Last Confessions of Marie Bashkirtseff

New Self-Revelations of the Remarkable Russian Girl

JEANNETTE L. GILDER'S INTRODUCTION.

IN this new volume of Marie Bashkirtseff's "Confessions" there is no falling off in interest. The entries in this journal have all of her characteristics.

Perhaps the most striking pages of this volume are those devoted to the letters that passed between Marie and Guy de Maupassant. She had never seen the novelist, nor had he ever seen her. She only knew him by his books; a knowledge, one would think, that scarcely invited the confidence of a young girl.

This young girl, however, was exceptional. The very fact that Guy de Maupassant was just what he was excited her interest, an interest altogether intellectual. She wanted to write to him and to receive his letters, just as a naturalist wants to catch a new and strange insect in his net. She felt a scientific kind of interest in this new specimen. Her first letter to him was short, but it must have piqued his curiosity. "I only know," she wrote, "that you are young, and that you are unmarried—two essential points. But I warn you that I am charming; this sweet thought will encourage you to reply." Maupassant's reply showed that he wanted to know more of his fair correspondent.

The Evening World to-day continues the series of remarkable entries in the diary of that strange and world-famous Russian girl, Marie Bashkirtseff. The diary comprises Mlle. Bashkirtseff's last confessions and will be published in full, from day to day.

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THE DIARY.

Saturday, 24 February.

BOJIDAR KARAGEORGEWITCH sits. Princess Jeanne Bonaparte comes; I receive her in the studio; then I go down—it is mamma's Saturday. There was, the only pretty one, little Deschanel of the College de France. He writes in the Debats, and imitates the Delaunays in amateur plays. Very exquisite, and very sympathetic; a good boy* * * *

At all events, I am in good humor, a rare thing. It seems to me that my painting is good; the time passes quickly.

I write in bed. To-morrow is Sunday; I am going to church, so it is useless to go to sleep early. But I am perhaps mad, for I have just been weeping over the shepherds of Bethlehem, and I shall not sleep at all.

Observe the evening, the air of evening, the atmosphere which envelops objects; a calm picture, and these worthy men walking, full of joy, guided by a Star that sparkles in a sky of beautiful blue, not too blue, for it is not quite night.

Ah well! but I adore it myself. Neither Jeanne d'Arc, nor anything on earth, is comparable with the divine Shepherds. I have not been so mad except for my Holy Women. Oh! but I shall do them this summer, in June, in Italy. Oh! for sure, if God permits it.

I am an artist in the full acceptation of the word; every artist is poet or visionary.

Cazin has succeeded with some little night landscapes in this style; very beautiful. Am I insane, or am I right? I prefer a little canvas of Cazin, with a black ship against a blue sky full of stars, to all the celebrated dark and smoky landscapes of the museums. Impossible trees! no atmosphere! And why celebrated? While with Cazin one feels the freshness of night, and one is moved as by a really beautiful night at Nice with the moon, which will be reflected presently in the still sea whose light movement is audible. Ah! how beautiful it is!

I once had a dream, years ago! I saw most brilliant stars; I watched them; there were five. I made some of them fall by merely looking at them. As for the fifth, I reached out my hand to take it—it was silver paper, and the sky blue cardboard, and to detach it I had to scratch it with my nails. This means nothing; but I write because it is pleasant. I shall fall asleep writing, for these confounded Shepherds bother me. I want to use up this energy by writing.

Sunday, 24 February.

IT is nearly 2 o'clock, and I am writing in bed, after returning from the Italiens, where they sang Massenet's "Herodiade." I was with the Marechale de Canrobert and Claire.

The first act surprised me by the novelty and largeness of sound. It resembles nothing I know. Truly it is new and full and sonorous and harmonious. The whole house listened with rapture. The music is of one body with the poem; airs and padding are absent. It is large, magnificent, grandiose. Massenet is a great artist, and henceforth a national glory. They make out that beautiful music is not understood at the first hearing. Come now! Here one understands at once that it is admirable and melodious, in spite of a very learned orchestration.

(But I did not even know Wagner.)

There is at the end of the first act an accompaniment of such beauty that I sat thrilled. Several times one watched with eyes ready to weep with enthusiasm. If these dogs of specimors had been sincere they would have wept.

Without doubt my Italian music cannot stand against this splendor. Massenet is a melodious and French Wagner. That is the comparison. The Wagner is Manet; he is the unfinished father of the new school, of those who seek talent in truth and feeling. There have always been new schools; only a hundred years ago painting went astray. It is being set in the right way again. There the Wagner is Manet. The amorous note is lacking in "Herodiade," notwithstanding the stupid idea of making St. John the lover of Salome. I should have liked him better as an enthusiast, a prophet, and her as an enthusiast. Yet love would be inevitable. I should have loved John myself. Yes, Massenet is an open-air artist; he requires air in an opera, from one end to the other; he wants the characters and the melodies to move in a musical atmosphere that envelops them and makes them live.

Wednesday, 6th February.

I HAVE been to Julian's to show him the Raudouin portrait. This Marseillais has a very contented air, and tells me it gets better and better. It is not my opinion of this portrait. I detest it. But if others think like Julian * * * Ah, well! I shall do it over again all the same; I shall try to make it please me. Julian provokes me. He insists on talking to me like this: "Your soundness in painting gets better and better." He will have it that I have been very strong, then run down, then strong again. It is false, false, false! My sketches are there. Test it.

Friday, 15th February.—Saturday, 16th February.

A SPLENDID soiree at the Italiens. I go with the G——s, Princess Jeanne Bonaparte, her husband. Mme. G—— finds me very pretty, dressed to kill (corsage black velvet, classic decollete), hair well dressed, shoulders of marble, "quite the shoulders that show the breed." Nothing less! The opinion of Mme. G—— is the echo of the majority always. But that is not why the soiree has been splendid; it is because we had Gayarre, the incomparable Spanish tenor. He had an ovation that he will remember. The straight-laced men and women were among the enthusiasts. He has a miraculous voice.

19th February.

I CANNOT write for rage and enervation. After labors and experiments without number, I have got the dreamed-of pose for the portrait of Dina. It is very nice to do, and I have now only to paint. And they hinder me! There remain only twenty-three days! Artists will understand my despair.

Thursday, 21st February.

DINA'S head, begun yesterday, is painted, save the expression in the eyes.

They made me angry at lunch by talking stupidities about the Meissonnier incident. Mme. M—— found Meissonnier, and ordered her portrait of him. After some hesitation, it seems, Meissonnier said, "Yes, but it will be 70,000 francs." The portrait has been exhibited at the Triennial, and is considered mediocre. Mme. M—— asks to have it retouched. Meissonnier refuses. Mme. M—— threatens to leave the portrait against the bill. Meissonnier says they will go to law. Mme. M——, persuaded by some friends, pays, accepts the work, and puts it out of the way. And all Paris stamps on the foreigner. In my opinion Mme. M—— lacked delicacy in showing her discontent with an artist like Meissonnier, who had done all he could, who is seventy-three years old, and who has produced masterpieces. But Meissonnier lacked nobility in forcing the ignorant bourgeoisie (I admit it) to pay, all the same.

23d February.

IF Christ returned, he certainly would not recognize the doctrines that he preached in Catholicism and in * * * But Christ would recognize the Bible for all that. Which proves that he was only a man and that it is necessary to take account of his humanity, his environment, and his country. * * * However sublime a genius, he could not but be subject to all those influences. If he had been God he would not have supported himself on the predictions of the Scripture, he would have * * *

Thou art going to prescribe the retrospective conduct of Christ, dear child? Get thee to bed!

25th February.

WITH an unequalled constancy I work at Dina, that I shall show to no one till it is finished.

B—— and the architect to dinner. The latter has been ill; that is the explanation of his long absence. His brother is always ill. He leaves for Algeria in ten days. Make way for the "Shepherds of Bethlehem!" If he does them before my "Holy Women" my dearest plan falls to pieces! Both are evening effects; I should have the appearance of imitating him; it would be impossible.

Bastien-Lepage is from Lorraine. Joanne d'Arc, the most extraordinary of heroines and even of heroes, was from Lorraine. Bastien-Lepage has made a chef-d'oeuvre of her, and in my mad presumption I felt myself in it, related to all the heroes and all the chefs-d'oeuvres. Here one might develop an interesting thesis: the mysterious ties that unite heroes and masterpieces to all those who think, for the sun, the air, the beauties of nature belong to all!

My words are obscure, but if there are men who think like me they will understand—the others will never understand, even if the lucid, easy, practical, logical M. Clemenceau set himself to explain it to them. I admire Clemenceau. He lacks passion, but he obtains almost the same effect by dint of accuracy in expression.

Friday, 7th March.

SINCE the portrait of Dina is done for, I want to know if the picture needs some serious retouches. I send to find the architect, who comes at 5 o'clock, and his first words apprised us that his brother has been in Paris for two days, very ill; his mother is with him. He expressed his lively regrets not to be in a state to come to see the picture. He leaves in three or four days for Algiers. He has nothing for the Salon. He is in bed, it appears. Let us hope Algeria will set him up again.

I made a pen sketch. The architect, a cord passed around his body, drags it vigorously toward a post with the inscription "Rue Ampere." At the end of the cord lies his brother, flat on his stomach, clinging with both hands to the sign post "Rue Legendre." I am sending him this sketch.

There remain to me only seven days, and I begin again to hope that the portrait will be finished. There is nothing done but the background and one arm. It is madness.

Monday, 10th March.

IT is begun and not badly. Claire, in a hat, out of doors; she has much character and poses well.

But I am distressed not to have my portrait white, with the bare arms and neck of the Academy, the beautiful academy. A flat arrangement. An indoor dress, all white. Ah! that was beautiful. I shall do it yet.

My excessive imagination has caused me to make a journey into Palestine before dinner. I shall do some studies and a picture, and in the month of October I shall go to Palestine and do my "Holy Women."

Sunday, 16th March.

MANY people came. First the Canroberts and the Marshal, Mme. Hochon and her mother, Carrier-Belleuse, Dujatis, Paul Deschanel, Dr. Guesnay, and others.

But I was too nervous to know who was who. Visits succeeded each other without interruption till 4 o'clock in the evening. They have taken down the pictures. The Marechale, Villevieille, Claire, myself, and the doctor got into noble carriages, conducted by the correct Paul Deschanel, bareheaded, and the others. The doors wide open, all the urchins who had left the shelter gathered round and watched those invited, in the vestibule.

It was radiant weather. An enormous mob of dandiers. What pictures! My God, lessen the number of painters! Each of us carries under his arm a little frame so as to enter without difficulty. When these brigands entered at the entrance, saw four ladies and an old decorated gentleman each with a parcel under his arm, there was a ferocious clamor. We found ourselves at the head of the staircase, rather upset by this reception; and as we began to look about in the galleries, other wretches came in amid other cries, yet more piercing, and whistles. Ah, well! it is very amusing. Only we await the arrival of our canvases until 6 o'clock; the carriage was late; at 6 we were still on the staircase, waiting. It is there that Gervese spoke to me for a moment.

Tuesday, 25th March.

THE picture is sketched out.

The architect writes to ask if he may dine this evening and adds, "I know the sympathy you have for myself and my brother, so I shall come to talk to you of what I have so much at heart." Considering these words of friendship and the really grave illness of his brother, Mamma and even Rosalie recommended me not to permit myself any nonsense; it would be cruel and in bad taste.

He had in his pocket a letter from his brother, who writes to his friend Charles Baude (the engraver). He gave it to me at my request. Eight pages of small, tortured writing and erasures, like my illustrious correspondent. The letter is quite charming. He speaks of what "Mamma" says of the Arabs. He goes out with "Mamma;" then fresh impressions and delightful things, from the heart, and not an ordinary man's. * * * But this letter, which enables me to penetrate into the intimacy of this man whom I hardly know, makes a certain impression on me, and I set myself to sneer, to quote passages to ridicule them, and I end by saying that "this being is not even sick."

Imagine the effect! And at each exclamation the architect says that he cannot bear this, that it is as if one laughed at God before a priest. As I saw he would leave under a bad impression, I accused him of misunderstanding me, and ended by [illegible] him to beg my pardon.

Emile Bastien-Lepage tells me that more than twenty persons have spoken to him of my landscape at the Union of Women Painters. Duez spoke to him of it. "You positively hold the ropes," he said; "a real success."

That is delightful; so I have done well to send this landscape to the Salon.

Saturday, 29th March.

WE are going to the Italiens tonight. They are giving "Lucie de Lammermoor," and Gayarre sings. The music is divine and will never grow old, for it has no stamp of fashion, no fondness save that of expressing sentiments such as love, hatred, sorrow. But these are eternal sentiments, and, in short, there is nothing beyond that. Melodrama, do you say? I laugh at that, provided I am moved, and I am moved when Edgar appears at the top of the steps. At the moment when, having torn up the contract, he breaks out into imprecations, it is maddening. Some people say that Gayarre sings through the nose and screams. The pack of idiots! The truth is that this man has a miraculous voice, and that one thinks of neither science nor method in listening to him. He sings like a court singer who has an artist's soul. He has shade and expression, and acts as well as sings. In the septet, when he says, "Sì, ingratto, t'amo, t'amo encore!" it is absolutely admirable and one hears him alone despite the cries of the others. A polished actor might not speak it so, for with Gayarre, it is true, it is natural, human, common, therefore, to all people and all classes. In the expression of absolutely sincere sentiments there is only human nature—habit, education, everything disappears. Shakespeare understood that, and Shakespeare is great because he is neither English, nor aristocrat, nor plebeian, nor of any period, but eternally true, like hatred, sorrow, love.

And the desire of being placed on the line at the Salon? After all I have No. 2 like last year. It is hard! It appears I have had so many votes for No. 2 that they thought I would have it. It is a considerable blow, and all my hopes are shattered.

Is it, then, that my picture is bad? Then how comes it that things notoriously inferior had No. 2? One loses one's self in conjectures, and, I should like to think, with injustice. For the moment I should like to think they have been very unjust. It is frightfully disgusting, and I have a horror of taking steps to obtain what is my due. And then I believe in my inferiority; and, besides, I am ashamed to ask favors. * * * It is dreadful.

(To be continued.)

AFTER THE OPERA.

"I AM WRITING IN BED AFTER RETURNING FROM THE ITALIENS."

*The correct Paul Deschanel," as she calls him on a later page, has been for some years President of the French Chamber. Speaking of his re-election to that office in January last, the Paris correspondent of the Daily News said:

"As a man cut out for society, M. Deschanel is fond, to quote the poet Moore, of 'the bowers where pleasure lies carelessly smiling at ease.' Indeed there is a good deal in him of the poet Moore. He is a macaronic, literary, is said to have written the most exquisitely turned love letters, and not for novels either, and is a devoted son. M. Deschanel was singled out by the late Felix Faure as the Deputy best suited to represent the Chamber at fetes that were to have been given at the Elysee if the Emperor and Empress of Russia visited the Exposition. * * * The new French term 'un arriviste' is liberally applied to him by his enemies. No doubt his agreeable manners contributed to his success."

A WHIRL ASUNDER OR LOVE'S DESPERATE GAME.

BY GERTRUDE ATHERTON.

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

Owen Clive, a young Englishman, comes to Yorba, Cal., to marry Mary Gordon, to whom he has long been engaged. He meets Helena Belmont, an heiress noted for her eccentricities. Helena's marked preference for Clive leads Mary to suggest an announcement of the engagement between herself and Clive.

Helena avows her intent to win Clive from Mary.

Helena and Clive confess to each other their mutual love. Twelve days remain before he must rejoin Mary in San Francisco, and he resolves to abandon all thoughts of his fiancee for that time.

Clive goes away for a few days, promising to come back. Helena awaits his return anxiously.

CHAPTER IX.

Love Versus Duty.

THAT night she went to bed glad with the thought that she should see him in sixteen hours, and pictured their meeting so often and variously, and struck a match to look at the clock, so many times, that she slept little.

The next morning she was so nervous and apprehensive that the placid conversation of her guests was intolerable, and she would not drive with them.

After luncheon she went up to a favorite spot in the forest, directing one of the Chinese servants to conduct Clive to her when he returned.

As the afternoon wore on her gloom lifted and passed. She grew light-minded and humorous, almost indifferent.

She took herself to task in some dismay: in the fitness of things she should be passionately serious when he arrived.

"Are there really no great crises in life?" she thought. "Are we all comedians gone wrong, personified jokes?"

"But she was helpless; the reaction was inevitable.

Clive was late. He was always late.

Helena felt no uneasiness, but sat idly, wondering how they would meet, her mind occasionally drifting to other things.

She heard a crackling in the brush on the other side of the creek, then the Chinaman's protesting voice.

"Can't! Why when catches pigtail allee liker time, Mister Clive. Me got thlee velly bad sclatches, and clothes allee same no washee."

There was no answer from Clive, but he was in view presently.

The Chinaman retreated hastily, wrapping his pigtail round his neck. Helena rose and went forward. She felt suddenly resentful and haughty.

After all, it was presumption in a man to take upon himself the deciding of a question which was as vital to her as to him.

She wondered if she really did love him; certainly she felt neither tenderness nor tolerance at the moment.

Clive walked slowly across the felled redwood which served as bridge between the high banks of the creek. As he approached Helena forgot herself and her moods.

"He has suffered horribly," she thought. "What am I that I did not know he must?"

And then she realized that she could not comprehend his experience of the past three days; that her mind merely grasped the fact; she had no profounder, more sympathetic understanding.

She drew back, frightened and chilled.

"I am sorry to see you looking so badly," she said coldly, as they shook hands. "Perhaps we had better have it out at once."

They sat down against two redwoods, facing each other.

"Very well," said Clive. "I have been a scoundrel and nothing I can say is the least excuse. I can only state the facts. The average girl who is an avowed flirt expects to be made love to, and a man finds it no task to do what a charming woman exacts of him. I took you in the beginning for a spoilt beauty, a coquette, above the average as far as brains was concerned, but still suggesting little more than an unusually spirited flirtation. Of course, I was far more fascinated than I realized or I should not have come to your house, nor should I have asked you to give me these two weeks. That it might mean life or death to either of us I did not realize until that day among the ferns."

The fight was on. Helena threw back her head.

"Can you not explain to Mary Gordon? Surely she would release you."

"I never could explain to Mary Gordon. She would comprehend that after four years I had thrown her over for a prettier woman whom I had known two weeks. Women like that—simple, good, loyal women—don't reason and analyze as a clever woman does. And the hurt abates—not because the man is worth it, any more than any man is good enough for such women—but because they are what they are."

"But she was not the woman for you; therefore she would find another man."

"She would live on an isolated ranch in Southern California for several years, then go back to England and live in her old home, among the people she had known all her life. Those women don't seek distraction. They are the slaves of an idea. If the right man did come she would not know it."

"All of which means that you think it your duty to marry her."

"I mean to marry her. There is nothing else to be done. If there were no other reason, I have no right to make her ridiculous."

Helena caught her breath. For the first time she mentally appreciated the strength in the man which had captivated her woman's instincts. But she did not lose courage.

"And I am not to be considered at all? I say nothing about being made ridiculous. If I am it is my own fault, and I don't care, anyhow; that seems to me a very insignificant matter. Now that I have found you am I to be left alone—thirty, forty years? You know that I have about equal possibilities of good and bad in me. If I married you I might become as wholly good as any mortal can. I never realized what possibilities there are in any of us as I did in the last few days before you went away. The principal reason that I love you is because I always feel that there is something in you to climb to and that you could lift me up to you. If you leave me I'll become a bad woman. Why not? It must be very interesting, and I have nothing more in life to look forward to. If I lived with you I might grow into your belief; you could carry me anywhere, but alone I cannot. Moreover, I want to live in this life. I cannot sit down and wait patiently for a mythical and unsubstantial hereafter. I am too much of a savage, I suppose, but at all events, I can't.

"There will be no excuse for you to become a bad woman. You have too much brain and money—too many methods of distraction. You can travel and make any life you choose. The world is an interesting place; you don't know the A B C of it.

"You are cruel."

"Yes," he said. "More so than you realize just now."

"I'm not doubting that you love me. If I did do you suppose I would argue with you? I'm not in a tender or sympathetic mood. There is too much to be said. I must talk it out now; we are not an ordinary pair of fools."

She paused a moment and looked straight at him.

"We have a more imperative duty to ourselves than to traditions. You are in the new world now, almost in a new civilization. Smash such outworn ideals. They are nothing, nothing to human happiness.

"Such traditions as honor and faith and pity for the weaker are in the bone and blood of the older civilization. If we tore them out there is not much we've got that's worth anything that wouldn't follow."

"I would not care—not a straw. I should love you whether you were satisfied with yourself or not, and I could make you forget."

"No; you could not."

"Oh! you are way above me," she said bitterly. "I don't mean to say that I haven't known plenty of honorable men, but they would find a way out of it—for me. You seem to be welded together so compactly that every characteristic is bound up with every other. Nothing is acquired, separate. Probably I'd never reach you, after all. Perhaps it is as well we don't marry."

"I wish you would not talk as if I were an infernal prig. Can't you imagine what an ass a man feels when a woman rots to him like that? I am the most ordinary person you will probably ever know. If I were not we wouldn't be where we are to-day. Now that I have made such a mess of things I can only see one way out of it, and I don't feel a hero, I assure you."

(To Be Continued.)

FACE HUMOURS

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PASTOR'S CONTINUOUS SHOW 10 Street. 20 AND 30 CENTS. JOE WELCH, M. WATTERS & TYSON, RYAN & RICHFIELD'S NEW ACT. MAG HAGGERTY'S FATHER.

MURTY THE MERCHANT OF VENICE, with Daniel E. Bandmann. Hill Thea., Lex. av. & 42d st. Ev'g & Prices 25c., 35c., 50c. MATINEE 25c. EVERY DAY.

BIJOU AMELIA BINGHAM COMPANY. Mat. Decoration Day. TO-NIGHT AT 8.15. Mat. To-morrow, 2.15. In Clyde Fitch's Best Play, THE CLIMBERS. Miss Bingham's Season Closes Sat., June 1.

14TH ST. THEATRE, nr 6th ave. Mat. Sat. only. MR. CHAUNCEY OLCOTT Last Mat. To-Morrow. OLCOTT'S Last Time This Year. To-Morrow Night Sweet Inniscarra.

METROPOLIS 42D & 3D AVE. Evgs. 8.15. Mats. Wed. & Sat., 2.15. Waite's Stock Co.—"THE BLACK FLAG." Next Week—LEAH LESSI in "EAST LYNNE."

AMERICAN 42D ST. AND 8TH AVE. Evgs. 8.15. 25c., 35c., 50c. MATINEE DAILY (except Monday) 25c. RIP VAN WINKLE. Next Week—KIT CARSON.

KOSTER & BIAL'S W. 34th St. Two performances Daily. Mats., 25c. Evgs., 50c. BEST VAUDEVILLE BILL IN TOWN.

Amusements.

Terrace Garden, 58th & 59th Sts. BEGINNING SATURDAY, MAY 25. "EL CAPITAN." W. C. MANDEVILLE AND MAMIE GILROY.

Brooklyn Amusements.

HAVERLEY'S MUSEE. SMITH ST., NEAR FULTON. PERMANENT WAX WORK EXHIBIT. Phantasm, Vaudeville, Novelties. From 10.30 A. M. until 10.30 P. M. Daily.

COL. SINN'S MONTAUK. POPULAR PRICES. CASTLE SQUARE OPERA CO. To-Night—FAUST. Messrs. Sheehan, Clarke, Paull; Misses Ludwig and Graham.

ORPHEUM. Ladies' Matinee Every Day. PAULINE HALL. The Great RAUSCHLE. And a Great Array of Artists.

Excursions.

Decoration Day Excursions Via LEHIGH VALLEY RAILROAD. To Mauch Chunk and Glen Onoko. BEGINNING SATURDAY, MAY 25. MAY 30th. Adults $2.00, children $1.50 for round trip. SPECIAL EXCURSION TRAIN will leave West 22d St. 8.10. Cortlandt and Dey streets 8.20. Jersey City 8.25 A. M. TO PAN-AMERICAN EXPOSITION. Tickets sold May 29, 49.00 round trip, good on day coaches all trains except Black Diamond Express. Tickets and information at Lehigh Valley offices and Stations.

STEAMER GRAND REPUBLIC. SUNDAY, MAY 26. UP THE HUDSON. AS FAR AS POUGHKEEPSIE. Leaves Bridge Dock, Brooklyn, 9.00 A. M.; West 20th St., 10.00 and West 129th St. at 10.30. ROUND TRIP 50c. Music and Refreshments. DECORATION DAY, GRAND REPUBLIC 23 WEST POINT, NEWBURG & POUGHKEEPSIE. GRA ROCUM TO BRIDGEPORT, 50c.

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