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Cecil Parrott

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JAROSLAV HAŠEK

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Hašek aged nineteen

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JAROSLAV HAŠEK

A STUDY OF *ŠVEJK* AND THE SHORT STORIES

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To Ellen

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ILLUSTRATIONS

Hašek aged nineteen (*frontispiece*)

- 1 Portrait sketch of Hašek by Josef Lada
- 2 Hašek soon after his call-up in 1915 (right, marked with a cross)
- 3 Hašek back in Prague in 1921, on an excursion
- 4 Cover-illustration by Lada to the first instalment of *Švejk* – the only portrayal of Švejk Hašek saw and approved
- 5 František Strašlipka, reputedly Hašek's model for Švejk
- 6 Principal characters according to Lada: Vaněk, Lukáš, Biegler and Ságner
- 7 Contemporary photographs of the 'originals' of Vaněk, Lukáš, Biegler and Ságner
- 8 Švejk and his landlady Mrs Müller: two successive versions of Lada's illustration of the opening scene

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GENERAL PREFACE TO THE SERIES

This series was initiated within the Cambridge University Press as an at first untitled collection of general studies. For convenience it was referred to inside the Press as ‘the Major European Authors series’; and once the initial prejudice against the useful word ‘major’ was overcome, the phrase became the official title.

The series was always meant to be informal and flexible, and no very strict guidelines are imposed on the authors. The aim is to provide books which can justifiably be given a title which starts simply with the name of the author studied: therefore to be general, introductory and accessible. When the series started, in the 1960s, there was an assumption that a biographical approach or an approach via historical background was old-fashioned, and it is still relatively hard to find books which address themselves directly to the works as literature and try to give a direct sense of the general intention, or particular structure or effect. The aim is principally to give a critical introduction to a whole *œuvre*, or to the most important works; to help the reader to form or order his own impressions by liberal quotation and judicious analysis; to assume little prior knowledge, and in most cases to quote in English, or to translate quotations given in the original.

It is hoped that the series will help to keep some classics of European literature alive and active in the minds of present-day readers: both students working for a formal examination in literature and educated general readers – a class which still exists – who wish to gain access to the best in European culture.

Sir Cecil Parrott’s study of Hašek is conceived within the general framework of the series; but it deals with an author whose work is so much a reflection of his own experience and times that it is essential to have a grasp of Hašek’s life and of the setting of Czech history and politics. Sir Cecil’s full-scale biography is the standard reference, but it is still most useful to have in this volume

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General Preface to the Series

his briefer account of Hašek's life, and the interesting survey of the historical background, before proceeding to the works themselves.

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AUTHOR'S NOTE

Page numbers in the text refer to the author's translation of *The Good Soldier Švejk* (Heinemann and Penguin Books, London, 1973, Robert and Thomas Y. Crowell, New York, 1973). This is the only complete edition available in English.

Some of the stories discussed in this book have been translated by the author in *The Red Commissar* (Lester and Orpen Dennys, Toronto, Heinemann, London and Dial, New York 1981); and further details about Hašek's adventurous life can be found in the author's biography *The Bad Bohemian* (The Bodley Head, London 1978).