

RUSSIAN LITERATURE – 19th Century

Contents

Poetry
Drama
Fiction
Essay
Autobiography

POETRY

Russian poetry underwent a profound transformation in the early decades of the 19th century that affected almost every aspect of it, from who wrote poetry to themes and language. Poets were no longer exclusively members of the aristocracy, and while many were civil servants, none were state-sponsored poets, since state-sponsored poetry had come to an end. Poetry was now primarily written for peers and friends in the salon, rather than for rulers and nobles in the court. Love, longing, and friendship replaced official themes, while the language of poetry grew closer to the spoken language than it ever had in the 18th century.

Golden Age: The period between 1813 and 1845 is often regarded as the Golden Age of Russian poetry. It begins with the surge of creativity that followed Napoleon's defeat, reaches its apex in 1825 at the end of Alexander I's reign, and concludes around 1845 due to a combination of increased censorship under Nicholas I, and the growing popularity of prose genres with expansion of Russia's readership. Poetry in the 18th century had primarily served the needs of noble patrons, and was written by professional poets. In contrast, poetry of the Golden Age was written for a small, but expanding, number of educated readers, often the poets' own peers, by writers who made their living by other means.

Two of the most important poets in the early years of the Golden Age came from the ranks of the young officers returning from service in the Napoleonic wars, Konstantin Batyushkov and Vasiliy Zhukovsky. Among their contributions to the poetry of this period were elements of Romanticism and the idea of the independent poet.

Vasily Zhukovsky, who followed Karamzin's reforms, expanded the poetic vocabulary that became the standard idiom for the whole 19th century. The contributions of other poets such as Yevgeny Baratynsky, Konstantin Batyushkov, Denis Davydov, Pyotr Vyazemsky, and Anton Delvig were also very important. Later Zhukovsky's and Batyushkov's style influenced the early poetry of Aleksandr Pushkin.

Pushkin's style was a synthesis of his own innovations and those of earlier writers, and was masterfully employed in a number of literary genres – love poems, epigrammatic insults, fairy tales, religious verse, comedy and tragedy. His works, clear and profound, became literary models not only for the writers of his time, but also for the writers who came after him.

Russian poetry reached its peak with Aleksandr Pushkin's poem *Ruslan and Lyudmila*. His "novel in verse", *Eugene Onegin* depicted contemporary Russian life, and the *The Bronze Horseman* foresaw Russia's later descent into totalitarianism.

The last great poet of the Golden Age was Mikhail Lermontov, an uncompromising and powerful Romantic reminiscent of Byron. Due to his solitary nature, much of his work was only published after his death. Since it was believed that Pushkin's style could not be improved upon, Lermontov chose to write in his own style, characterized by its energy, emotional tension and unique forms of expression.

Whether Russian poetry suffered a qualitative decline following Lermontov's death is a subject of debate, but the rapid decline in poetry's popularity among the Russian intelligentsia is undeniable. Social issues and struggle began to attract the attention of this class and as early as the late 1810s-1820s poets such as Fyodor Tiutchev, Afanasiy Fet, and Nikolay Nekrasov found themselves ignored or mocked by radical critics such as Pisarev who criticized their aestheticism. Mediocre poets known as "civic poets" became popular with the public for a time, but poetry's popularity began to decline in the mid-1840s. When the view that the value of literature was directly linked to its concern with social issues became dominant in the 1860s radical critics subjected poetry as an art form to serious criticism.

Ballads: This genre of poetry only appeared in the early 19th century, inspired by German romantic poetry. Generally composed on the themes of family and romantic relationships, their subject matter is less diverse than the *bylina*. Vasily Zhukovskiy is generally regarded as the first composer of Russian ballads, with his first, "Lyudmila", written in 1808. Ballads were eventually displaced by shorter songs called *chatushki*.

DRAMA

Golden Age: The first half of the 19th century witnessed the appearance of Russian drama's first masterpieces. Among these works was Alexander Griboyedov's *Woe from Wit*, an old-fashioned classicist comedy which was first staged in 1831 and published in 1833 depicting Moscow society of about 1820.

Nikolay Gogol's first attempt at drama was *Order of Vladimir, Third Class*. His next work, *Government Inspector*, was a satirical comedy that subtly criticized the state of the Russian Empire through its depiction of the inefficiency and corruption of government officials in a minor provincial town.

The tradition of Russian historical drama developed from Russian romantic drama, despite the fact that Russian romantic drama's Western roots are even more obvious than those of romantic fiction. Pushkin's *Boris Godunov*, a poetic, yet somewhat realistic depiction of this period of Russian history. Among the most prominent playwrights of Russian historical drama in the first half of the 19th century were Nikolay Polevoy and Nestor Kukolnik. Aleksy Khomyakov, known for his Slavophile sentiments, wrote two historical dramas which were staged for only a short time, *The False Dmitry* and *Ermak*.

In 1842 the romantic writer Mikhail Lermontov made his mark on the history of Russian drama when his play *A Masked Ball* was staged. There was a strong reaction by officials to its uncompromising depiction of the moral corruption of the Russian upper classes which resulted in the play being censored. It was not until 1862 that Lermontov's work was presented in its entirety.

However, Russian theater continued to thrive in the 19th century although much of what was performed was still of foreign origin. The plays by Alexandr Ostrovsky which appeared around the middle of the century would inspire a new generation of performers. His series of plays on merchant life highlighted the negative qualities of merchants as cheats, tyrannical bosses and fathers, and narrow-minded philistines. Among his well-known plays are *The Bankrupt* (or with its later title *It's a Family Affair-We'll Settle It Ourselves*), *A Poor Bride*, *A Lucrative Position* and *Lumber*.

Historical drama was also written by Count Aleksey Tolstoy. His main importance came from his dramatic trilogy, *The Death of Ivan the Terrible*, *Tsar Fyodor Ivanovich* and *Tsar Boris*.

Silver Age: Although many plays staged at many theaters were still foreign, the domestic repertoire was also growing as a result of the end of the imperial theaters' monopoly. Lev Tolstoy was an important figure in the drama of later part of the 19th century whose reputation as a major playwright comes primarily from three works. The first two, *The First Distiller* and *The Power of Darkness* were short, realistic morality plays which premiered in Saint Petersburg in 1886. The third, *The Fruits of Enlightenment*, a satirical comedy that targeted the educated elite, was performed in Moscow in 1892.

Russian drama began to take new directions and gain international recognition with the plays of the short story writer Anton Chekhov. In his plays Chekhov deliberately broke with and ridiculed the dramatic

conventions of the classic theater that had been in use since the 18th century and which were thought to be essential for a well written play. His four best-known dramas were all written after a period of intense short story writing. The first, *The Seagull*, employed both modernist and symbolist elements, while the other three – *Uncle Vanya*, *Three Sisters* and *The Cherry Orchard* - met with negative criticism for being plotless and actionless, and were perceived as unorthodox.

Maxim Gorky used the social, political and historical issues of his time as the subject matter for his dramas. His first works, *The Petty Bourgeois* and *The Philistines* are generally regarded as promising, but unpolished efforts. *The Lower Depths* is widely viewed as the finest of Gorky's plays. Gorky wrote a total of fifteen plays, yet none of them achieved any commercial success.

FICTION

Golden Age:

It was not until the third and fourth decade of the 19th century Russian literature saw excellent examples of prose fiction from the writers Narezhny, Bestuzhev, Pushkin, Lermontov and Gogol.

Vasily Narezhny wrote *A Russian Gil Blas, or Adventures of Count Chistyakov* which was modelled on Alain-René Lesage's picaresque novel *Gil Blas*. Although the Minister of Education banned the publication of this novel because of its satirical content, Narezhny continued to write prose fiction and published his *A Black Year or Mountaineer Dukes*, a story about the installation of a colonial bureaucracy in the Caucasus.

Another writer of prose fiction of this period, Aleksandr Bestuzhev, was in exile in the Caucasus for his participation in the Decembrist uprising, and there he was able to publish his Caucasus tales such as *The Red Veil*, *Ammalat-bek*, and *Mulla-Nur* and his society tales *A Test* and *The Clock and the Mirror*.

Alexander Pushkin's historical fictions *The Captain's Daughter* and *A History of the Pugachev Rebellion* were both dedicated to the events of Pugachev's Rebellion. His burlesque anthology of early 19th century fiction, *The Tales of Belkin* is a complex work that satirizes contemporary trends in Russian fiction through the narrators of each of the work's five tales. The influence of the Western European Romantic fiction can be seen in his famous narration *The Queen of Spades* which was a moral story about guilt and punishment. Pushkin's novels had a deep impact on the development of Russian prose fiction, and influenced writers such as Lermontov, Gogol, Dostoevsky, and Tolstoy.

Mikhail Lermontov wrote a work of historical fiction, *A Hero of Our Time* set in the Russian Caucasus which portrays an individual who reflects this generation. Like Pushkin, Lermontov's style of economical prose fiction and simplicity of language was utilized by subsequent prose fiction writers.

Realistic writers of fiction began to examine major social issues such as society, etiquette, the individual, trade and the empire in their writings. One of the Realistic writers, Gogol, with his comic grotesque *The Nose*, depicted the absurd nature of daily life in everyday settings. Another of his works, *Revizor*, sometimes regarded as a social satire targeting systematic despotism and corruption in the bureaucracy, was actually a moral satire of corrupt officials. Gogol's *Dead Souls* and *The Overcoat* were considered the foundation of 19th century Russian realism. *The Dead Souls* is a satire that exposes the corrupt image of Russian society. Gogol in his work *Overcoat* depicted the extreme limits of the dehumanization of the individual.

In *Rudin*, a work of political fiction, Ivan Turgenev created a character endowed with great potential and a deep intellect, but who finds no way to use either of them. In *Fathers and Sons*, Turgenev created a controversial contrast of the nihilistic, materialistic youth of the 1860s with their idealistic fathers of the 1840s. Later he described the oppression of the Russian peasants and the unjust system that kept them in their places in *The Hunting Sketches*, a work based on what he had witnessed on his mother's estate at Spasskoye while hunting there.

Goncharov, in his psychological and ideological novel *Oblomov*, portrays a lazy, inactive, young aristocrat who is unable to make any decision. This condition, found in Russian social and spiritual life in the second half of the 19th century, came to be called *Oblomovism*.

Aleksandr Griboedov wrote his novel *Woe from Wit* under strict tsarist censorship. The work depicted the high society of post-Napoleonic Moscow. It is an old fashion classicist comedy, a burlesque on Moscow whose full text was only allowed to be printed forty years later.

Sergey Aksakov's essayistic prose fiction *Family Chronicle* is a fictional work based on life in his family and early experiences that on one hand criticized some aspects of the old order, such as serfdom, and on the other praised the virtues of the old, patriarchal Russian society.

Alexander Herzen, who was regarded as a leading man of letters due to his fiction, wrote his masterpiece *From the Other Shore*, a work that consists of a series of critical essays and dialogues in response to the Revolution of 1848 in France.

Mikhail Saltykov-Shchedrin assumed the perspective of a bemused outside observer in his satirical depiction of rural life, *Provincial Sketches*. However, in *The History of a City* provides an unvarnished portrayal of urban life's pointless cruelty, bitter struggles for power, irrational and unattainable projects, and social disorder.

Silver Age:

Fyodor Dostoevsky's philosophical anthropological fiction *The Notes from Underground* earned praise with its distinctive Dostoevskian polyphonic style. His psychological, anthropological and ideological novel *Crime and Punishment* takes the genre of the realistic social novel and adds to it anti-nihilist philosophy. Dostoevsky's other masterpieces of prose fiction were composed in a number of different styles. Two were written as parodies of popular fiction genres; *Poor Folk* satirizes the sentimental epistolary novel, while *The Double* is a parody of romantic novels. *The Brothers Karamazov* has a decidedly metaphysical approach to its subject matter, but *The Possessed* is a tragedy.

Leo Tolstoy's most controversial and philosophical novel *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* reflects Tolstoy's theories about moral living. *The Kreutzer Sonata* was another controversial work because it talks about problems never before discussed in public. Heroic fiction *Haji Murat* and his historical fiction *War and Peace* where he blends successfully the historical and the fictional into a single monolithic whole, mark the beginning of the realistic school of fiction.

Aleksandr Ostrovksy's comedies *The Insolvent Debtor*, *The Bankrupt* (or with its new title *It's a Family Affair-We'll Settle It Ourselves*), *A Poor Bride*, *A Lucrative Position and Lumber* are all descriptions of the life that the author knew from personal experience. In his comedies merchants are shown in a negative light, as dictatorial fathers, oppressive bosses, uncultured and dishonest.

Vladimir Korolenko in his *A Paradox*, *The Blind Musician*, *Yashka* and *A Strange One* takes a critical view of Russian society, peopling his novel with criminals, social outcasts, convicts, underdogs and political exiles.

Late in the 19th century Anton Chekhov emerged as a master of short fiction. He was an objective writer in that his stories always portray aesthetic values, never moral ones, and provide a rich reflection of real life in Russian society at all levels, either in the city or the countryside. For example, in his *Peasants*, he deals with rural poverty and the hopeless picture of the Russian people in rural areas. In his *In the Ravine* he introduces the real life of the lower middle class in a small town and describes human suffering similar to that in the countryside.

The founder of Socialist Realism, Maksim Gorky's first fictional stories began to appear in a two-volume collection in the late 19th century. His realistic stories earned him high praise because of his interest in

milieu. His characters were on the margins of society: homeless bums, petty criminals etc. He reflected his own experiences of the hardships of the working class in his *Chelkash*, which was about the life of a professional thief; in his *Twenty-six and One* he presented the hardships of twenty-six overworked bakers, and with his first novel *Foma Gordeev*, he introduced a young man who breaks with social contacts and rebels against societal norms.

Early in the 20th century, Maxim Gorky published his stories in a collection titled *Through Russia*. He also continued to write novels. One of his novels, *Mother*, described a wide range of revolutionary factory workers lives based on his own experiences among the working class for decades.

ESSAY

One of the most famous proponents of Classicism, Gavrila Derzhavin, wrote his essay *A Discourse on Lyric Poetry or on the Ode* in 1811–1815. In this essay, he talked about the gift of a poet, his imagination, his knowledge and experience that he contributed to the history of the Ode.

Vasily Zhukovsky who was one of the leading writers of the 19th century, wrote critical essays that were considered manifestoes of Romanticism. In his essay *Raphael's Madonna* (1824), he presented his views on painting and Romantic artists, and discussed the importance of creativity in an artist's life. Zhukovsky also translated the philosophical essays of David Hume, such as *On Simplicity and Refinement in Writing*, *On Tragedy*, and *On Eloquence*.

The Russian essayist Konstantin Batyushkov collected his philosophical essays in his *Essays in Verse and Prose* (1817). In his essay *A walk to the Academy of Arts* (1814), Batyushkov introduced his aesthetic viewpoint, narrating his story in the person of a painter and gave a broad panoramic depiction of Petersburg. He wrote his essay *A bit about the poet and Poetry* in 1816, in which he depicted a sentimental poet, and claimed that art should be in agreement with real life.

Peter Vyazemsky wrote a number of essays such as *On Derzhavin* (1816), *Mickievich's sonnets* (1829), and *On the Spirit of Parties; on Literary Aristocracy* (1830) that mostly included his critical views on some literary events of his time.

The prolific writer Aleksandr Pushkin wrote many essays that included his remarks on philosophy, education, literature, and poetry. Pushkin, in his first essay *My Observations on the Russian Theater* (1820), talked about professionalism in the administrative committee. In his essay *On the Factors That Delayed the Progress of Our Literature* (1824) he criticized the overwhelming use of French by Russian writers and the aristocrats. In his essay *Objection to A. Bestuzhev's Article 'A View on Russian Literature During 1824 and the Beginning of 1825'* (1834), Pushkin expressed his views on poetic inspiration and the role of literature in a society. He also gave his thoughts on history and historiography in his famous letter (1836) to Peter Chaadaev.

Peter Chaadaev, on the other hand, wrote philosophical essays, only one of which was published in the journal *Teleskop* in 1836. In this essay, Chaadaev directed his criticism at his homeland, comparing Russia with Western civilization, and claimed that Russia had never experienced the Renaissance and Reformation like Western countries.

Nikolay Gogol also wrote many essays. His first essays were included in the volume *Arabeski* (1835). His essays *On the Architecture of Our Time and Sculpture, Painting, Music* contained his aesthetic remarks on various arts. In his *The Last Day of Pompei*, he praised Karl Bruilov for the plastic effects on his canvas and complete harmony in it. In *On the Middle Ages*, he criticized the Enlightenment philosophers who saw the Middle Ages as a primitive period, and the Romantic writers who greatly admired it. In *A View on the Formation of Little Russia* and *On Little Russian Songs*, Gogol expressed his views on Ukrainian national culture and folklore.

In his article *Literary Reveries* written on Pushkin, the literary critic Vissarion Belinsky acknowledged Pushkin as a national poet and called Pushkin's Evgeny Onegin an encyclopedia of Russian life. In his article *On the Russian story and Gogol's stories* (1835), he praised Gogol as the leader of the Natural School. His essays *Letter to N.V. Gogol* (1847) included his criticism of serfdom, ineffective government policies, and also Gogol's religious conservatism.

Herzen became a leading writer of the political essay, and in his journal, *Kolokol*, he published his essays such as *Moscow and Petersburg* (1857), *Western Books* (1857), *Very Dangerous* (1859), and *Superfluous Men and Revolutionaries* (1860). He discussed the government policies on serfdom, the illusions of Slavophilism, and the liberals' struggle against tsarism. Herzen included his essays in two books, *Letters from France and Italy, 1547–1851* and *From the Other Shore* (1855). In *From the Other Shore* (1855), he discussed the ideals and views of the European elites and his remarks on the revolution of 1848. His first major works, *Dilettantism in Science* (1842–1843) and *Letters on the Study of Nature* (1845–1846) were published in Russia in the journal *Otechestvennye Zapiski*.

Ivan Turgenev was another essayist who wrote *Hamlet and Don Quixote* (1860), in which he describes two basic human types. Hamlet represented a socially useless person, while Don Quixote, on the other hand, was a man who completely devoted himself to his ideal and was ready to sacrifice everything for it.

Ivan Kireevskiy published his essays in his own journal *Evropeets*. He published his essay *The Nineteenth Century* criticizing 18th and 19th century Western philosophy and values. Together with Aleksey Khomyakov, Ivan Kireevsky was considered as the theoretician of the Slavophile movement.

Aleksey Khomyakov wrote an essay *On the Necessity and Possibility of New Principles in Philosophy* (1856) in which he criticized the differences between Russia and the West, and claimed that Western countries were individualistic and mostly agnostic, and that Russian civilization was superior than the West because it was more unified and more religious. In his two essays of 1845 and 1846, *Foreign Opinions of Russia*, he depicted post-Petrine Russia, criticizing the Russians for being admirers of European culture and their feeling of inferiority.

Ivan Kireevsky wrote his essay *The Nineteenth Century* and published it in his journal *The European*. He criticized Peter's reforms for being against Russia's organic development and the French Revolution for being an age of destruction. His journal *The European* was closed in 1832 after this essay was published.

After the abolition of serfdom in 1861, the gap between the followers of the Slavophiles and the Westernizers increased, because of the Nihilists' extremist political program and their demand to overthrow the tsar. These people had profound influence on the thought and behavior of subsequent generations of writers.

One of the major Russian literary critics, Nikolay Chernyshevsky, wrote essays which appeared in *Otechestvennye Zapiski* and in *Sovremennik*. He published in *Sovremennik* his essay *Essays in the Gogolian Period of Russian Literature* (1856) claiming that Gogol was the first Russian writer who was concerned about real Russian life and was the father of Russian realism.

Apollon Grigoryev was a leading critic influenced by both the Westernizers and the Slavophiles. He called his aesthetic "organic" and his criticism "organic criticism" which meant an awareness of the organic unity and continuity of national culture. In his essay *On Truth and Honesty in Art* (1856), he reflected his views on Russian poets as being sharp observers of reality who opened the mysteries of life, and the belief of the poet as a prophet and national leader.

In the second half of the 19th century, one of the outstanding Russian writers, Fedor Dostoevsky penned many essays on the social, political, and psychological character of his country and published them in his journals *Vremya* (1861–1863) and *Epokha* (1864–1865), and as editor of *Grazhdanin* (1873–1878). In his essays Dostoevsky criticized the Westernizers' sympathy towards Western civilization. He was against the legalism, positivism and scientism of the Russian elite as a harmful import from the West, and believed that

Western civilization had begun to decline, but that it might be revitalized by the spirituality of the simple Russian people.

In the 1860s, Lev Tolstoy began to write his contradictory remarks on art and literature first in his pedagogical journal *Yasnaya Polyana*. He began to live in Yasnaya Polyana, and it was there that he published twelve issues of *Yasnaya Polyana* between 1862 and 1863. Tolstoy wrote his essay *Who Ought to Teach Whom How to Write: We Our Peasant Children, or Our Peasant Children Us?* (1862) and criticized himself and his associates for delivering little to their people and doing severe damage to their pure souls. Tolstoy spent the rest of his lifetime expressing his new religious views in his didactic treatises. In his essay *What Then Shall We Do?* (1882-1886), he stated that people should quit praising modern civilization, that every aspect of modern society should be abolished, and the people should return to their communal farming. In his treatise *What Is Art?* (1893–1894), Tolstoy believed that art should be universal in all aspects and intelligible to people on all levels and all nations, and most contemporary art was unintelligible to the masses.

A religious philosopher Vladimir Solovyev, under the influence of Slavophile thought, wrote his philosophical essays *The Spiritual Foundations of Life* (1884) and *The History and Future of Theocracy* (1887) including his remarks on the introduction of religion into public life. In *The Russian Idea* (1888), Solovyev questioned what type of role on Earth was assigned to Russia by God to be become a part of humanity and the Mystical Body of Christ, and what role Russia should have in introducing Godmanhood in the religiously divided world.

Nikolay Mikhailovsky, in his essay *What is Progress?* (1869), advocated a society that gave the human personality a chance to develop comprehensively. For him, progress meant stages and types of social organization, and the peasant commune was the highest type at a very low stage of development. In his article *Heroes and Crowd* (1882), Mikhailovsky claimed that an ordinary individual under certain circumstances could lead or give strength to a crowd, and the whole event could gain a special power. The role of an individual, here, was reinforced by mass perception.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

One of the 19th century Russian writers, Denis Davydov, wrote an *Essay towards a Theory of Guerrilla Welfare* (1821), included an autobiography prefixed to the 1832 edition of his poems, and authored a series of recollections of military life. His autobiography is peppered with puns and jokes, many unsuitable in polite company, and his highly readable military writings are regarded as some of the best in Russian.

Alexandr Pushkin, in his autobiographical work *Journey to Arzrum* (1836) and based on his travel to the Caucasus, depicted the places and people he encountered in the Caucasus.

Another writer who experimented with autobiographical fiction was Ivan Turgenev. His collection of short stories *Notes of a Hunter* (1852), based on his observations of peasant life and nature, and his novella *First Love* (1860) were famous for their *autobiographical* overtones.

Apollon Grigoriev's autobiographical work, *My Literary and Moral Wanderings* (1862-64) was about his experience of the cultural life that created him and the Russian nation during his early years.

Alexander Herzen's autobiography *My Past and Thoughts* (1852) covers the period from Herzen's birth in 1812 to 1868 and depicts his early privileged childhood among the Russian aristocracy, his interaction of people and events, his correspondence with friends and his ideological debates. He began writing his *My Past and Thoughts* in London, printed many of its chapters in *Polyarnaya zvezda* and *Kolokol*, and published the first and second volumes as a separate edition in London in 1861. The fourth and last volume came out in Geneva in 1867.

Sergey Aksakov's trilogy *The Family Chronicle* (1856), *Childhood Years of Bagrov Grandson* (1858) and *A Russian Schoolboy* (1856) influenced autobiographical works of the mid-century with its focus on the history of the childhood and the family of the protagonist.

Lev Tolstoy published his autobiographical work entitled *Childhood* (1852) under the initials L.N. Although initially it was planned as the first part of a tetralogy, only *Childhood*, *Boyhood* and *Youth* were completed. The trilogy describes the transition from adolescence to adulthood and examines the emotional world of a young gentry boy. He published another autobiographical work *My Life or First Memories* (1878) based on his personal recollections.

Émigré Writers: Émigré writer Prince Peter Kropotkin wrote his autobiography *The Memoirs of a Revolutionary* (1899) in exile. His *Memoirs* covers his early life, cadet corps schooling, life in the royal court, his military service in Siberia, his political activities, his imprisonment, his escape from jail, his exile and activities in Western Europe.

Women Writers: Among women writers of autobiographical accounts, Nadezhda Durova's autobiographical texts written from 1836 to 1841 recounted her childhood experiences in *Autobiography*. In her *The Cavalry Maiden* she described her service in the military dressed as a man, and her participation in the defense of her country.

Another women writer, Varvara Bakunina's *The Persian Campaign of 1796* (1887) was another account of military operations and her experiences during her husband's expedition against the Persian invasion of the Caucasus in 1795.

Mariya Kamenskaya's *Reminiscences*, written in the late 19th century, was a family chronicle including the history of her father's family, the Tolstoy family and her own happy life as a daughter of the regiment of artists.