**Extract from *Evgeny Onyegin***

**translated by Isabel F. Hapgood**

Taken from the extract in *A Library of the World’s Best Literature - Ancient and Modern* - Vol. XXX (ed. Charles Dudley Warner), New York, NY: Cosimo: 2008. ISBN 978-1-60520-225-9, pp. 11918−11924 (sic), part of which is available from Google Books. The section on Pushkin is introduced by Isabel F. Hapgood. Part at least was probably first published in *The Columbia University course in literature. Scandinavian and Slavonic literature: Slavonic Literature (*edited by Clarence A. Manning). New York: Columbia University Press 1928. LCCN (Library of Congress Control Number): 28022718. This extract consists of Chapter Three, Stanzas 26 and 28 and Tatyana’s Letter to Onyegin, Chapter Four, Stanzas 12 to 16 and Chapter Eight, Stanzas 41 to 47 (apart from part of Stanza 45).

[As it is not possible to reproduce both sense and rhyme, I have attempted only to give a correct translation, and to preserve the simple rhythm where I could, in my lack of poetic powers. I have indicated the scheme of rhyme by numbers attached to the first stanza.⎯I.F.H.]

. . . . . . . . . . . . .

**Chapter Three**

**26**

1. Another trouble I foresee:

2. To save the honor of my land

1. I shall be forced without a doubt,

2. To translate Tatyana’s letter.

3. She hardly knew her native Russian,

3. Our newpapers she never read,

4. And could express herself but badly

4. In her own mother tongue.

5. Accordingly she wrote in French.⎯

6. What’s to be done, again I say?

6. Down to this day a lady’s love

5. In Russian ne’er hath been expressed.

7. Down to this day our haughty tongue

7. To prose of letters is not used.

**28**

And God forbid that I should meet,

At full, or parting on the porch,

A yellow-shawled seminarist,

Or Academic in a cap!

Like rosy lips without a smile,

Without grammatical mistakes

I do not love the Russian tongue,

And yet it may be, to my grief,

Of beauties a new generation,

Heading entreaties of the journals,

To correct speech will make us used.

**31**

. . . . . .

Tatyana’s Letter to Onyegin

I write to you⎯What can I more?

What is there left for me to say?

And now, I know, upon your will

Depends my chastisement with scorn.

But if to my unhappy lot

You but one drop of pity spare,

You will not now abandon me.

At first I vowed I would not speak:

Trust me, you ne’er had heard my shame,

Might I at least have had the hope

To see you rarely,⎯once a week,⎯

To see you in our village here;

If I might listen to your speech,

Utter a word to you, and then

Think, ever think, of but one thing,

Both day and night until we met.

But you love solitude, they say:

All’s dull here in our rural wilds:

And we,⎯in no way do we shine,

Though truly glad to welcome you.

Why did you ever come to us?

In this remote, deserted spot

Forsaken then I ne’er had known you,

Nor known this bitterness of pain,⎯

The tumult of a soul untaught,

I might have tamed, in time, no doubt;

Have found another to my heart.

Perchance, and been a faithful wife,

A virtuous, loving mother,

Another! Nay to none on earth

Could I have given e’er my heart.

Heaven’s counsel then have thus decreed;

This is its will, and I am thine.

All, all my life hath been a pledge

Of faithful meeting thus with thee.

I know that God hath sent thee to me;

My guardian unto death art thou.

In dreams I long ago beheld thee,

And, still unseen, I found thee dear.

I languished ’neat thy wondrous glance,

Thy voice rang sweetly though my soul,

Long, long ago,⎯nay, ’twas no dream!⎯

Thou cam’st, and in a glance I knew thee;

I was benumbed, yet filled with flame.

My soul within me cried, “’Tis he!”

’Tis true, is’t not? I listened to thee:

Thou spak’st with me in silent watches

When I to aid the needy sought,

Or sweetened, by my fervent prayers.

The languors of my troubled sould.

And was’t not thou, beloved vision,

Who, at that instant as I prayed,

Didst flit in transparent darkness past me,

And to my pillow gently steal?

And didst thou not in love and gladness,  
Drop in my ear sweet words of hope?

Who art thou then? My guardian angel,

Or crafty tempter of my heart?

I pray thee now, disperse my doubts,

Perchance all this is but the empty

Deception of an untried soul,

And God hath willed quite otherwise:

So be it! From this hour my fate

I trustfully to thee commit;

Before thee burning tears I weep,

And for thy safeguard thee entreat.

Bethink thee, here I stand alone,

And no-one here doth comprehend.

My judgement weakens, reason reels,

And I must perish dumb, unheard.

I wait for thee; I pray thee quicken

With but a look of hope my heart,

Or break at least the numbing dream

With well-deserved reproof⎯alas!

I’m done! ’Tis terrible to read⎯

I faint with terror and with shame⎯

Your honour is my only pledge:

To be it I boldly thus confide.

. . . . . . . . . . . .

**Chapter Four**

**12**

For a brief space they stood in silence;

And then Onyegin, drawing near,

Spake thus:⎯

“A while agone you wrote me:

Deny it not, I pray. I read

That sweet outpour of innocent love,

Confession of confiding soul.

To me your frankness is most precious,

And it has raised within my heart

Feelings which long have sleeping lain:

But not for this will I extol you;

And yet for this I will requite

With a confession, artless too.

Accept , I pray, this confession,

And sit in judgement over me.

**13**

“Had I desired in life to limit

Within the bounds of hearth and home;

Had kindly Fate to me dictated

Husband and father e’er to be:

Had family bliss, as a fair vision,

One moment e’er my sense beguiled:  
Assuredly I should have chosen

No other bride than you, I vow.

Without a shade of flattery

I say, you’d be my only choice.

In you I’d find my sweet ideal

As partner of my gloomy life,

A pledge of all that is most fair;

And thus be happy⎯if I could!

**14**

“But I for bliss was not created;

To that my soul is foreign still:

In vain, in vain are your perfections;

Of them I count myself unworthy.

Believe (I pledge my word upon it),

Marriage for us would torture be.

However much at first I loved you,

At once, with custom, I should hate;

Straightway you’d weep⎯but could not touch,

With all your tears, my hardened heart,

Which would but more inflame my hate.

Judge for yourself what kind of roses

Hymen would thus for us prepare,⎯

And, it might chance, for many a day!

**15**

“What can be worse in all creation

Than household where the wretched wife

Her thankless spouse doth mourn and grieve.

Sitting alone by day and night;

While weary husband, her worth knowing

(Yet cursing his untoward fate),

Is always taciturn and gloomy,

Engaged, yet coldly jealous still!

And such am I. Is’t thus thou soughtest

In the love-flame of thy poor soul,

When with such simple innocence

Thou wrot’st so cleverly to me?

And can it be that such a lot

Hath been assigned to me by fate?

**16**

“Our dreams, our years we cannot call back;

My soul I never can renew;⎯

I love you with a love fraternal⎯

And tendered, perchance: who knows?

Then listen to me without anger:

Often, I think, in young maids’ minds,

Slight dreams succeed to dreams as slight.

As a young tree bears leaves in spring;

And thus, it seems, is heaven’s will.

Again you’ll give your love⎯and yet

You’ll learn of self-control the at,

Not every man will understand you:  
And innocence oft leads to woe.”

. . . . . . . . . . . .

**Chapter Eight**

**41**

Oh, who could not, in that swift flash,

Have read the tale of her dumb pain?

Who, in the princess, could not see

Our Tanya of those former days?

In frantic grief of his compassion,

Onyegin fell low at her feet.

She trembled, but was silent still,

And fixed her eyes upon Onyegin

Without surprise, yet without wrath.

To her his dim and tortured gaze,

Beseeching mean and dumb reproach,

Made all things clear. The simple girl,

With dreams and heart of former days,

Had waked once more within her breast.

**42**

She did not raise him to his feet,

But left with eyes still fixed on him,

She lets her senseless fingers lie

Beneath his thirsting, burning lips.

What is it that she dreams of now?

A long, long silence follows then;

And at the last she softly says:⎯

“Enough⎯arise; it is my part

To speak to you quite frankly now.

Onyegin⎯you recall the hour

When in our garden, in the walk,

Fate made to meet, how meekly I

Gave ear to all your lessons stern?

To-day it is my turn to speak.

**43**

“Onyegin, I was younger then;

I think that I was better too;

I loved you truly. What of that?

What was’t I found within your heart,

What answer? Sternness; naught but that.

’Tis true, is’t not? ’Twas nothing new

To you, this love of maiden’s heart?

How my blood curdles,⎯O my God!⎯

When I recall the chilling glance,

And that stern sermon which you gave.

But I blame not: in that dread hour

You acted nobly, for my good,

And honorably towards me then:

For that, receive my heartfelt thanks.

**44**

“In that far solitude, ’tis true,

Far from the noise of idle tongues,

I did not please you. Why then now

Do you thus persecute me hear?

Why do you deign to heed at all?

Is’t not because, at present, I

In loftiest circles must appear?

That I am rich and famous now;

That for the wounds my husband bore

In battle, we are loved at court?

Is’t not because this my disgrace

Would now by all be known and seen,

And might, in social circles here,

Lend flattering honor to your name?

**45**

“I weep. If you have not forgot

Your Tanya till this present hour,

Then know, the sharpness of your chiding,

The coldness of your step upbraiding,

Did but the choice lie in my power,

I would prefer to sullying passion,

And to your letters and your tears. . . .

**46**

“But list, Onyegin: all this splendor,

Illusion of a stupid life,

My triumphs in the social whirlpool,

My fashionable house and guests,⎯

What is there in them? I would gladly

Renounce this foolish masquerade,

This tumult all, incense and splendor,

For the wild park, a shelf of books,

And life in our poor, humble manse;⎯

For the old spots. In short, Onyegin,

When the first time I met with thee:

Yes, for the quiet, peaceful church-yard,

Where now a cross and shady bough

Bend o’er the grave of my poor nurse.

**47**

“And happiness was so near to us,

So possible! But my sad fate

Was shaped already. Indiscreet,

Mayhap, was my behavior then;

My mother, bathed in tears adjured me;

Poor Tanya felt all fates were one.

And so⎯I married. ’Tis your duty

To leave me now. I beg you will;

I know you⎯That your heart containeth

Firm pride and strenuous honor still.

I love you, (why should I conceal it?)

But I am now another’s bride

And I will ne’er betray his trust.”