

M. E. SALTYKOV-SHCHEDRIN: SELECTED SATIRICAL WRITINGS.
 Edited by *I. P. Foote*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977. vi, 284 pp. \$21.00.

The Russian texts in this volume are reprints from the recent collected edition of M. E. Saltykov-Shchedrin's works (*Sobranie sochinenii* [Moscow, 1965-76]). Four unabridged fairy tales and thirty-one extracts from Saltykov's major works are grouped according to a rough thematic scheme: numbers 1-8 deal with relations between the Russian state and the people; numbers 9-15 with the emancipation, reform, and counterreform; numbers 16-21 with aspects of the postreform period and social changes; numbers 22-25 with the liberals; number 26 with the *zemstvo*; numbers 27-32 with the political mood of Russia in the late 1870s and the 1880s; and numbers 33-35 with Saltykov's literary position and satirical method. The selected passages are more or less self-contained and illustrate Saltykov's attitude toward the major problems of his day, as well as the range of his technique as a satirist as found in the following works: *Gubernskie ocherki* (1856-57), *Satiry v proze* (1859-62), *Pompadury i pompadurshi* (1863-74), *Istoriia odnogo goroda* (1869-70), *Skazki* (1869-86), *Gospoda tashkenttsy* (1869-72), *Dnevnik provintziiala v Peterburge* (1872), *Blagonamerennye rechi* (1872-76), *V srede umerennosti i akkuratnosti* (1876), *Sovremennaia idilliia* (1877-83), *Ubezhitelnye Monrepo* (1878-79), *Kruglyi god* (1879-80), *Za rubezhom* (1881), *Pis'ma k teten'ke* (1881-82), *Melochi zhizni* (1886-87).

The collection includes a substantial introduction by Foote, introductory notes to the individual items, commentaries to all the texts, a glossary of rare words, and a select bibliography, all of which provide reliable information on Saltykov's life and work as well as on the historical background of mid-nineteenth-century Russia. Foote's contribution is scholarly, though he is indebted to the commentaries contained in the *Sobranie sochinenii*. According to Foote, Saltykov is "too literary for the historian and too historical for the student of literature, and he has been largely ignored by both" (p. 1). He points out that the aim of the present volume is to correct this situation, which, I should add, prevails only outside of Saltykov's native country. The "merciless satirist" of the old regime is one of the "most-printed" and "most-studied" writers in the Soviet Union (see Maurice Friedberg, *Russian Classics in Soviet Jackets* [New York, 1962], p. 33).

This "Portable Saltykov" can be read with pleasure by lovers of humor and satire, and should also provide a useful service in courses on Russian culture and civilization, because the selected passages offer a vivid insight into some of the main political and social problems of Saltykov's day. The lack of detailed linguistic commentary to the texts is regrettable, however, because it precludes their use in advanced Russian language courses.

A serious student of literature normally prefers to read and analyze the complete text of an entire work of art rather than extracts. Consequently, *Selected Satirical Writings* has little or no appeal to specialists, although the collection may be useful as a review source for Saltykov's satires.

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D. S. MEREŽKOVSKIJ ALS LITERATURKRITIKER: VERSUCH EINER RELIGIÖSEN BEGRÜNDUNG DER KUNST. By *Ute Spengler*. Slavica Helvetica, vol. 2. Lucerne: C. J. Bucher, 1972. 174 pp.

Of the entire corpus of Merezhkovskii's work, his literary criticism has best stood the test of time. "On the Causes of the Decline of Russian Literature" is frequently considered the manifesto of Russian Symbolism; "Gogol and the Devil" was included