, D. 281, 286, 331—332, **333—336, 402—403**
Vabbe, A. 166
Vaher, L. 294, 295, 322
Vahing, V. 330
Vahtra, J. 212, 230
Vaidlo, R. 282, 324
Vaigur, E. 361
Valdemar II 16
Väli, H. 324
Vallak, P. 205—207, **227—229,** 236, 285, **403**
Valter, E. 328
Valton, A. 296, **327—328,** 357, **403**
Veetamm, M. 351
Verhaeren, E. 256
Veske, M. **98,** 105
Vetemaa, E. 296, **325—326,** 333, 354, **403**
Vierorth, A. 47
Vihalemm, A. 374
Viiralt, E. 247
Vilde, E. 111, 115, 119—121, **122—131,** 133, 135, 145, 148, 150, 173, 174, 179, 185, 197, 208, 218, 267, 306, 375, **404**
Villmann, A. 374
Vinkel, A. 376
Virginius, Adrian 38
Virginius, Andreas 38
Visnapuu, H. 170, 182, 184, 200, 203, 240, **248—251,** 266, 272, 274, 284, 362, **405**

Wanradt, S. 35
Weitzenberg, J. 84
Weltherus, J. A. 36
Werfel, F. 245
Whitman, W. 256, 292
Widmann, J. V. 77
Wiedemann, F. J. 88
Wilde, O. 165, 209
Wilde, P. E. 51
Willmann, F. W. 51
Winkler, R. J. 55
Witschel, J. H. W. 77
Witten, F. 35
Wuolijoki, H. 173, **176—177,** 272, **405**

Zeromski, S. 147
Zinzendorf, N. L. 44, 47
Zola, É. 119, 120, 147, 230
Zschokke, J. D. 69

Yessenin, S. 292

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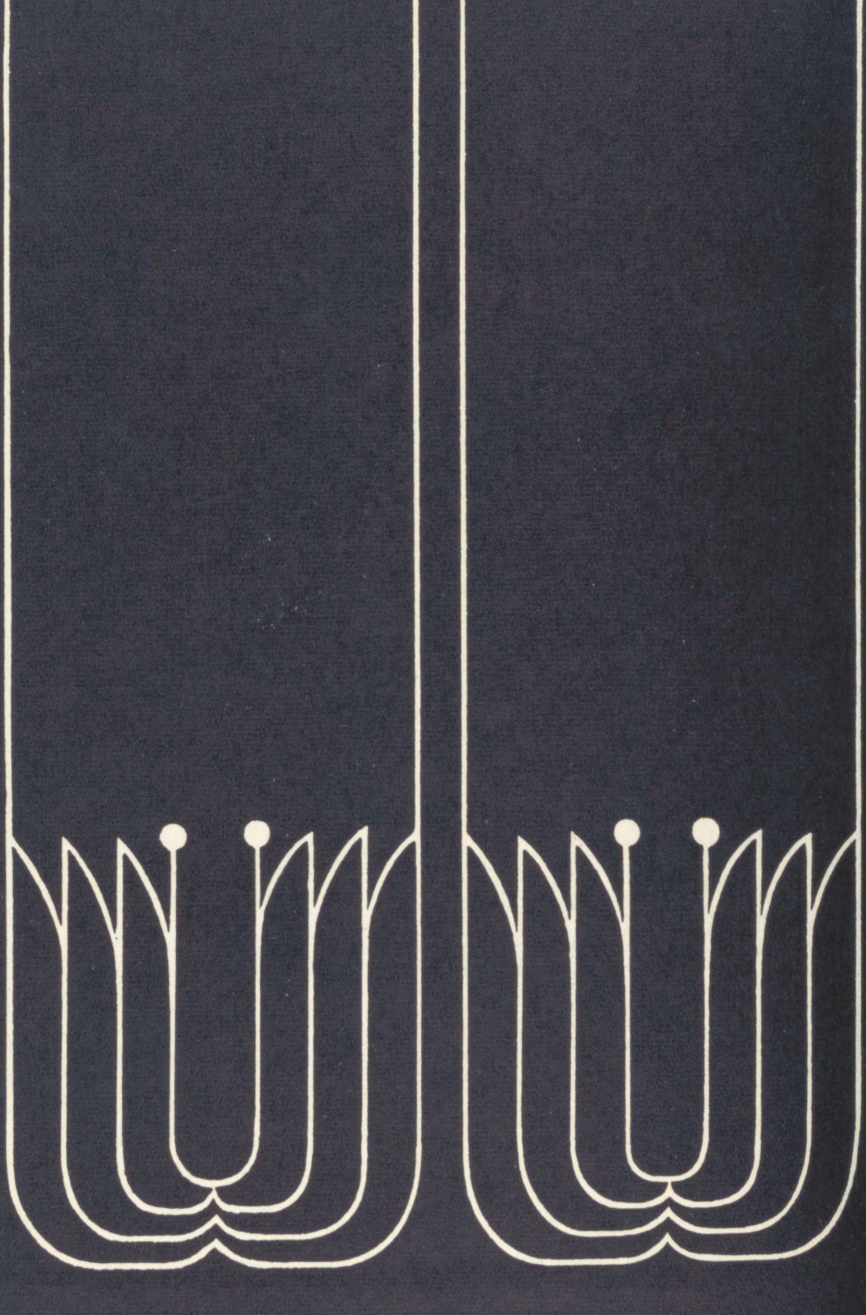

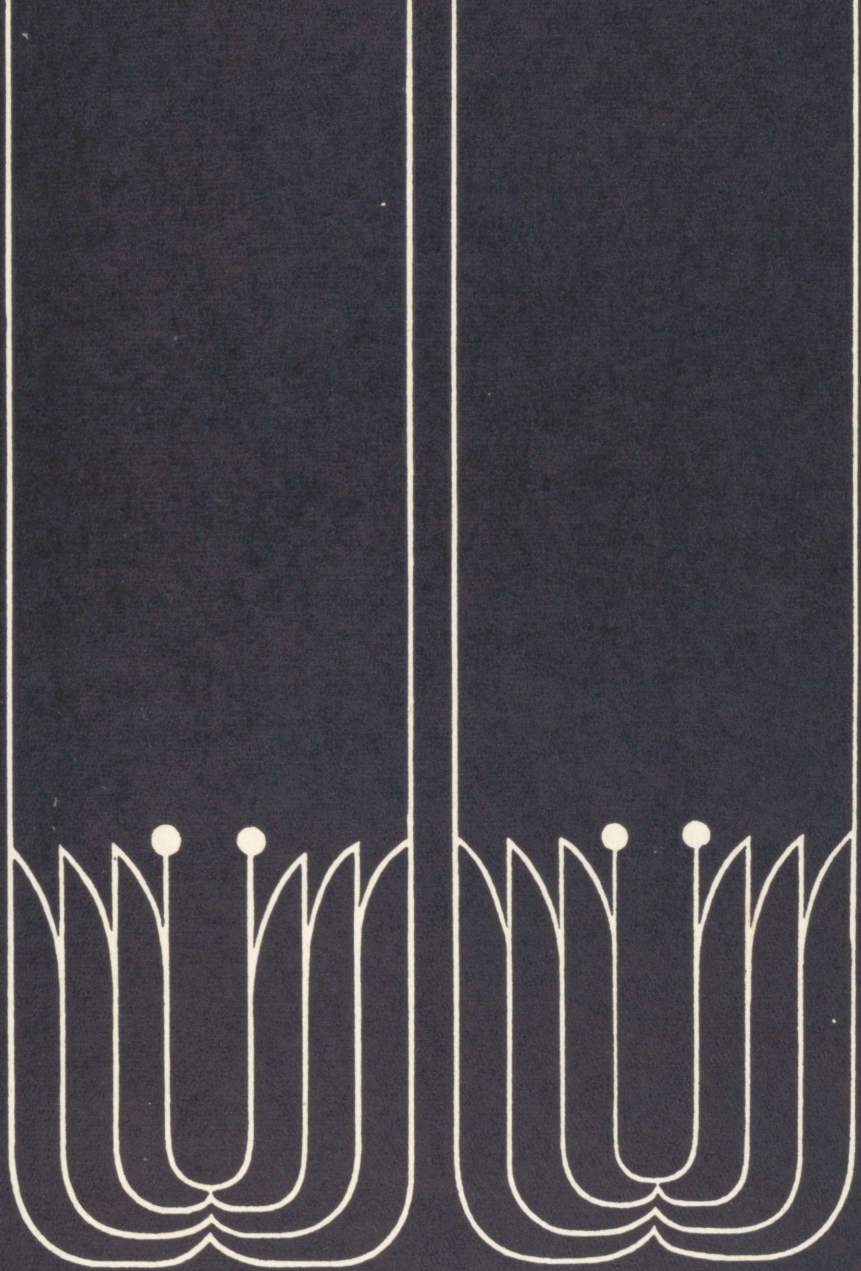

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