

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Teodor Josef Konrad Korzeniowski, known to us as Joseph Conrad, was born at Berdyczew, in Russian Poland, on December 3, 1857. His father, Apollo Korzeniowski, was, as Conrad says, "a Pole, a Catholic, a gentleman," a man of culture with a natural taste for good literature. His mother, Evelina Bobrowski, belonged to the same class of land-owning gentry. When Conrad was about five years of age, his father's participation in a patriotic Polish insurrection against Russian domination was punished by exile. Madame Korzeniowski, taking her young son with her, followed her husband; but homesickness and the rigours of the climate preyed upon a naturally delicate constitution, and she died in 1865, at the age of thirty-four. Four years later Conrad's father died in the city of Cracow. Thus, before he was twelve, the boy had lost both father and mother. His mother's brother took charge of him and gave him advice and help and affection.

In the year 1873 Conrad saw the sea for the first time when he visited Venice. Although he was inland bred, he had long set his heart on going to sea, and the next year, at the age of seventeen, he went to Marseilles. Here he was at home, as he spoke French fluently and wrote it with a nice feeling for style. He began to know the sea and during a period of apprenticeship made several short voyages. In April, 1878, he left on board the English steamer *Mavis*, bound for Constantinople with a cargo of coal. She returned with a cargo destined for Lowestoft. On the 18th of June, 1878, the vessel reached her port. In his twenty-first year Conrad, with only a few words of English at his command, set his foot for the first time on English soil. England